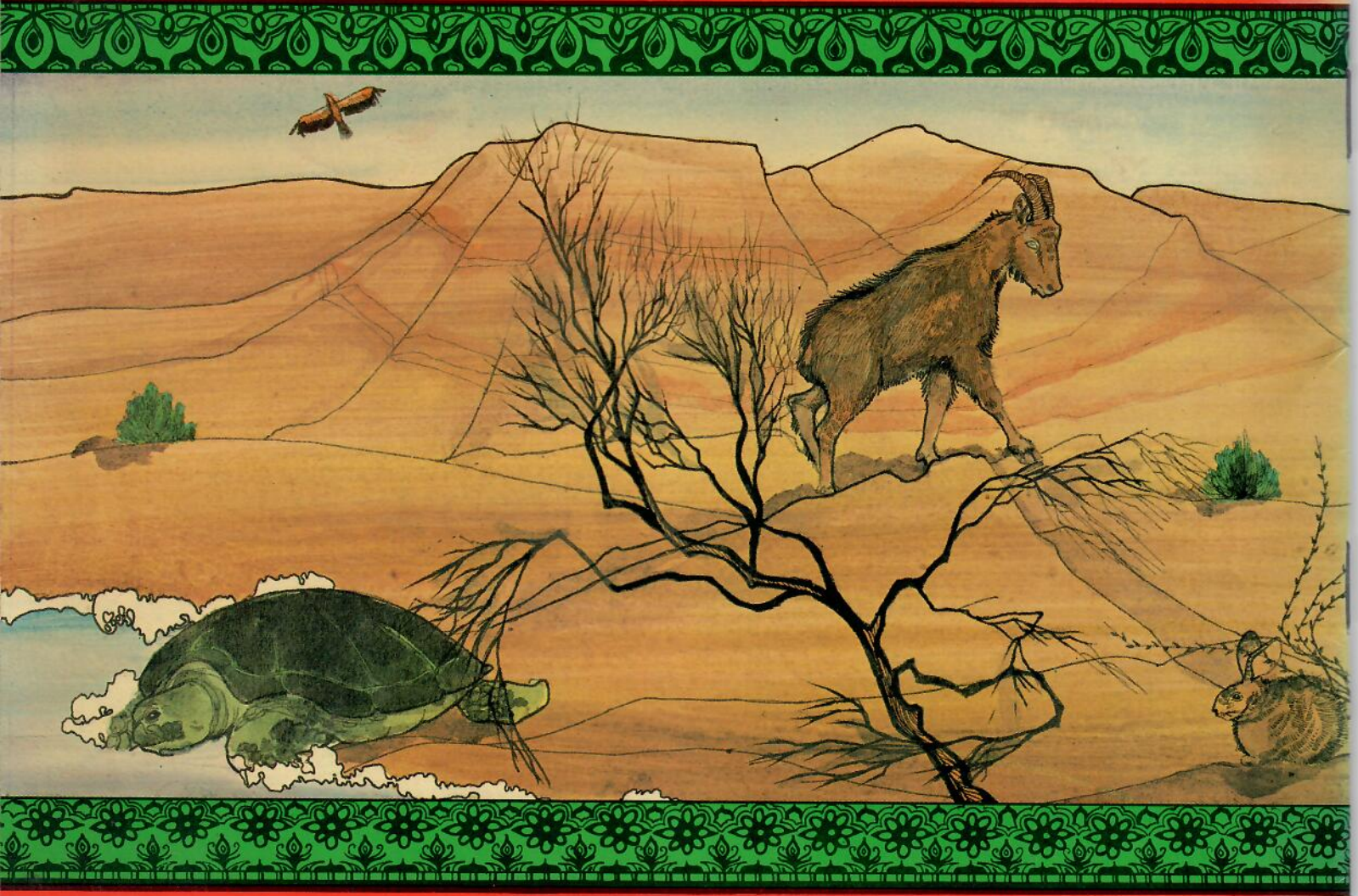
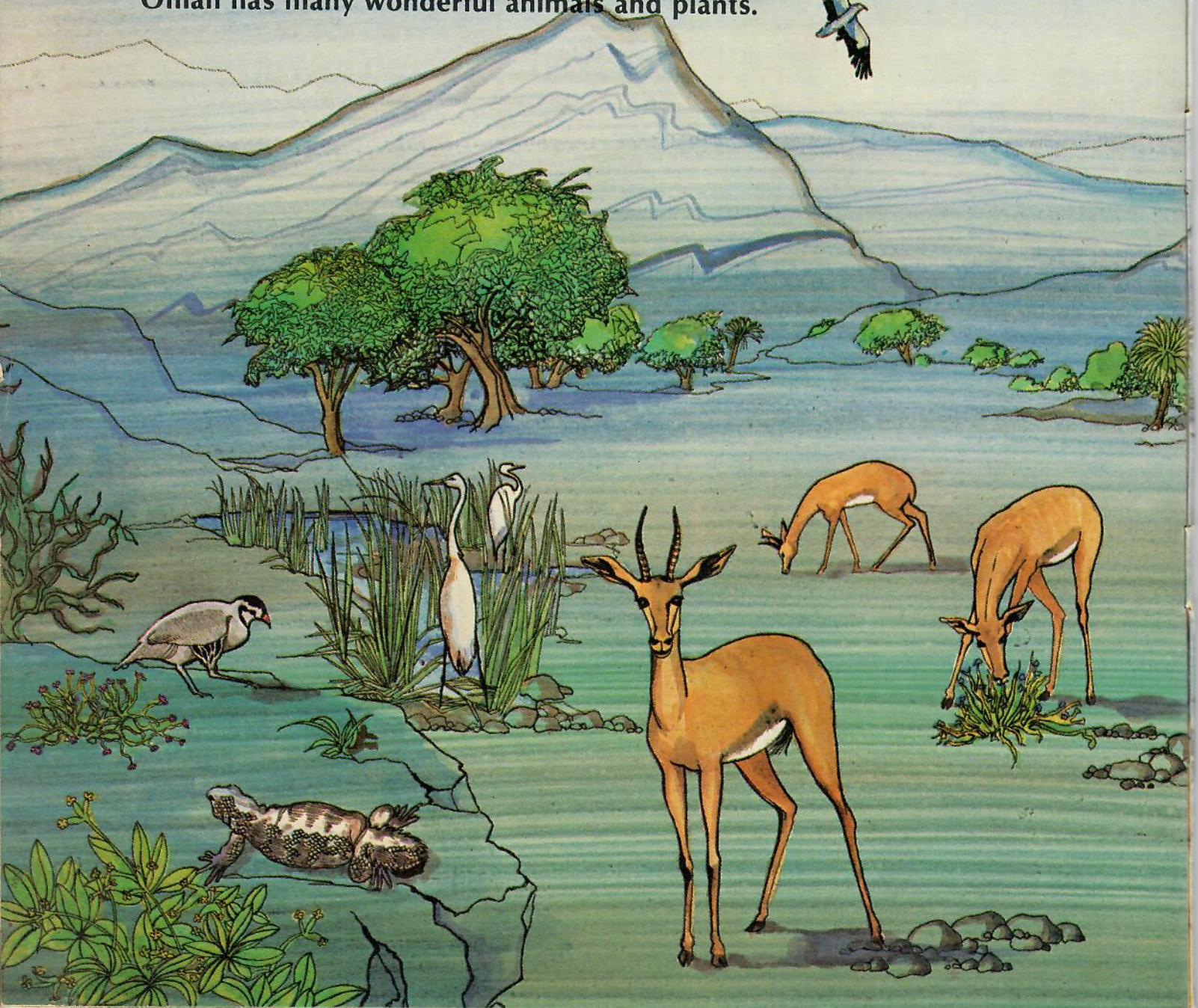


Wildlife in Oman

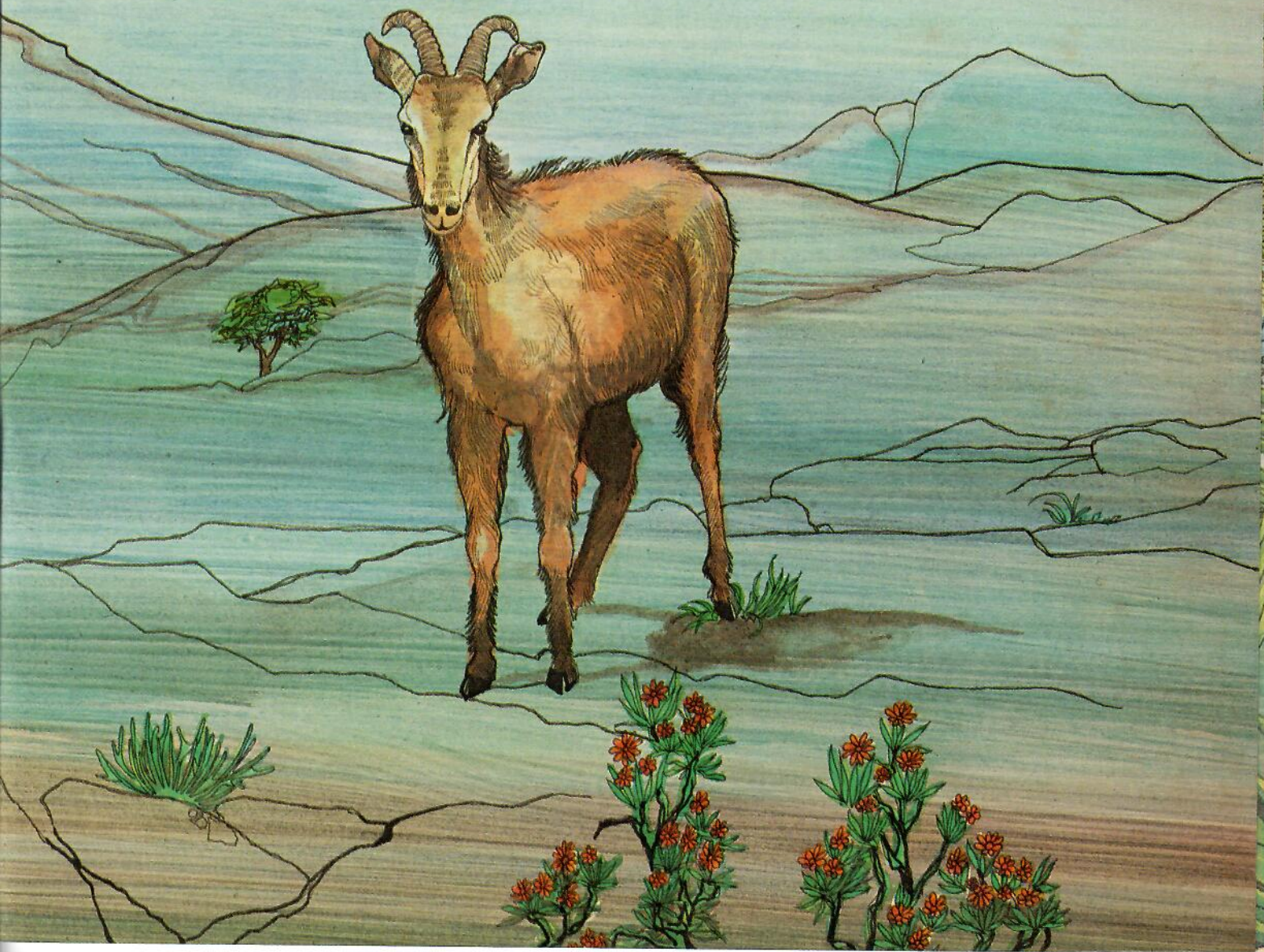




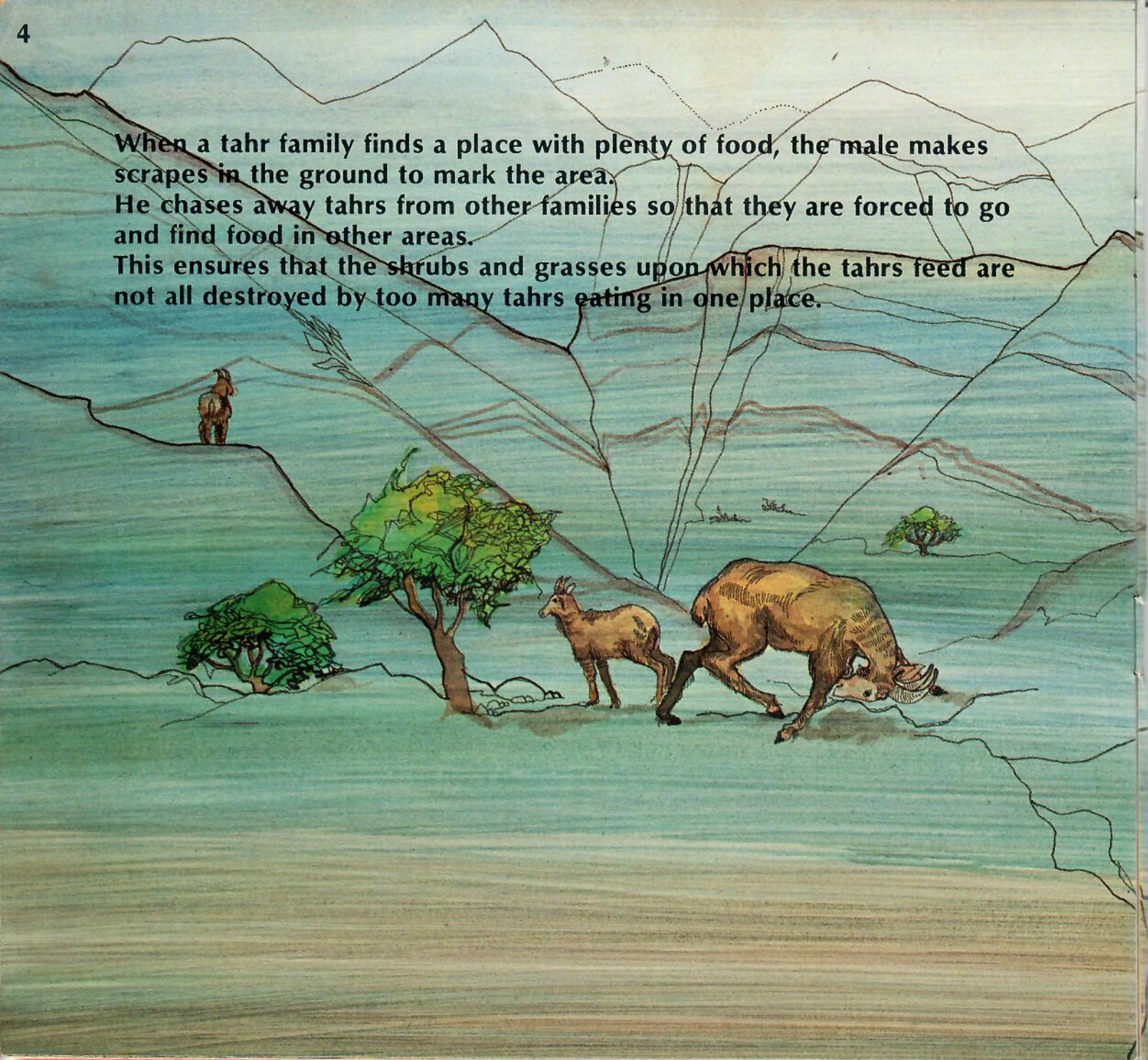
Oman is a beautiful country.
Oman has many wonderful animals and plants.



This is the Arabian tahr which we call the wa'l.
The Arabian tahr lives only in the mountains and hills of northern Oman
and is found nowhere else in the world.



When a tahr family finds a place with plenty of food, the male makes scrapes in the ground to mark the area. He chases away tahrs from other families so that they are forced to go and find food in other areas. This ensures that the shrubs and grasses upon which the tahrs feed are not all destroyed by too many tahrs eating in one place.

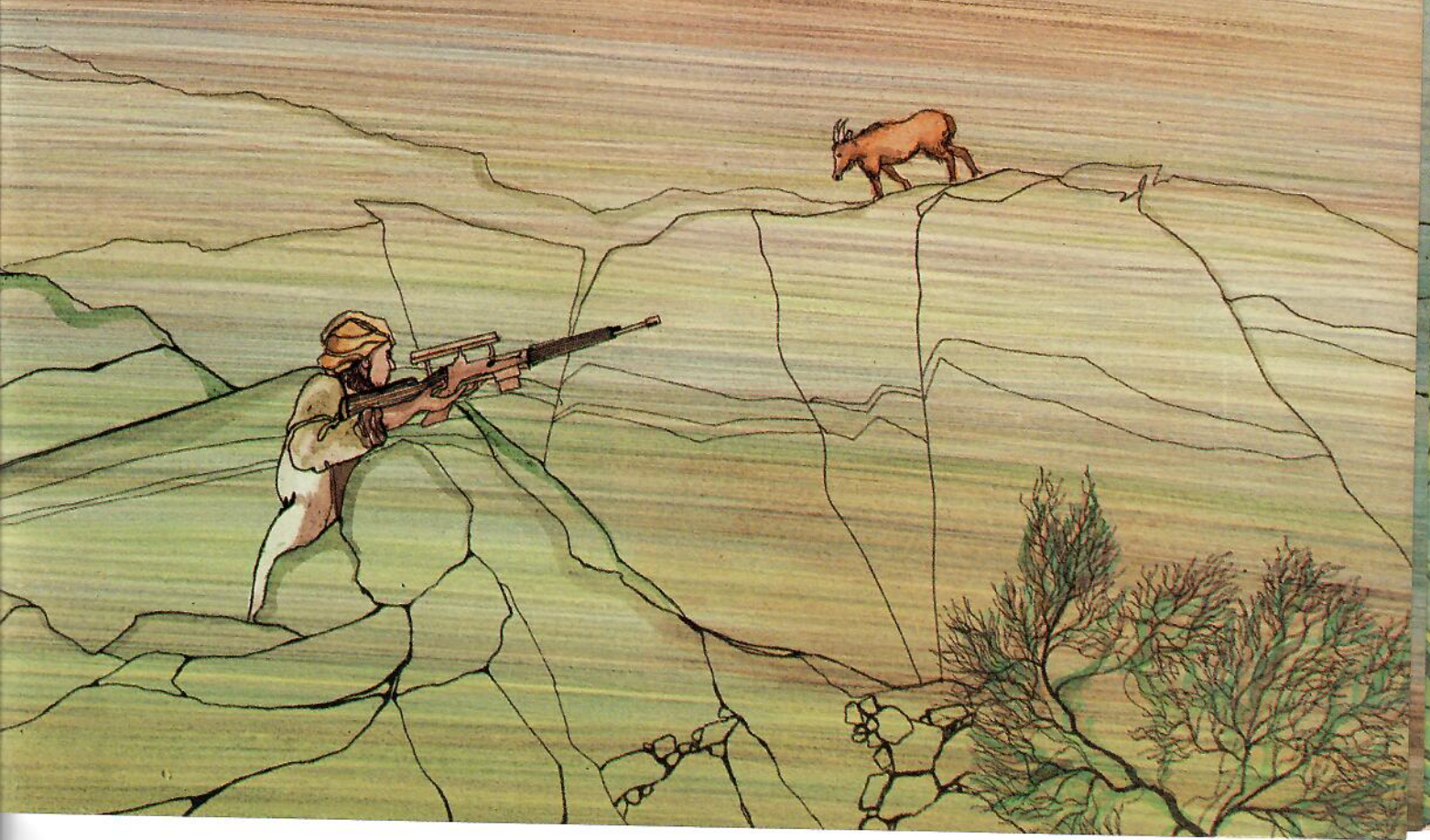


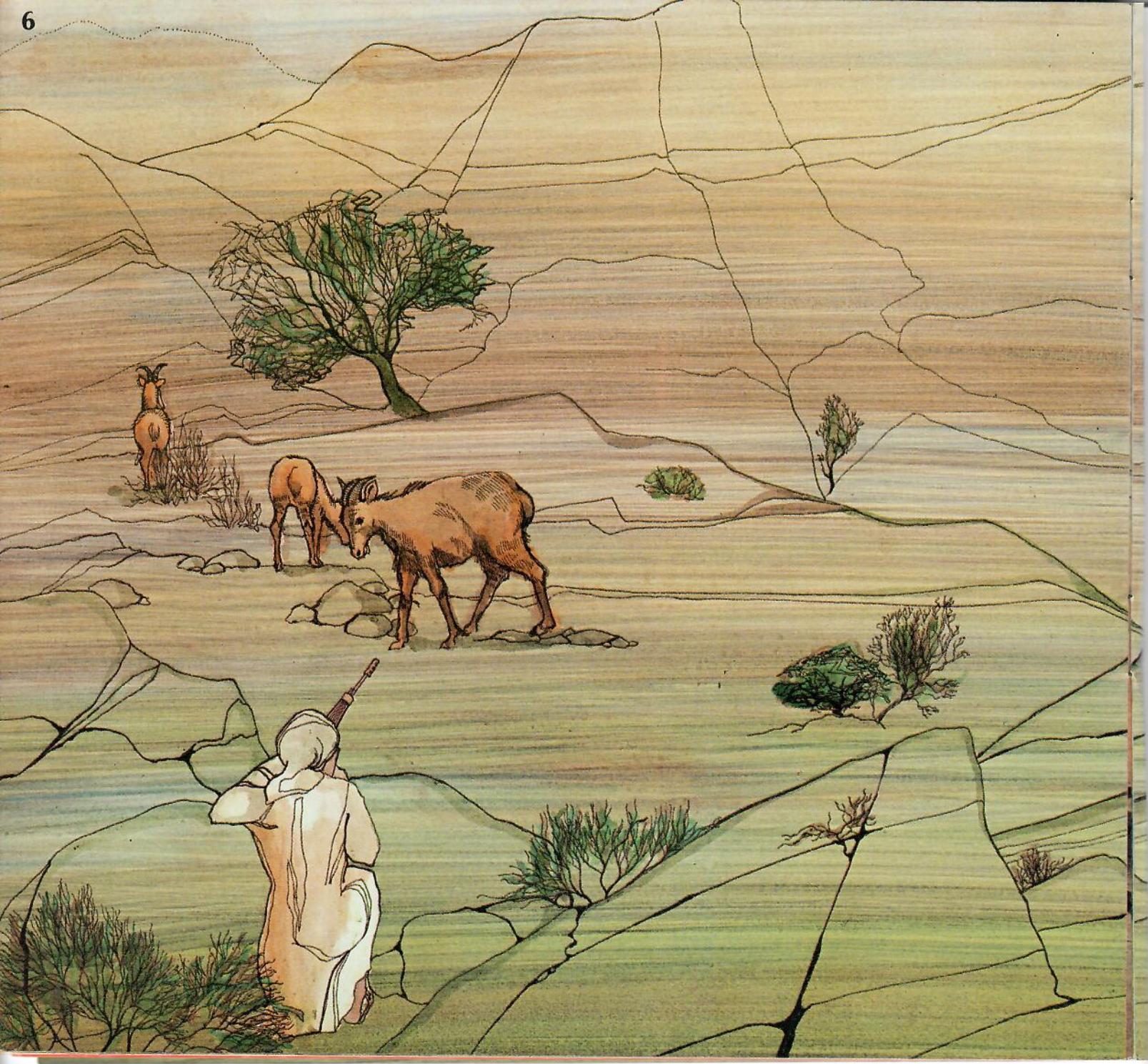
Once upon a time there were very many tahrs in Oman; now there are very few. There are several reasons for this.

Hunters used to wait at waterholes to shoot the tahrs as they came to drink.

Tahrs were shot with high powered rifles which killed them from a great distance.

Also, some people kept too many goats in areas where the grazing was poor. The goats ate all the grazing so that there was none left. This was bad for the tahrs and the goats.



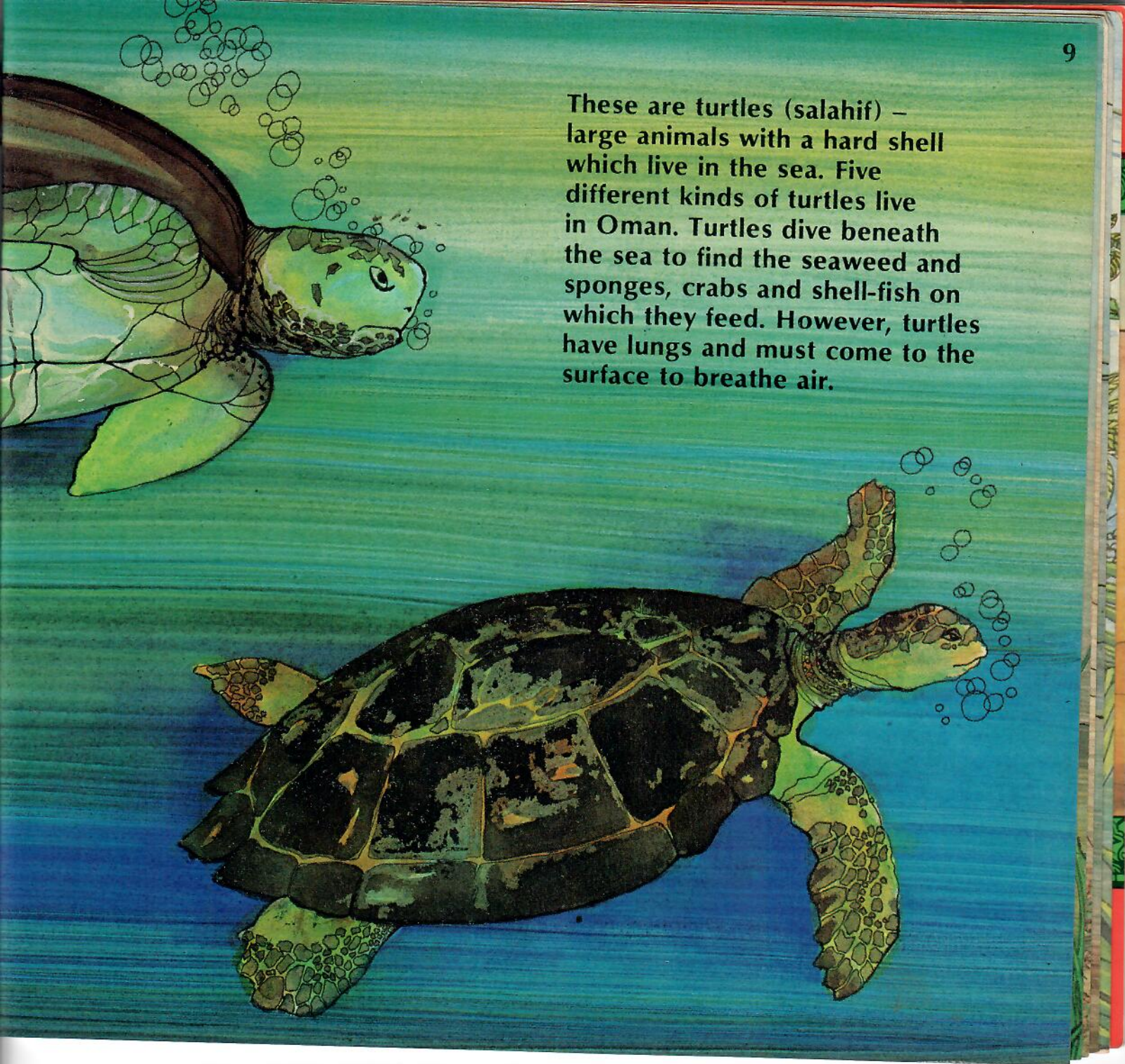


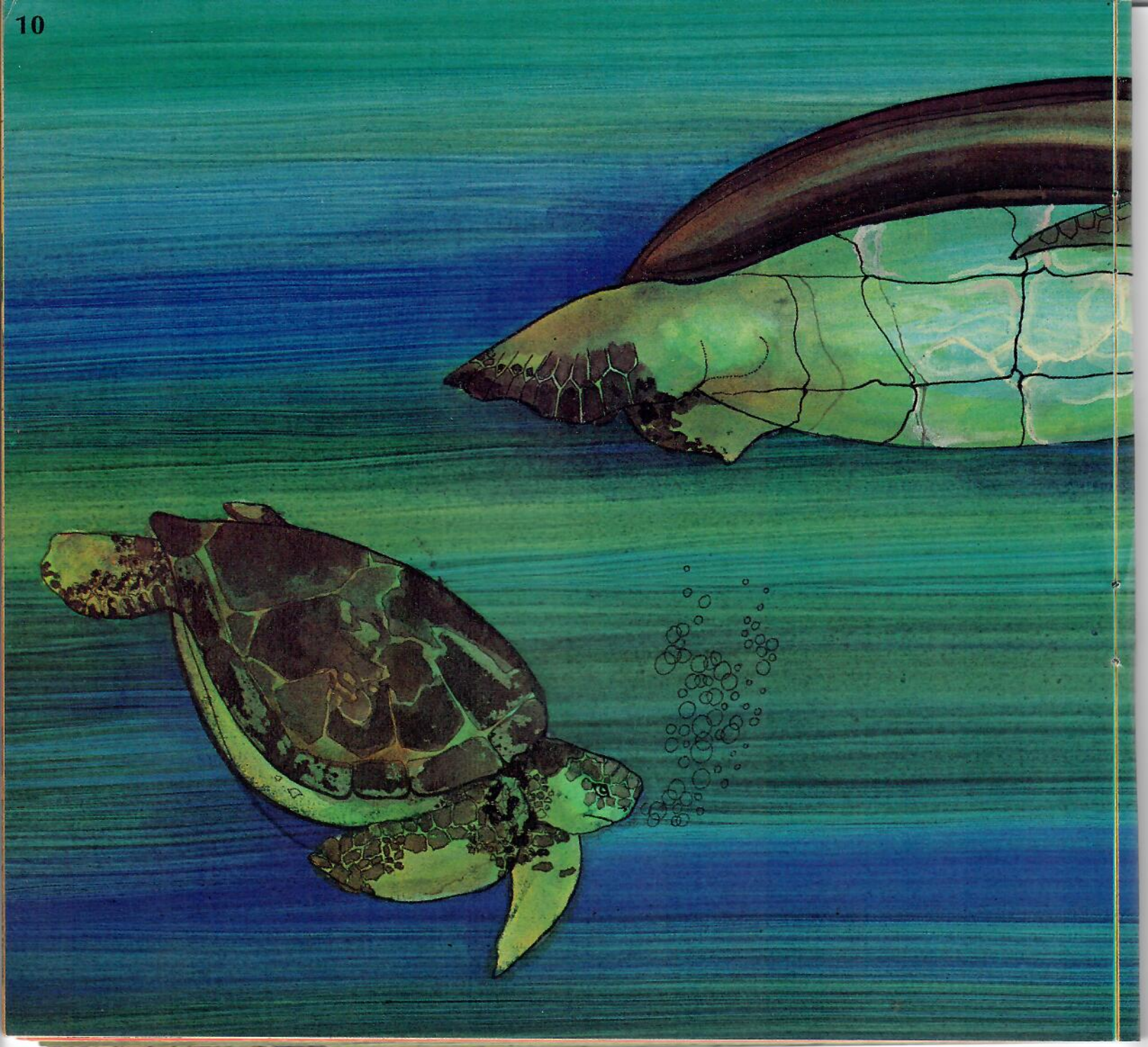
The tahr is part of Oman's national heritage. To prevent it from becoming extinct, the Government has forbidden the hunting of the tahr. A special nature reserve has been established in the mountains south of Muscat where the habits and needs of the animal are being studied. Here the tahrs can live in peace protected by the guards who are recruited from the local people.

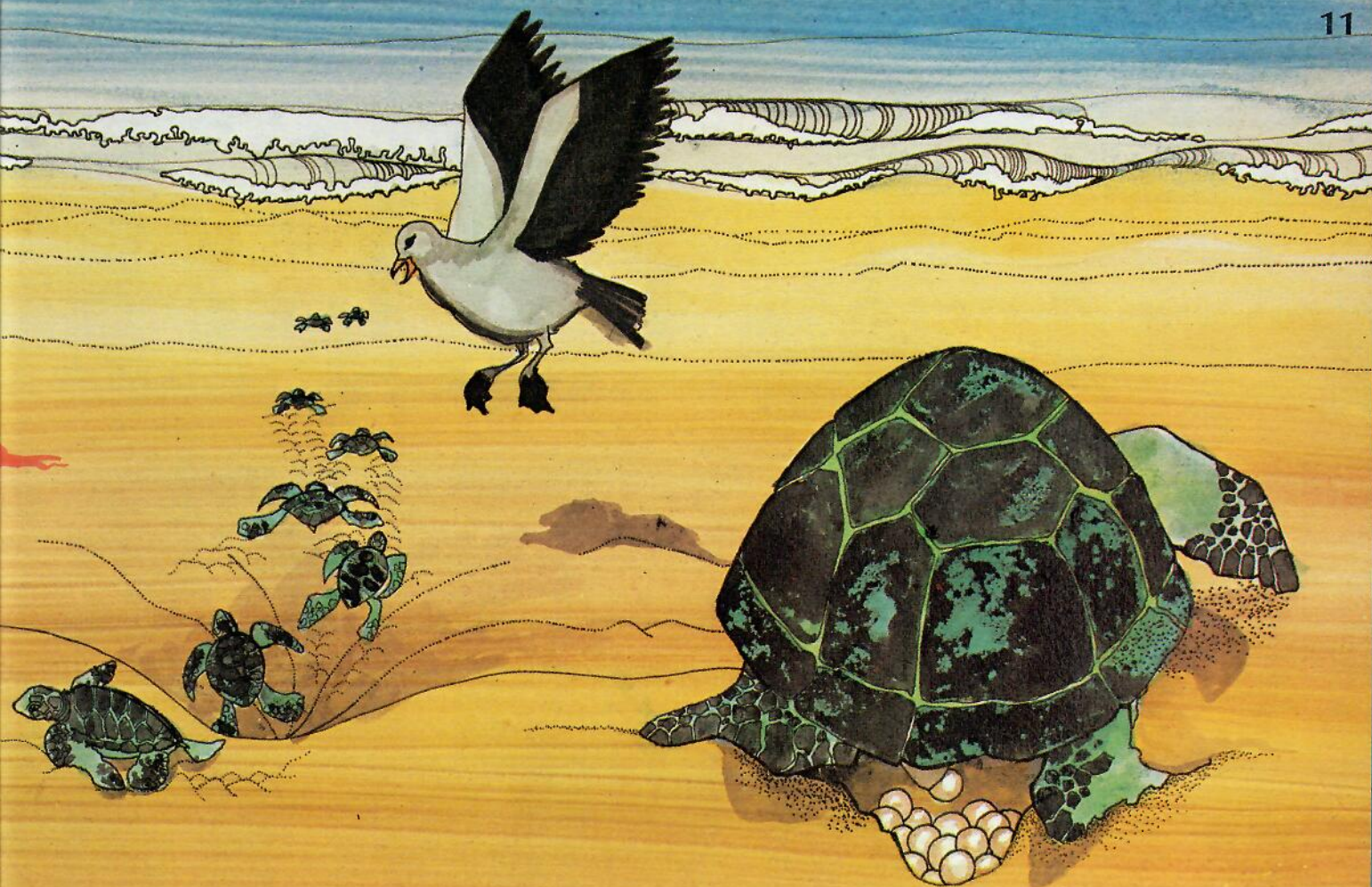




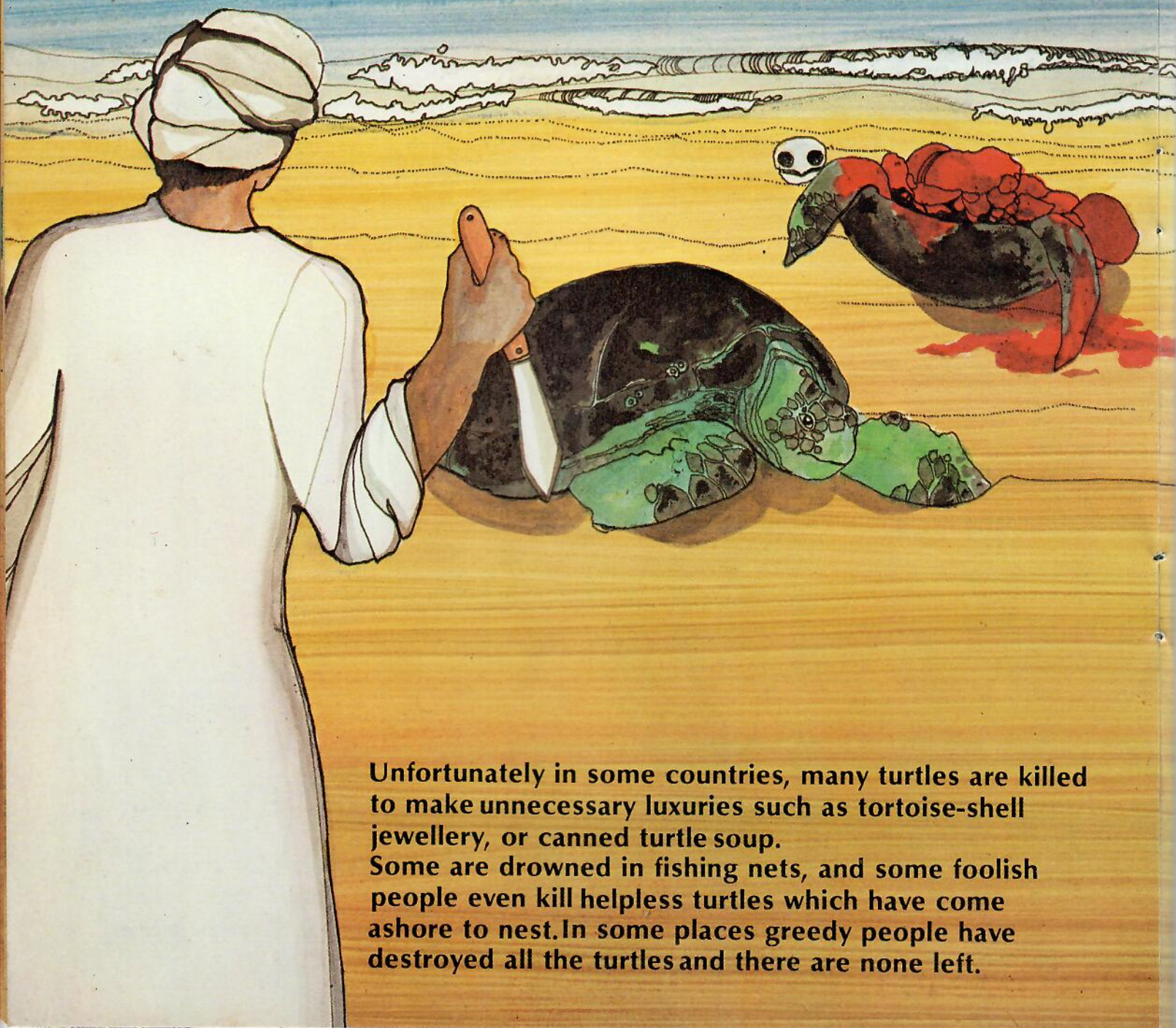
These are turtles (salahif) – large animals with a hard shell which live in the sea. Five different kinds of turtles live in Oman. Turtles dive beneath the sea to find the seaweed and sponges, crabs and shell-fish on which they feed. However, turtles have lungs and must come to the surface to breathe air.







The female turtle must come ashore to lay her eggs. She digs a hole in a sandy beach with her flippers, and may lay more than 100 eggs. Each egg hatches into a tiny turtle only five centimetres long which crawls towards the sea. Foxes, seagulls, and sharks catch and eat baby turtles, so only a few ever reach the sea and grow up.



Unfortunately in some countries, many turtles are killed to make unnecessary luxuries such as tortoise-shell jewellery, or canned turtle soup. Some are drowned in fishing nets, and some foolish people even kill helpless turtles which have come ashore to nest. In some places greedy people have destroyed all the turtles and there are none left.

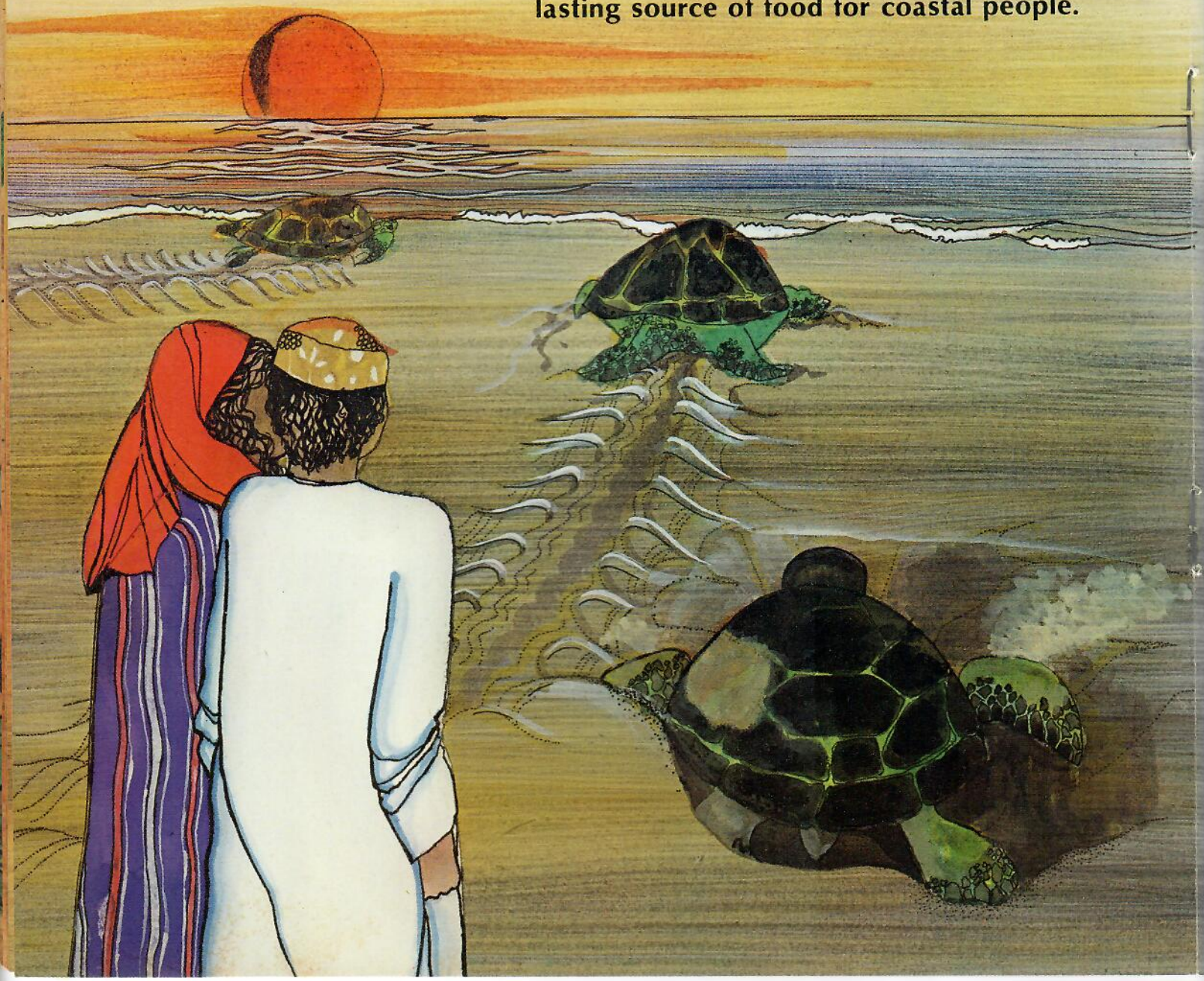
Turtles are being studied in Oman to provide more knowledge about their life and habits.

Some turtles are being fitted with numbered metal tags so that they can be recognised in the future.

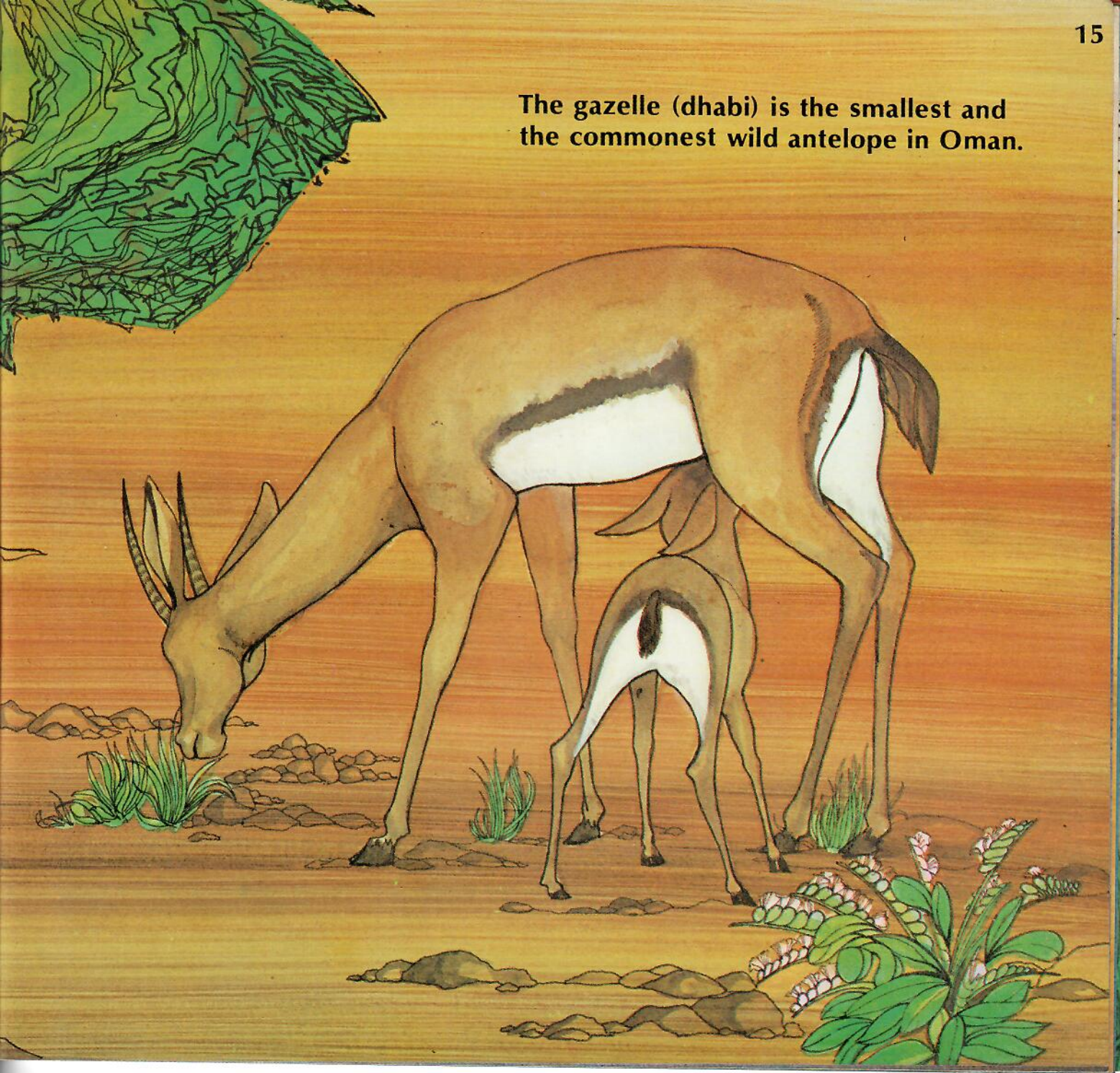
In this way we can find out how far they travel and how long they live.

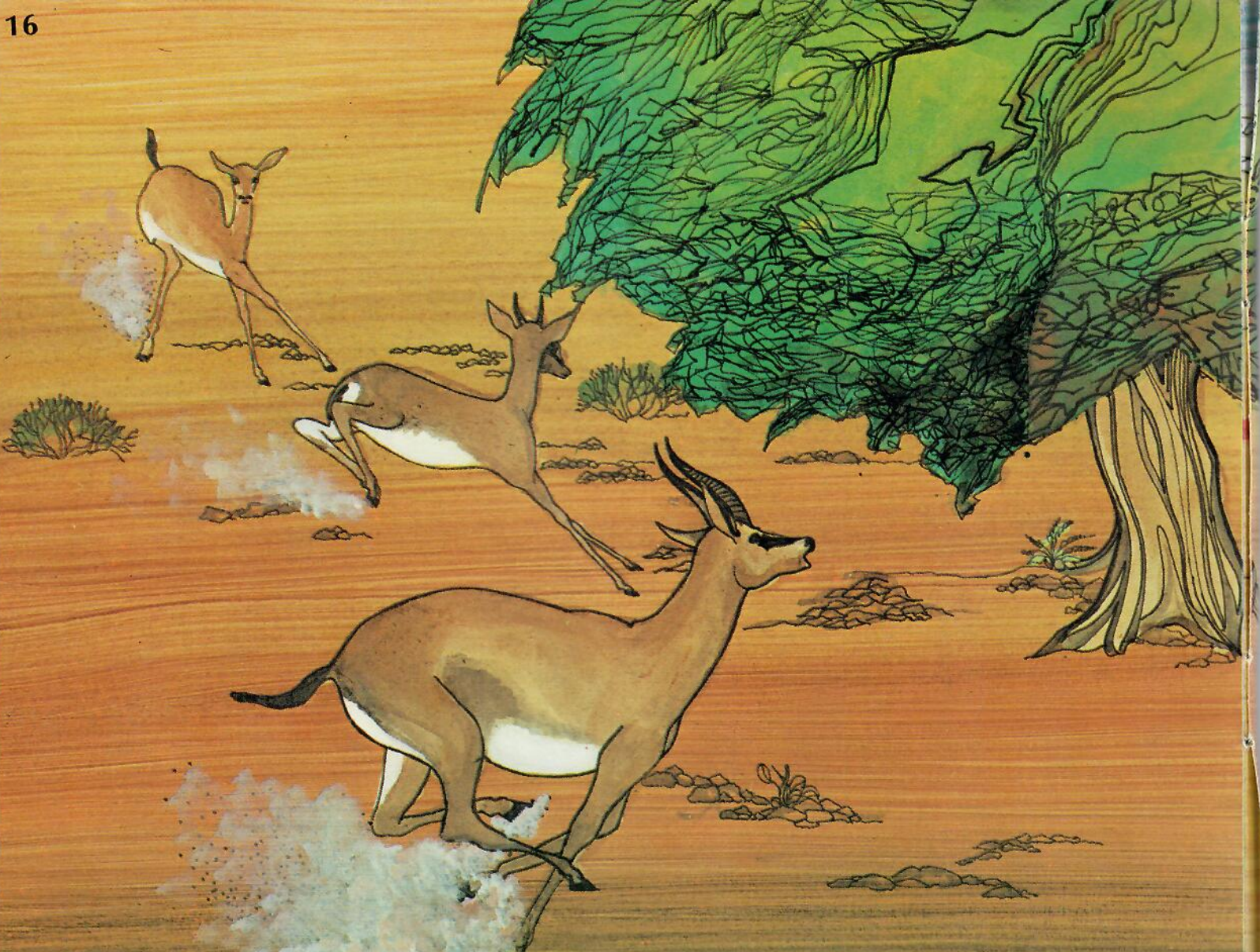


Wisely used, Oman's turtles can provide a lasting source of food for coastal people.



The gazelle (dhabi) is the smallest and the commonest wild antelope in Oman.



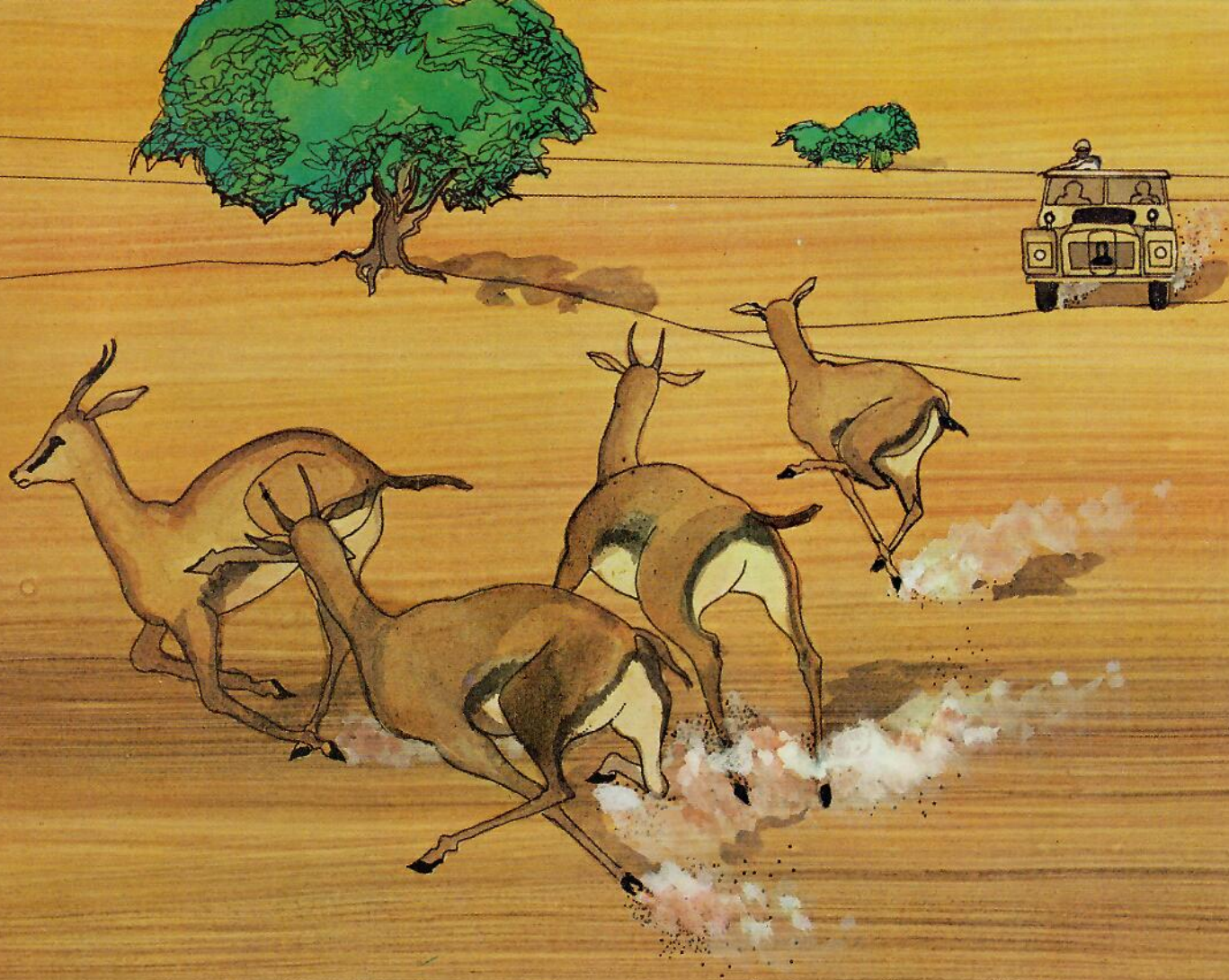


Its grace, speed, and beauty have inspired the poets and artists of many lands

Leopards, wolves, and man too, have always hunted gazelles but until recently had little effect on their numbers.



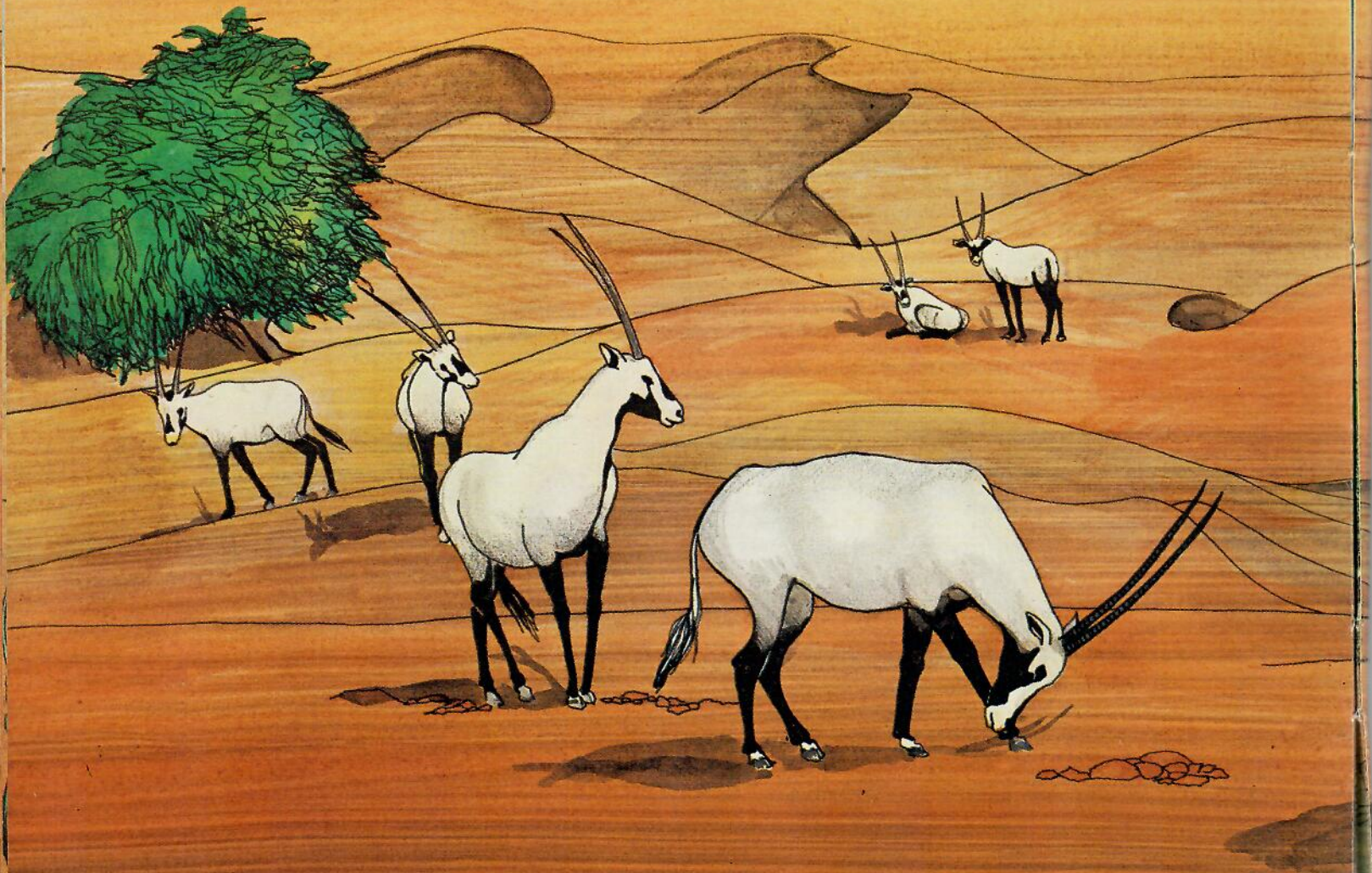
The widespread introduction of cheap effective guns and motor vehicles greatly increased the amount of hunting. Gazelles were chased to exhaustion with motor vehicles. The gazelles were in great danger of disappearing forever.



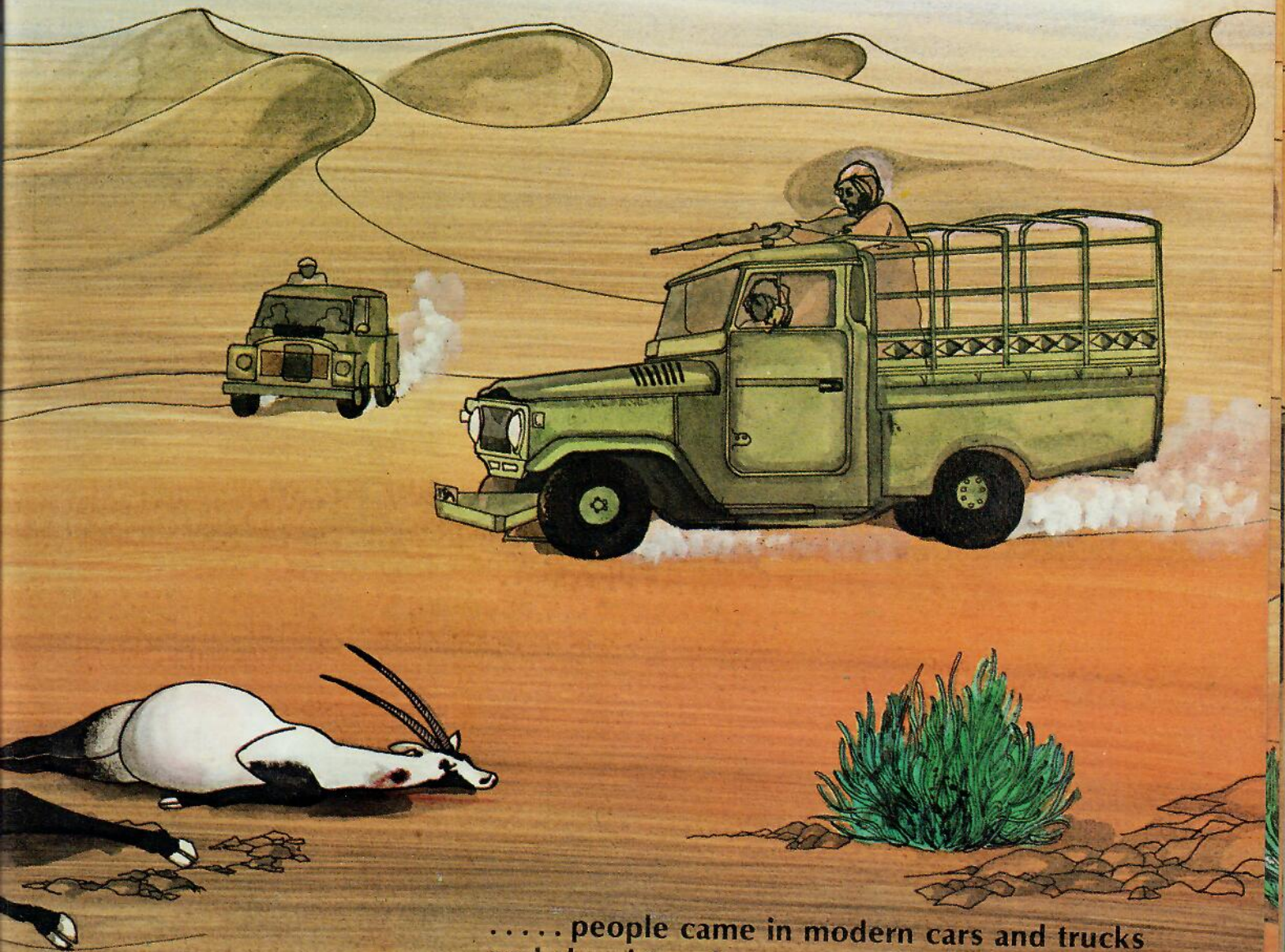
Fortunately His Majesty the Sultan has now placed a ban on the hunting of gazelles
Slowly these beautiful animals are once again becoming more common in Oman.



This is the Arabian oryx (ibn saula) – one of the rarest and most beautiful of all hoofed animals.



The oryx once lived in great herds in the deserts of Oman. It travelled great distances in search of food – rarely needing to drink. A few were killed and eaten by local people but oryx were plentiful until



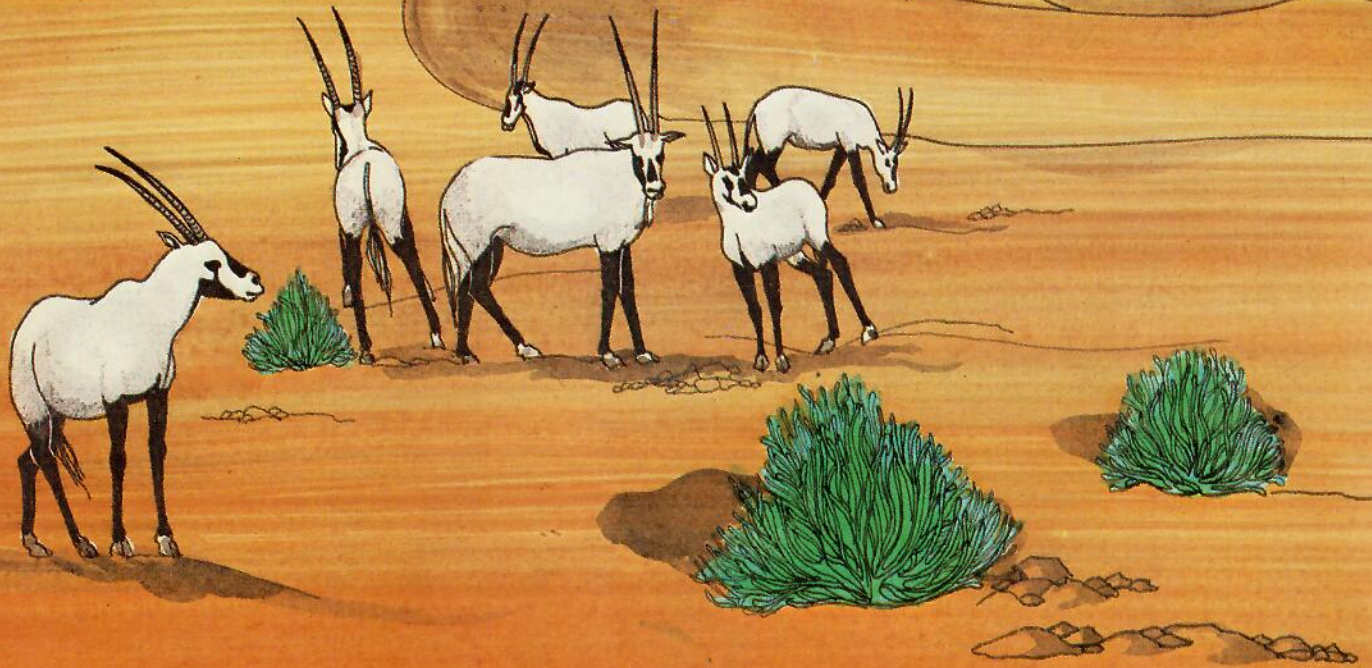
..... people came in modern cars and trucks
and slaughtered our oryx with machine-guns.
There are no longer any oryx in Oman.





Fortunately the oryx is still found in zoos where it is well cared for.

Many Omanis would like to have the oryx back in their country. The World Wildlife Fund and other International Organisations have promised to help His Majesty the Sultan to bring back the oryx to the deserts of Oman.

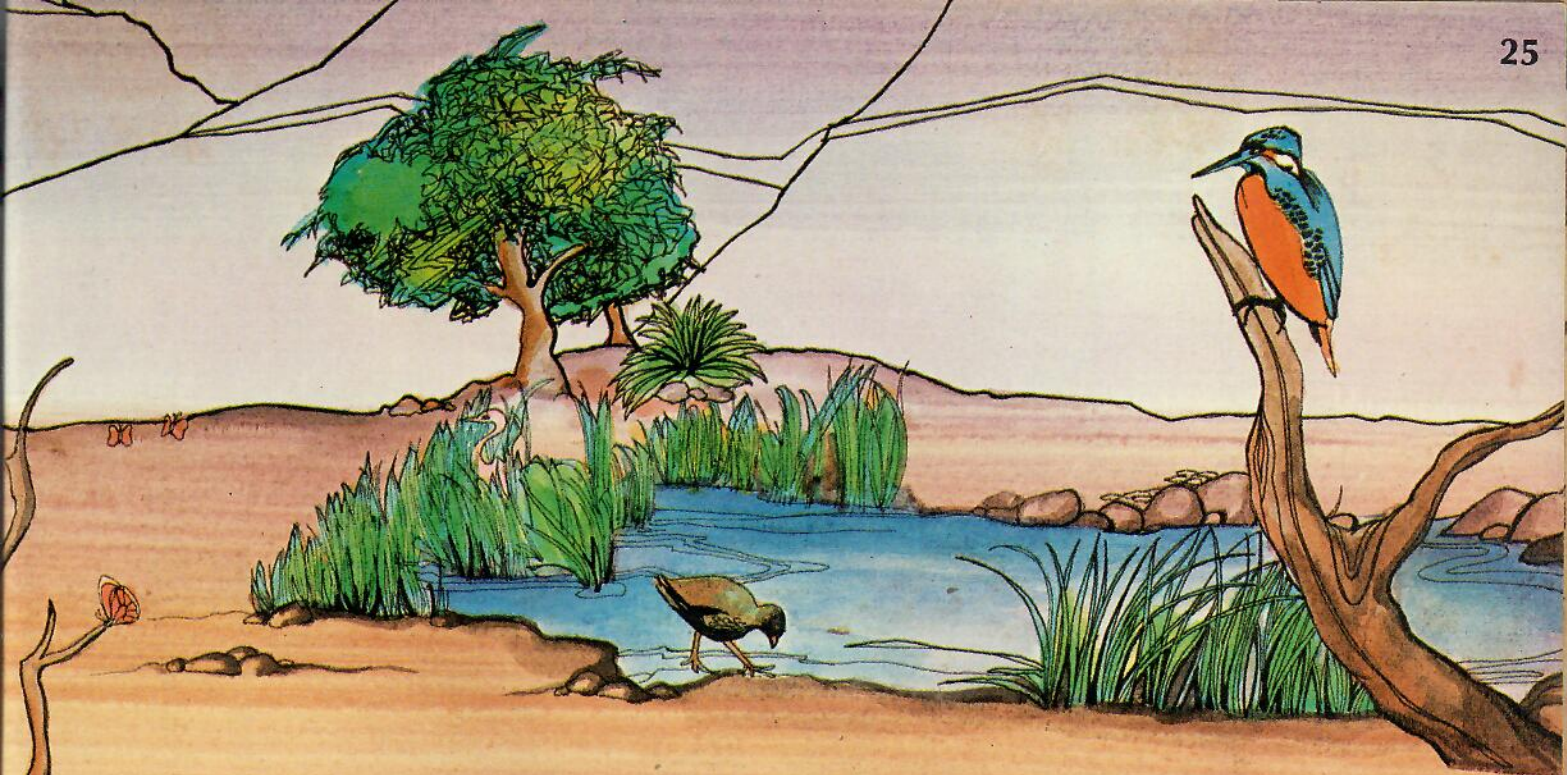


What can be done to conserve the wildlife of Oman?

People must be taught the value of wild animals and plants. More nature reserves and national parks must be created where our animals and plants are protected.

More studies of our wildlife must take place to find out the needs of animals and plants.

By these means we can help to ensure that we all live in harmony with our environment.



What can you do to help conserve nature in Oman?

Look around your home:

Make a list of the wild animals and plants which live there.

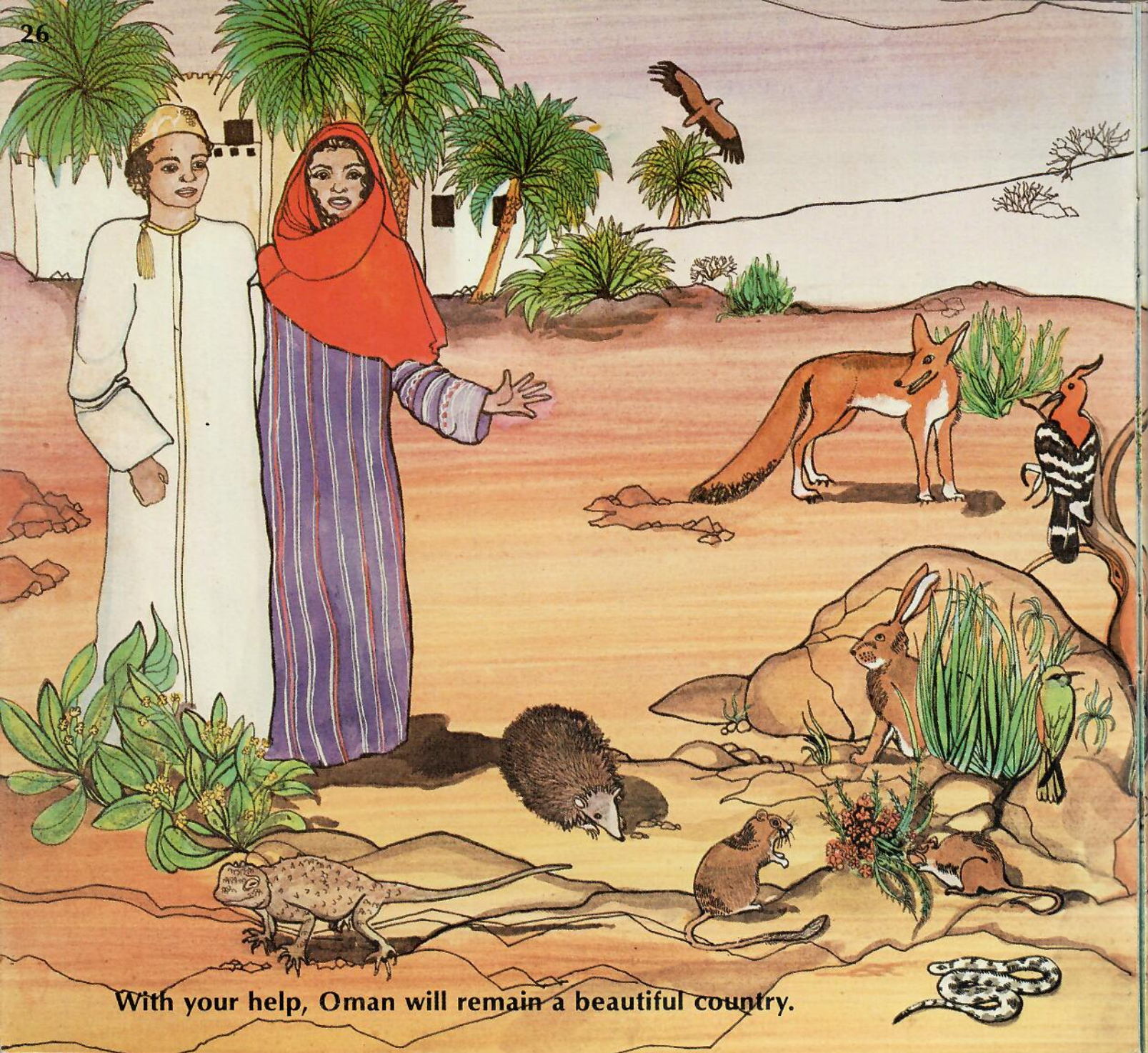
There are many other wonderful animals besides tahr and turtles, gazelle and oryx!

Look for foxes and rabbits, mice and gerbils, birds and lizards, butterflies and beetles, and many beautiful wild flowers.

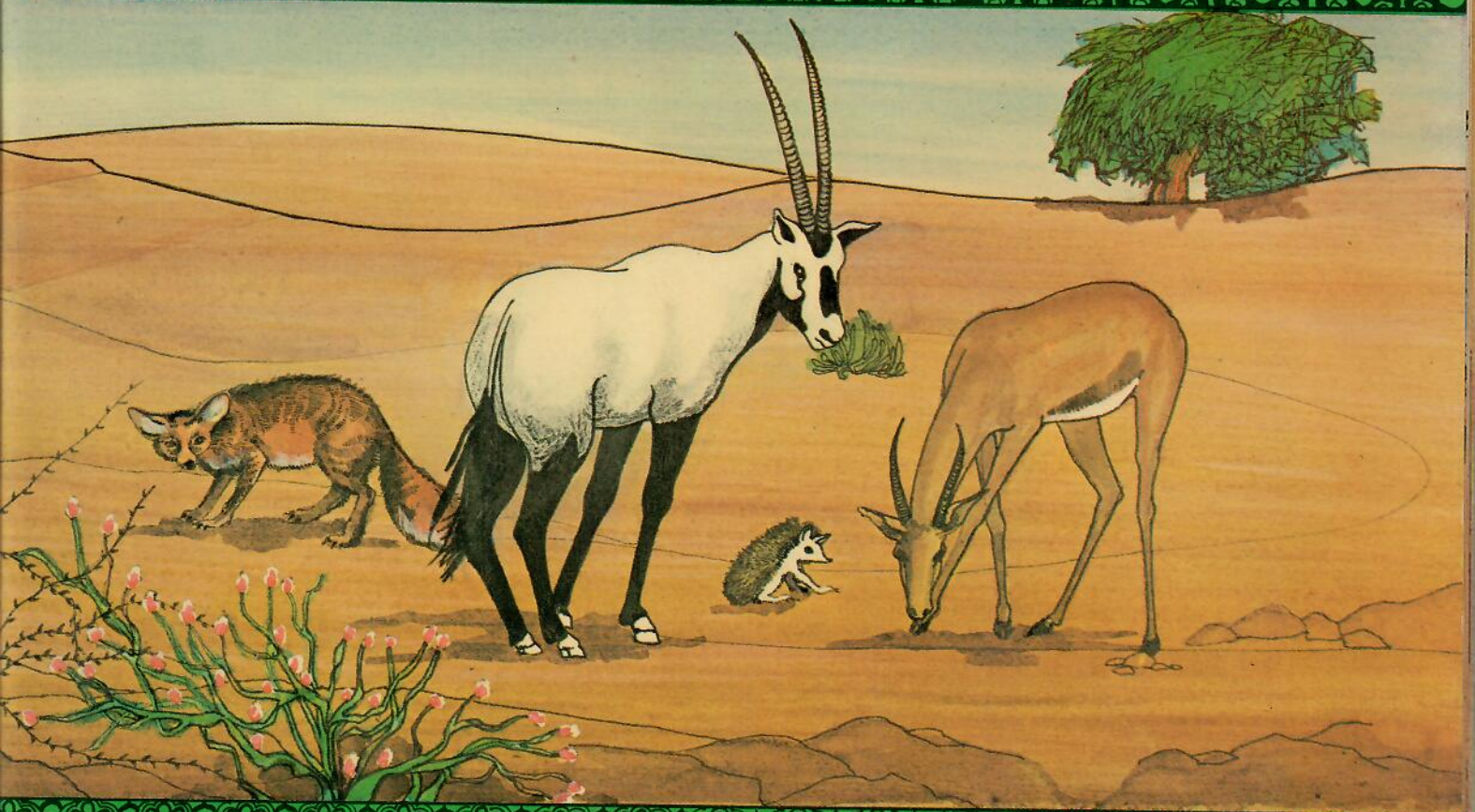
Learn all you can about these animals and plants.

Make your home, your school, or your village into a nature reserve.

Don't let people kill the animals or destroy the plants.



With your help, Oman will remain a beautiful country.



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