**Inter-Emirates Weekend 2019**

**21st to 23rd February 2019**

**FRIDAY TRIPS**

**Friday, 22nd February (Full Day Trip)**

**Field Trip: Introduction to Hajar Mountain Geology (8 a.m. to 5 p.m. driving included)**

**Trip Leader: Gary Feulner**

**Group Limit: 20 people/8 cars**

**Meeting Point: Hotel parking area**

**Departure Time: 8 a.m. from hotel parking area**

A driving trip with stops that will explore a cross-section of the Hajar Mountains from the Sharjah desert to the East Coast from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**What to bring:**

**packed lunch, snacks, enough water and drinks for the day, hats, sunglasses, sun creams, sturdy walking shoes (no flip flops or sandals!) cameras.**

**This trip will be for 4x4 vehicles only.**

**Friday, 22nd February (Morning Trips)**

**Field Trip: Wasit Wetland Centre (7.00 a.m./730 a.m. to 9.30 a.m./10 a.m.)**

**Trip Leaders: Simon Mathews Paul Vercammen**

**Group Limit**: **2 groups with maximum of 15 people per group.**

**Group 1 starts 7.00 a.m. with guide** **Simon Mathews. (7.00 a.m. to 9.30 a.m.)**

**Group 2 starts at 7.30 a.m. with guide Paul Vercammen. (7.30 a.m. to 10 a.m.)**

**Meeting Point: Wasit Wetland Centre. Location and directions will be sent to participants.**

4WD not required.

Wasit Wetland features extensive dunes, mud flats and salty lagoons, as well as fresh water pools, and is part of an ancient chain of historical wetlands along the Gulf coast. The reserve supports several species of resident and migratory birds, offering unique bird-viewing opportunities.

The specially designed visitor’s centre houses several bird species that can be viewed in large aviaries. A number of unique birds, including Northern Bald Ibis, Black tailed Godwit, Marbled duck, Eurasian Oystercatcher, Curlew sandpipers and Pink-backed pelican can be viewed in the visitors centre. Several species have bred since the centre was opened, including the impressive Goliath heron.

Starting from the visitors parking at **7.00 a.m. and 07.30 a.m.**, we will walk along the 4-kilometre-long track that encompasses the wetland reserve. We will have the opportunity to view birds and appreciate the uniqueness of the Wasit Wetland Reserve.

This will be followed by a visit to the centre.

**Duration: walk and introduction to centre approximately 2.5 hours.**

**What to bring: Binoculars, cameras with long lenses are highly recommended. Sunglasses, hats, sun creams, plenty of water. Free time at centre afterwards. Can bring snacks. Hot water urn, milk and sugar will be provided. Please bring a coffee mug.**

 **Field Trip: Scuba Dive on the MV Dara (7.00 a.m./7.30 a.m.to 12 noon) (20 minutes drive from hotel)**

**Trip Leader: Angela Manthorpe**

**Group Limit: 5-10. (Second boat is available if numbers go over 8)**

**Meeting Point: Sharjah Wanderers at 7.00 a.m. Location and directions will be sent to participants.**

**NB: This trip is only available to qualified divers and those with valid Emirates ID (due to coastguard restrictions)**

**Cost for diving is** **AED 300** **per head** - this price includes all equipment.  There is a discount if people bring own kit.

After a drive to Hamriyah port (between Ajman and Umm Al Qawain) the group will do 1 dive on the historic Dara wreck (max 50 mins dive). Return to port approx. 11.30 am.

Participants could leave from this point if they wish to join another trip. Otherwise they will return to the club to wash kit.

Lunch is available at the club if needed.

**The trip is weather dependent.  If too windy, this trip will be cancelled.**

An interesting article about the dive site can be found here:

[A night of horror on the Arabian Gulf](https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/a-night-of-horror-on-the-arabian-gulf-1.434299)

**Field Trip: Visit to Tell Abraq Archaeological Site (10 a.m. to 1 p.m.)**

**Trip Leader: Anelisa Lambert**

**Group Limit: 20 people**

**Meeting Point: Tell Abraq. Location and directions will be sent to participants.**

Alternative Meeting Point: hotel parking area at 9.30 a.m.

Tell Abraq is a highly significant first and second millennium site located on the Arabian Gulf, where it is currently bisected by the Sharjah/Umm al Quwain border. Excavation has revealed occupation from c. 2500 BC to c. 300 AD, offering insights into Bronze Age, Iron Age and late Pre-Islamic societies. In particular, Tell Abraq offers one of the region’s best preserved Umm an-Nar settlements, with a circular tower in the fortified central area of the tell, and a tomb dated to c 2100 BC.

**Friday 22nd February (Afternoon Trips)**

**Field Trip: Mleiha Archaeological Centre (2 p.m. to 5 p.m.)**

**Trip Leader: Ajmal Hasan**

**Group Limit: 30 people maximum**

**Meeting Point 1: Mleiha Centre. Location and directions will be sent to participants.**

Meeting Point 2: Hotel Parking. Departure Time from hotel parking 1.20 p.m. (40 minutes drive from hotel)

**Cost per person** **AED 100 per adult & 75 per child (below age of 6 will not be charged). Special prices for DNHG instead of Dh150/-.)**

Group will be treated to a complete Archaeological Tour which includes all archaeological sites including the Faya Cave shelter where the 125K paleolithic flint tool was excavated from, go on a short trek in the Valley of the Caves Neolithic burial site and finish off with visits to some Bronze Age tombs and Late Pre-Islamic sites.

**What to bring:**

**The café is open but you can bring packed lunch, snacks, plenty of water and soft drinks, sun hats, sun glasses, sun creams, cameras, binoculars**

**Field Trip: Lecture on Reptiles of the UAE (1.30 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.)**

**Lecturer: Johannes Elms**

**Group Limit**: **30 – 40 people**

**Talk starts at 1.30 p.m.**

**Meeting Point 1: Sharjah Desert Park. Location and directions will be sent to participants.**

Meeting Point 2: Hotel Parking Area. Departure Time from Hotel: 1 p.m. (20 minutes drive from hotel).

4WD not required – car-pooling in whatever vehicles are available.

Johannes Els will give a talk on the Reptiles of the UAE and which factors influence their location. Interaction with at least two reptiles will be included. Please inform us if children will attend.

**Islamic Botanical Garden (from 2.45 p.m. to 3.45 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.)**

**Trip Leader: Local guides**

**Group Limit: 2 groups Max 12 people per group.**

**Group 1 from 2.45 p.m. to 3.45 p.m. Group 2 from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.**

**Meeting Point: Sharjah Desert Park. Location and directions will be sent to participants.**

Alternative Meeting Point: Hotel Parking Area

Located within Sharjah **Desert Park,**the **Islamic Botanical Garden** has plants and trees mentioned in the Holy Quran and Sunnah.

Local guide to show people round. Coffee shop will be open.

**Arabia’s Wildlife Centre (3 p.m. to 4.30 p.m.)**

**Trip Leader: Local Guides**

**Group Limit: 30 people**

**Duration 1 – 1.5 hours.**

**Meeting Point: Sharjah Desert Park. Location and directions will be sent to participants.**

Alternative Meeting Point: Hotel Parking Area

A member of staff from the Breeding centre will be available to give an introduction to the centre and answer any questions.

There is a cafeteria, open from 2 p.m. which sells basic food, burgers & fresh fruit juices.

**The three trips above can be combined.**

**Al Mahatta Airport Museum visit: 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. (20 minutes drive from hotel)**

**Trip Leader: Local Guides**

**Group Limit: 20 people**

**Duration 1 hour.**

**Meeting Point: Al Mahatta Museum. Directions will be sent to participants.**

Al Mahatta Airport Museum or Sharjah Old Airport is situated in Al Estiqlal St, Al Qasimia Area, opposite Sharjah Mega Mall and behind the Immigration Office. There is a control tower with museum sign visible. It was the first airport in the region. It was built in 1932 and then turned into a museum. It highlights the history of flight in the UAE and the region.

**Field Trip: Ajman Museum visit (2.30 p.m. to 4 p.m.) (20 to 30 minutes drive from hotel)**

**Trip Leader: Local Guides**

**Group Limit: 20 people**

**Meeting point: Ajman Museum (2.30 p.m.). Location and directions will be sent to participants.**

Alternative Meeting Point: Hotel Parking Area

**Cost: Small entry fee may apply.**

**Field Trip: Ajman Fish Market + Abra trip along the creek (4 pm.to 5.30 p.m.)**

**Trip Leader: Margaret Swan**

**Group Limit: 20 people**

**Meeting point 1: Ajman Fish market (4 p.m.). Location and directions will be sent to participants.**

Alternative Meeting Point: Hotel Parking Area

**Cost of abra trips: (cost of abra to be split amongst the participants.)**

Ajman Fish Market, described as a little gem of a fish market, boasts 116 stalls but not all of them sell fish. Some sell vegetables, sugar cane and coconut juice. Stalls are navigated via three walkways. Shops alongside include a fruit shop, an egg shop and three butchery shops. There is also a fish cleaning area, three restaurants and a fish pet shop.

NB: The two trips, Ajman Museum and the Fish Market can be combined and the departure time would be 2 p.m. from hotel.

**SATURDAY TRIPS**

**Saturday 23rd February (Full Day Trip)**

**Hajar Mountain Nature Walk(10 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. driving included)**

**Trip leader: Gary Feulner**

**Group Limit: 20 people/8 cars**

**4WD required.**

**Meeting Point: Hotel parking at 10 a.m.**

A short walking introduction to the typical flora and fauna of the Hajar Mountains.

**What to bring**:

**packed lunch, snacks, enough water and drinks for the day, hats, sunglasses, sun creams, sturdy walking shoes (no flip flops or sandals!) cameras.**

**Saturday 23rd February (Morning Trips)**

**Field Trip: Desert Walk (6 a.m. to 9 a.m.)**

**Trip Leader: Ajmal Hasan**

**Group Limit: 25 people**

**Meeting Point 1: Roundabout opposite Sharjah Wildlife Park (Bridge No. 09 on Al** **Dhaid Road) below the Sharjah monument (now taken down) at 6 AM location and directions will be sent to participants.**

Meeting Point 2: Hotel car park. Departure 5.30 a.m. from the hotel.

**What to bring:**

**snacks, plenty of water and drinks, hats, sunglasses, sun creams, sturdy walking shoes, cameras.**

An early morning walk through Sharjah dunes observing the flora and fauna of the area: The omnipresent Ghaf (*Prosopis cineraria*), Rimth (*Haloxylon salicornicum*) and Sodom’s apple milkweed (*Calotropis procera*) dot the desert landscape. The area is also rich in fauna such as the Striped mantis (*Blepharopsis mendica*), Desert Runner ant (*Cataglyphis niger*), White spotted lizard (*Acanthodactlus schmidti*), Toad headed agama (*Phrynocephalus arabicus*), etc.

**Field Trips to Kalba area (driving 70 minutes)**

**Al Hefaiya conservation Centre (9.00 a.m./9.30a.m. to 11.00 a.m./11.30 a.m.)**

**Trip Leaders:**

**Group 1 starts 09h00 guide Chris Wilson**

**Group 2 starts 09h30 guide Paul Vercammen**

**Group Limit**: **2 groups with maximum of 30 people per group.**

**Meeting Point: Al Hefaiyah conservation centre location and directions will be sent to participants.**

Alternative meeting point: Hotel car park at 7.30 a.m.

**Duration: walk and introduction to centre 60-90 minutes**

Free time at centre afterwards. Can bring snacks.

Located at the base of the Hajar Mountains, the centre is home to species that occur in the mountain habitat. Species such as the Arabian leopard, Arabian tahr and Arabian wolf, just to mention a few, can be viewed from the air-conditioned building. There is a night house area where the smaller mammals, invertebrates and reptiles can be seen. The visit concludes with a ride to the outdoor viewing areas by electric buggy.Local guides will accompany the group to explain the art work, which portrays the endangered animals through different media. They will also highlight the features that make the building energy efficient.

**Kalba Bird of Prey Centre: Raptor Show (11.00 a.m. to 11.45 a.m.)**

**Presenter Gerry Whitehouse**

**Group Limit: 50 to 60 people**

Using live demonstrations and displays, the centre introduces visitors to a host of native raptor species, highlighting this historical landscape and its importance to the population of both resident and migrating wild raptors, like the Barn Owl, Short Toad Snake Eagle, Greater Spotted Eagle and Lappet Faced Vulture.

**The two trips can be combined**.

**Field Trip: Muweilah Archaeological site visit + Sharjah Archaeological Museum (9.30 a.m. – 1 p.m., driving included)**

**Trip Leader: Anelisa Lambert**

**Group Limit: 20 people/5 cars**

**Meeting Point: Hotel car park 9.30 a.m.**

Muweilah archaeological site itself is an Iron Age settlement whose construction, rebuilding and destruction are carbon dated from the 10th to the 8th centuries BC. Excavation has revealed a columned hall on the western side of the site in which rare imported objects located; and the large number of dromedary bones indicate that domestication becomes an important part of the community’s life. We will see some of the artefacts from the site at the subsequent Museum visit.

Guide in English arranged at the museum from 11 am. Car parking available

**Field Trip:Sharjah Wanderers dive club (start time 10am through to 1.30pm) (Driving 20 minutes)**

**Trip Leader: Angela Manthorpe**

**Group Limit: 10 – 15 (flexible)**

**Meeting Point: Sharjah Wanderers at 10 a.m., location and directions will be sent to participants.**

**Cost: AED 120 per person** (Includes access to the club and use of the pool in the afternoon should participants wish to stay.)

An opportunity for those who've never tried scuba diving to have an introduction to the equipment, how to use it, followed by approx. 20-30 minutes in the swimming pool.

Lunch is available at the club.

**Field Trip: Sharjah souk visit 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.**

**Trip Leader: Peter Jackson**

**Group Limit: 20 people**

**Meeting Point: Sharjah Souk. Location and directions will be sent to participants.**

Alternative Meeting Point: Hotel car park 9.30 a.m.

The trip ends in Sharjah Fort.

**Field Trip: Sharjah Fort (Al Hisn) + Sharjah Heritage Museum + Al Naboodah House 11.00 – 13.00 + 20 minutes drive)**

**Trip Leader: Hazelle Page + guides in English in Al Hism and Al Naboodah**

**Group Limit: 20 people**

**Meeting Point: Sharjah Fort. Location and directions will be sent to participants.**

This will be a walk through Sharjah pre-oil history.

Paid parking behind fort, a visitor’s ticket to the museum gives the first hour free.

General paid meter parking in the area is available, but you can use the car park behind the museum which will have spaces.

**Saturday 23rd February (Afternoon Trips)**

**Sharjah Aquarium and Maritime Museum (from 2.45 p.m. to 5 p.m.)**

**Trip Leader: Local guide**

**Group Limit: 20 people**

**Meeting point: In front of entrance to Aquarium at 2.45pm. Directions will be sent to participants.**

**Both Sharjah Aquarium and Sharjah Maritime Museum are situated in the Al Khan Area of Sharjah**

Trip starts in the Aquarium with fish feeding at **3pm** and a guided tour in English.

Followed by a guided tour in English at the Maritime museum at **4 pm**

Car parking available.

**Field Trip: Ajman Fish Market + Abra + Lunch (from 1.30 p.m. to 4 p.m.)**

**Trip Leader: Margaret Swan**

**Group Limit: 20 people**

**Meeting point 2: Ajman Fish market (2 p.m.). Location and directions will be sent to participants.**

Alternative meeting point: Hotel car park at 1.30 p.m.

**Cost of abra trips: (cost of abra to be split amongst the participants.)**

Ajman Fish Market, described as a little gem of a fish market, boasts 116 stalls but not all of them sell fish. Some sell vegetables, sugar cane and coconut juice. Stalls are navigated via three walkways. Shops alongside include a fruit shop, an egg shop and three butchery shops. There is also a fish cleaning area, three restaurants and a fish pet shop plus cooking shops which will cook the fish for you. We will make our lunch stop here: fish can be bought, cleaned, prepared by one of the cooking stations and then eaten at one of the restaurants which charges Dh10/- service charge to eat your own fish and you can then supplement your fish with other food.

**Field Trip: Ajman Museum visit (4 p.m. to 6 p.m.) (30 minutes drive from hotel)**

**Trip Leader: Local guides**

**Group Limit: 20 people**

**Meeting point: Ajman Museum (4 p.m.). Location and directions will be sent to participants.**

Alternative Meeting Point: Hotel car park at 3.30 p.m

A guide in English has been arranged for 3.30pm

**Cost: Small entry fee may apply.**

**This can be combined with the trip to Ajman Fish Market.**