

ECOTOURISM IN



# WADI EL GEMAL

## NATIONAL PARK

### CONTACT US

ECOTOURISM IN WADI EL GEMAL NATIONAL PARK

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## ECOTOURISM IN WADI EL GEMAL NATIONAL PARK

An ecotourism model for Wadi el Gemal National Park is being implemented through a public private project co-financed by Gorgonia Beach Resort and the Deutsche Investitions- und Entwicklungsgesellschaft (DEG) with public funds of the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. Together, we aim to promote ecotourism in Wadi el Gemal by enhancing the park's infrastructure and ecotourism services in a manner that will benefit the environment and the local Ababda tribe.

This will ultimately enhance the park's generation of income and improve the overall marketability of Marsa Alam as a destination, extending the benefits of ecotourism on a larger scale.

## ECOTOURISM ACTIVITIES

We offer unparalleled bird watching, hiking, snorkeling, diving, star gazing and bicycle guided tours and more. You can also give your travel experience a cultural twist by engaging with the Ababda, a nomadic tribe in the region known for their legendary desert tracking skills.



## BICYCLE TOURS

Go for a bicycle tour on one of our circuits and enjoy the park's scenery on wheels. Bicycles can be rented by the hour, half day or full day.

## BIRD WATCHING

Experience our fun, professionally guided birdwatching tours in the park and Important Bird Areas (IBAs). Birds in the area include Caspian Terns, Lanner Falcons, Sooty Falcons, Ospreys and more



## ACCOMMODATION

Come stay at one of the excellent hotels and villages located minutes away from the park. These high quality hotels offer their guests a variety of outdoor activities and dining experiences, guaranteeing you a relaxing and memorable stay.

For more information please visit

[www.wadielgemal.org](http://www.wadielgemal.org)

## GETTING THERE

Flights can be booked directly to Marsa Alam or Hurghada. For those who enjoy driving, follow signs for Al Qusayr – Safaga and then Halaieb and Shalatein. Taxis can also be arranged outside of Hurghada airport.



## VISITING HOURS

The park is open to visitation from sunrise to sunset. Overnight stays require permission from Park Rangers.



## VISITOR CENTER

The Wadi el Gemal National Park visitor center is located at the park's northern entrance along the scenic Suez/Bir Shalatein seashore highway. The visitor center offers ecotourism services to individual guests, tour operators and tourism establishments along the Red Sea coastline.

We provide our visitors with a world class experience by offering them high quality audio and visual interpretive presentations, maps and tours that will enable them to truly appreciate the park's distinctive environmental and cultural resources.



*Developing, improving, and promoting ecotourism opportunities*

*Enhancing visitors' experience, raising awareness and education*

**The Ecotourism Project in Wadi el Gemal National Park**

*Conserving the park's biological and cultural resources*

*Developing capacities, supporting communities and sharing benefits, Supporting local communities and sharing benefits*

## ABOUT WADI EL GEMAL NATIONAL PARK

Established in 2003, Wadi el Gemal (Valley of Camels in Arabic) is the third largest protected area in the Arabian Desert. Covering an area of approximately 7,000 km<sup>2</sup> of land and sea, this spectacular park offers its visitors an opportunity to experience its crystal clear waters rich in marine biodiversity and a desert environment featuring jagged mountains and roaming gazelles.

## WHERE IT IS

Wadi el Gemal National Park is located in Egypt's Red Sea region, 40 km from Marsa Alam and 325 km from Hurghada.



## BIODIVERSITY

With its breathtaking landscapes and turquoise waters, Wadi el Gemal is home to 450 species of fish, 1,200 species of coral, 140 plant species, 24 mammal species, 45 bird species and at least 25 reptile species.

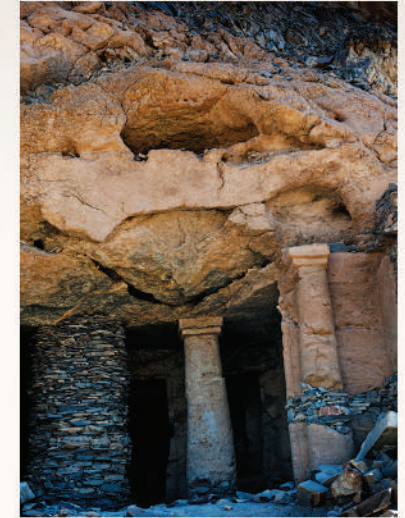
Medicinal plants like the *Anastatica hierochuntica* are said to have been used traditionally for the treatment of menstrual cramps, asthma, high blood pressure, headaches and fatigue. Mammals in the park include the Dorcas Gazelle, Nubian Ibex, Rüppell's Sand Fox, Hyrax and Striped Hyena. Rare occurrences include the Sand Cat and the Caracal.

Wadi el Gemal is amongst Egypt's unique national parks for it maintains a high species richness of birds of prey, including the globally threatened Lappet-Faced Vulture and the rare Lammergeyer. Wadi el Gemal Island, one of several islands in the park and a designated Important Bird Area (IBA) under BirdLife International, hosts the largest Sooty Falcon breeding colony in the world.

The park hosts an impressive marine component with its outstanding coral and fish diversity. The hawksbill and green turtle are two of five marine turtles that have been recorded in Wadi el Gemal. Dolphins and dugongs are also among the park's popular marine species. The presence of the globally endangered mangrove settlements supports the park's biodiversity.

## HISTORICAL SITES

Historical sites within Wadi el Gemal National Park include the ancient emerald mining villages of Mons Smaragdus, also known as the 'Emerald Mountain' and 'Cleopatra Mines'. It is alleged that these mines were exploited as far back as 1800 BC during the reign of Senusret III. Visitors can explore the remains of the ancient mine shafts and villages, as well as their connecting pathways. The ancient emerald processing town of Marfuah offers its visitors an exceptional panoramic view of the surrounding area. Ruins of the ancient Roman fort Appollonia, Sikait temples and the Roman settlement Umm Kabu are also key historical attractions in the park.



## ABABDA TRIBE

7,000 local people from the nomadic Ababda tribe call Wadi el Gemal their home. The Ababdas were known to have been at constant war with the Romans. For the longest time, they served as guides to caravans through the Nubian Desert and up the Nile Valley. They are believed to be engaged in telegraphy across the Arabian Desert till this day. The Ababda are said to have lived in southern Egypt since 2,500 BC. Their pastoral nomadic lifestyle is based on herding and trade, where they trade in products like charcoal, medicinal plants and handicrafts.

