

A Celebration of the Natural History of the Emirates

Dates: Monday and Tuesday, December 6 and 7
Timings: 18:00 to ~20:30 each evening
Format: Online, as Zoom Webinar



The Emirates contain far more than the glittering skyscrapers and rolling sand dunes that we commonly see in the media. Our young nation is made up of a rich mosaic of habitats and ecosystems that support surprisingly diverse communities of organisms. *A Celebration of the Natural History of the Emirates* is a two-evening online event that will provide an overview of the unique environmental setting of the UAE, and will survey the major ecosystems and organisms that occur across our land and seascapes. Using a combination of short 10 minute ‘flash talks’ and discussion panels, the event seeks to engage the public in a renewed appreciation for the Emirates’ natural history as we celebrate the UAE’s 50th anniversary. Please [register here](#) to obtain the event links.



Evening 1: Monday, 06 December, 2021

Session 1: Our Physical Setting - How the Environment Structures Life	
18:00 – 18:05	Opening Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> John Burt, New York University Abu Dhabi, UAE
18:05 – 18:40	Geology and Geography of the Emirates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gary Feulner, Chairman, Dubai Natural History Group
	The UAE Climate: Present, Past and Impacts on Life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Francesco Paparella, New York University Abu Dhabi, UAE
	Marine Environments of the Emirates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> John Burt, New York University Abu Dhabi, UAE
19:40 – 18:50	<i>Session 1 Q&A/Discussion</i>

Session 2: The UAE's Terrestrial and Coastal Ecosystems	
18:50 - 19:50	The UAE's Desert, Mountains, and Gravel Plains (20 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gary Brown, Environmental Consultant, and Gary Feulner, Chairman, Dubai Natural History Group
	Sabkha Ecosystems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stephen Lokier, University of Derby, UK
	Mangrove Forests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guillermo Friis, New York University Abu Dhabi, UAE
	Coastal Lagoons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daniel Mateos-Molina, Emirates Nature-Worldwide Fund for Nature, UAE
19:50 – 20:00	<i>Session 2 Q&A/Discussion</i>
Session 3: The Underwater Ecosystems of the Emirates	
20:00 – 20:45	Seagrass Meadows <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noura Al-Mansoori, New York University Abu Dhabi, UAE
	Seaweed Ecosystems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David John, London Natural History Museum
	Coral Reefs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Burt, New York University Abu Dhabi, UAE
	Oyster Reefs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ivonne Bejarano, American University of Sharjah, UAE
20:45 – 21:00	<i>Session 3 Q&A/Discussion and Closing Remarks</i>

Evening 2: Tuesday, 07 December, 2021

Session 1: Terrestrial Organisms of the Emirates	
18:00 – 18:05	Opening remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Burt, New York University Abu Dhabi, UAE
18:05 – 19:00	Flora in Our Arid Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gary Brown, Environmental Consultant
	Terrestrial Mammals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jacky Judas, Soudah Development Company, KSA
	Birds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oscar Campbell, Chair, Emirates Bird Records Committee
	Terrestrial Reptiles and Amphibians <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Johannes Els, Environment and Protected Areas Authority, Sharjah, UAE
	Insects and Other Arthropods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brigitte Howarth, American University in Dubai, UAE
19:00 – 19:10	<i>Session 1 Q&A/Discussion</i>

Session 2: Marine Organisms of the Emirates	
19:10 – 20:00	Marine Mammals: Whales, Dolphins and Dugongs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ada Natoli, Zayed University & UAE Dolphin Project
	Marine Reptiles: Turtles and Sea Snakes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fadi Yaghmour, Sharjah Environment and Protected Areas Authority, UAE
	Sharks and Rays <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shamsa Al-Hameli, Environment Agency Abu Dhabi
	Fishes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marie Seraphim, New York University Abu Dhabi, UAE
20:00 – 20:30	<i>Session 2 Q&A/Discussion,</i> Followed by a Discussion on the Emirates Natural History Group



Image credits: Winn W. Gomez; Jitesh Mohanan; John Burt; Ross Pappin