

# Champions of the Mangroves



Written and Illustrated by Rebecca Kent

This book is dedicated to all past, present and future students at The KAUST School, who will inherit this planet and hopefully take positive environmental actions to make it a more sustainable natural world. I also dedicate it to teachers everywhere who promote and make connections to raise global awareness in the classroom.

# Foreword

Mangroves have always been, and continue to be, a key part of the Saudi Arabian coastal landscape. They play a vital role in protecting the local and global environment through the unique ecosystems they sustain. They help protect coastal areas from erosion, mitigate the effects of global warming and provide an important shelter for numerous marine creatures who live and reproduce within them.

This beautifully illustrated children's book, with its lively and heroic characters, is set within KAUST's Nature Conservation Area. This coastal area spans over 150 hectares and is dedicated to biodiversity protection and research. Mangrove forests at KAUST are thriving, thanks to local conservation efforts and an active collaboration between the community members, the academic departments and administration staff of the University. This book is one example of that collaboration, having been produced by The KAUST School and the Health, Safety and Environment department.

I am delighted to be writing the foreword for this book, as it goes to the heart of KAUST's mission to educate and encourage the next generation of young students to take pride in their local environment and become the future "Champions of the Mangroves".



Nadhmi Al Nasr  
Interim President

King Abdullah University of  
Science and Technology



Katie Crab and the mangroves  
were the best of friends.  
They lived together in perfect harmony.  
Katie hid from predators amongst the  
mangroves.

When she burrowed under the mangrove  
roots for food, she helped them  
get oxygen to breathe better.

They awoke on Tuesday morning to find the beach littered with rubbish which would damage the mangroves.

They needed to work together to protect their habitat.

Hadi wanted to help but he did not like the salty water. It stung his eyes and he thought it tasted horrible!



On Wednesday, a plastic bag breached the mangroves.  
The bag rudely  
boasted,

I only get used once.  
Then I am tossed away.  
I fly and swoop in the wind  
before landing in the water.  
I live for over 500 years!



When the children left, the animals realized the children had done something amazing! They had bagged up all of the rubbish that had littered the beach and put it in the recycling bins.

They had left only footprints in the sand.

The sea was calm, the beach was clean,  
and the mangroves and animals were safe from harm.



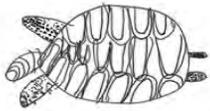
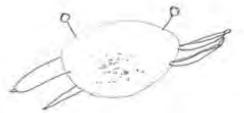
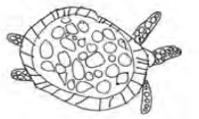
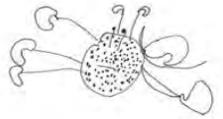
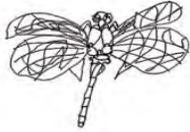
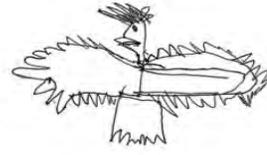
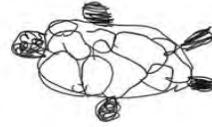
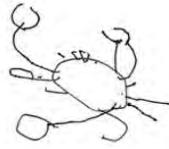
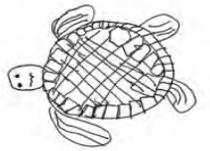
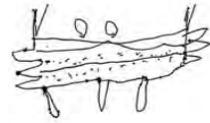
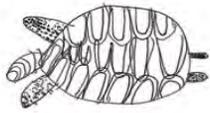
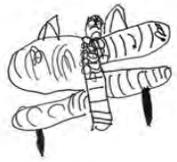
# Nature Conservation Area

In June 2017, KAUST set aside 152 hectares of protected land as a Nature Conservation Area near the King Abdullah Monument at the northern side of the University. This formal designation is a clear testimony of the University's commitment to protecting and enhancing the unique local biodiversity within the University.

This area is home to a well preserved mangrove forest, seagrass, shallow banks, crabs, and a variety of birds. The dominant mangrove species in the area is "*Avicennia\* marina*", also known as the grey or white mangrove. This mangrove forest supports a unique local ecosystem by:

- Acting as an important nursery for juvenile fish;
- Providing habitat for crabs, shrimps, shell fish and birds;
- Supplying nutrients to neighboring ecosystems, including coral reefs and sea grass beds;
- Sequestering and storing carbon and so decreasing the effects of global warming;
- Stabilizing shorelines and preventing erosion.

\*The scientific name of this mangrove plant is attributed to one of the great Muslim philosophers and natural historian, Abu-Ali Al-Husayn Ibn-Sina, known to the western world as Avicenna. He was one of the early scientists who described the natural history of the Red Sea including the life cycle of the mangrove species. One of the main KAUST campus buildings bears his name Ibn-Sina Building.



Lucy Ryan, Reina Kuwaha,  
Nora Avello, Jana Hoteit,  
Kirsten Bindoy,  
Abdullah Bukhari

