



INSTITUTE

**A CELEBRATION OF THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE UAE**  
**AGENDA**  
**NYU ABU DHABI**  
**6-7 December 2021**

The Emirates is more than 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. This symposium brings an overview of the unique environmental setting of the UAE, and surveys the major ecosystems and organisms that occur across our land and seascapes. Using a combination of short ‘snap lectures’ and discussion panels, the symposium seeks to engage the public in a renewed appreciation for the Emirates’ natural history as we celebrate its 50th anniversary.

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**Monday, December, 6 | Day 1**

| <b>Session 1: Our Physical Setting - How the Environment Structures Life</b> |  |
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| 18:00 – 18:05  | Opening Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>John Burt</b>, New York University Abu Dhabi, UAE</li> </ul>   |
| 18:05 – 18:40  | Geology and Geography of the Emirates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Gary Feulner</b>, Chairman, Dubai Natural History Group</li> </ul>   |
|  | The UAE Climate: Present, Past and Impacts on Life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Francesco Paparella</b>, New York University Abu Dhabi, UAE</li> </ul>  |
|  | Marine Environments of the Emirates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>John Burt</b>, New York University Abu Dhabi, UAE</li> </ul>   |
| 19:40 – 18:50  | <i>Session 1 Q&amp;A/Discussion</i>  |
| <b>Session 2: The UAE’s Terrestrial and Coastal Ecosystems</b>               |  |
| 18:50 - 19:50  | The UAE’s Desert, Mountains, and Gravel Plains (20 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Gary Brown</b>, Environmental Consultant, and Gary Feulner, Chairman, Dubai Natural History Group</li> </ul> |
|  | Sabkha Ecosystems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Stephen Lokier</b>, University of Derby, UK</li> </ul>   |
|  | Mangrove Forests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Guillermo Friis</b>, New York University Abu Dhabi, UAE</li> </ul>  |
|  | Coastal Lagoons  |

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|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Daniel Mateos-Molina</b>, Emirates Nature-Worldwide Fund for Nature, UAE</li> </ul>   |
| 19:50 – 20:00   | <i>Session 2 Q&amp;A/Discussion</i>   |
| <b>Session 3: The Underwater Ecosystems of the Emirates</b> |   |
| 20:00 – 20:45   | Seagrass Meadows <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Noura Al-Mansoori</b>, New York University Abu Dhabi, UAE</li> </ul> |
|   | Seaweed Ecosystems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>David John</b>, London Natural History Museum</li> </ul>           |
|   | Coral Reefs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>John Burt</b>, New York University Abu Dhabi, UAE</li> </ul>              |
|   | Oyster Reefs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ivonne Bejarano</b>, American University of Sharjah, UAE</li> </ul>      |
| 20:45 – 21:00   | <i>Session 3 Q&amp;A/Discussion and Closing Remarks</i>   |

## Tuesday, December, 7 | Day 2

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| <b>Session 1: Terrestrial Organisms of the Emirates</b> |  |
| 18:00 – 18:05   | Opening remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>John Burt</b>, New York University Abu Dhabi, UAE</li> </ul>   |
| 18:05 – 19:00   | Flora in Our Arid Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Gary Brown</b>, Environmental Consultant</li> </ul>  |
|   | Terrestrial Mammals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Jacky Judas</b>, Soudah Development Company, KSA</li> </ul>  |
|   | Birds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Oscar Campbell</b>, Chair, Emirates Bird Records Committee</li> </ul>  |
|   | Terrestrial Reptiles and Amphibians <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Johannes Els</b>, Environment and Protected Areas Authority, Sharjah, UAE</li> </ul>     |
|   | Insects and Other Arthropods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Brigitte Howarth</b>, American University in Dubai, UAE</li> </ul>                              |
| 19:00 – 19:10   | <i>Session 1 Q&amp;A/Discussion</i>  |
| <b>Session 2: Marine Organisms of the Emirates</b>      |  |
| 19:10 – 20:00   | Marine Mammals: Whales, Dolphins and Dugongs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ada Natoli</b>, Zayed University &amp; UAE Dolphin Project</li> </ul>           |
|   | Marine Reptiles: Turtles and Sea Snakes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Fadi Yaghmour</b>, Sharjah Environment and Protected Areas Authority, UAE</li> </ul> |
|   | Sharks and Rays <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Shamsa Al-Hameli</b>, Environment Agency Abu Dhabi</li> </ul>  |
|   | Fishes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Marie Seraphim</b>, New York University Abu Dhabi, UAE</li> </ul>   |
| 20:00 – 20:30   | <i>Session 2 Q&amp;A/Discussion,</i><br>Followed by a Discussion on the Emirates Natural History Group   |