Azraq Wetland Reserve

Azraq has long been an important settlement in Jordan’s remote Eastern Desert. In fact, archaeologists say that it was one of the first sites of settlement after humans migrated out of Africa. Today, the area is home to the Bedouin, Arab Druze, and Chechens. During the Great Arab Revolt, the nearby Azraq Castle was an important headquarters for T.E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) and his Arab counterpart, Sharif Hussein bin Ali.

Unfortunately, over the past decades, the wetlands have suffered from an environmental disaster due to overuse of water from the Azraq Basin. Water levels have steadily dropped, resulting in extreme depletion and erosion of massive areas of invaluable wetland. By 1993, the oasis’ ecological value was virtually destroyed.

In 1978, The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) established the Azraq Wetland Reserve to conserve this unique oasis. In 1994, with international support, RSCN began a rescue effort to restore a significant portion of the wetland. Today, many of Azraq’s birds are returning and special boardwalks and bird hides have been constructed to enable visitors to safely observe and enjoy them.

Stay in Azraq Wetland Reserve

Open year-round, the Azraq Lodge is a short distance from the Azraq Wetland Reserve. Originally a British military field hospital, the building was later transformed into the current lodge. There are sixteen fully-equipped 1940’s style rooms with views of the distant mud and sand flats of the Azraq Basin. The kitchen and restaurant are under the management of a local Chechen family, providing a variety of authentic Chechen food and delights.

Azraq Silkscreen Printing Workshop

Silkscreen printing is a stencil method of print making in which a design is imposed on a screen of silk, with blank areas coated with an impermeable substance, and ink is forced through the silk onto the printing surface. This is our way of customizing your gifts one-by-one.

Azraq Tailor Workshop

For the hip, conscience, adventurers of today we have just the right combination of products. Whether a camera bag or a water bottle holder, Azraq bags are handmade, durable, and have our famous RSCN icons from nature to deliver our message of helping nature and helping people. The ladies at the workshop are also especially good at producing customized messenger bags for workshops and other special events.

Azraq Educational Toys Workshop

Who said learning can’t be fun? At the Educational Toys Workshop, women create a wide selection of toys which both adults and children can enjoy while simultaneously learning. Our version of Wild Monopoly is a family favorite!

Azraq Ostrich Egg Design Workshop

The women of Azraq hand paint beautiful designs on infertile ostrich eggs, using special carving and dotting techniques.

Azraq Recycle Workshop

We produce a wide range of recycled material for you and your business so that you can show how much you care about the world in which we live.

Azraq Packaging Workshop

We make our handmade products stand out by using our handmade packaging, created using recycled products. With no restrictions on shape or size, we will create the best package to fit your gift.

Azraq Handicrafts from Nature

Make sure to visit the six handicraft workshops, all of which are located in Azraq Lodge:

The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature and Wild Jordan

Created in 1966 under the patronage of His Majesty the late King Hussein, The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) is a non-governmental organization devoted to the conservation of Jordan’s natural environment.

Wild Jordan is the socio-economic development and eco-tourism division of RSCN that is dedicated to developing viable nature-based businesses for those living in and around RSCN’s protected areas while generating support for nature conservation throughout Jordan.

RSCN Membership

Becoming a RSCN Member is great for both you and nature! For information, contact (+962 6) 5337 931 member@rscn.org.jo

Contact us

For booking and information contact Tourism Unit at Wild Jordan
Tel: (+962 6) 4616 523 email tourism@rscn.org.jo
or contact Azraq reserve directly at
Tel: (+962 6) 4616 523 email azraqtourism@rscn.org.jo
www.rscn.org.jo

Follow us on

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Activities

Integrated Bus & Hiking Tours

**Azraq Bus Tour**
- **Year-round**
- **Guided only**
- **Grade:** Easy
- **Distance:** 1.5 km
- **Time:** 30 minutes
- **Starting time:** 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (winter), 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. (summer)
- **Group size:** Up to 5 people
- **Start:** Azraq Lodge
- **Stop:** Azraq Zoo

**Usakhim Bus Tour**
- **Year-round, except during Ramadan**
- **Guided only**
- **Grade:** Easy to Moderate
- **Distance:** 10 km
- **Time:** 5-6 hours
- **Group size:** 3-9 people
- **Start:** Azraq Lodge
- **Stop:** Azraq Zoo

Biking Trails

**Azraq Village**
- **Biking Trail**
- **Year-round, except during Ramadan**
- **Guided only**
- **Difficulty:** Easy to Moderate
- **Distance:** 22 km
- **Time:** 5-6 hours
- **Group size:** 3-9 people
- **Start:** Azraq Lodge
- **Stop:** Azraq Zoo

Other Activities

**Nearby Sites - Attraction Points**

**Azraq Castle**
- This black basalt fort has been in continuous use since early Roman times. During the Great Arab Revolt, it served as the headquarters for T.E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) and Sharif Hussein bin Ali, his Arab counterpart and the current King Abdullah’s great-grandfather.

**Qasr al Hallabat**
- At the Nature Cinema in Azraq Lodge, visitors can watch documentaries and movies about nature and history. Azraq Lodge offers a unique experience for visitors by giving them a wonderful chance of seeing the Druze dabbekh (dancing) show and to listen to the original Druze music and even to learn how to dance dabbekh themselves. This activity is available upon request and based on availability.

**Qasr al Anra**
- **(8 km) west of Azraq and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. One of the best preserved monuments in Jordan, its interior walls and ceilings are covered with lively frescoes and two of the rooms are decorated with colorful mosaics.**
Activities

**Highlights**

- **Azraq Village Biking Trail**
  Get a glimpse into the history and culture of the Azraq area.

- **Azraq Mudflat Biking Trail**
  Pass through the huge qa’a mudflat area and the Eastern desert.

- **Usakhim Bus Tour**
  Hike to the Usakhim fortress and see human inscriptions from thousands of years ago.

- **Azraq Bus Tour**
  See Azraq Castle, visit the Old Druze village, and have brunch at a local home.

- **Marsh Trail**
  Wind your way through the wetlands, catching glimpses of resident and migratory birds.

The gathering point for all of the trails is Azraq Lodge.

We have flexible starting times for the trails.
• Stay on the trails with the guide and do not wander alone in the Reserve; camp and climb only in official sites.
• Protect all nature; no hunting or collecting of plants, animals, rocks, artifacts, or firewood. Leave things as you find them.
• Avoid damaging trees and shrubs; do not add graffiti anywhere within the reserve.
• Respect nature; keep noise to a minimum, be kind to living creatures.
• Respect the lifestyle of the local people and ask before taking pictures.
• Keep the area clean and deposit your litter in the appropriate place.
• Leave your vehicles in the parking area.

**Rules and Regulations**

**How to Get There**

From Amman, the trip is 100km. Start at 7th Circle. Take the Desert Highway/Airport Road south. 3km from 7th Circle is the Na’ur/King Hussein Bridge/Amman East exit. Take the exit to Amman East and continue for 2km. Turn right at first traffic light. Continue straight to a roundabout. Continue straight for 100m and turn right. Go straight through a traffic light and take the Sahab exit. Continue for 60km and follow the signs for Azraq Wetland Reserve/Azraq Lodge.

**Useful Arabic Words**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Word</th>
<th>Arabic Pronunciation</th>
<th>Arabic Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>Mashaha</td>
<td>مرحباً</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome</td>
<td>Abilan wa Sahlan</td>
<td>للاستقبال</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good morning</td>
<td>Sabah al Khayr</td>
<td>صباح الخير</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>Sabah al Noor</td>
<td>صباح الخير</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good evening</td>
<td>Masaa’ al Khayr</td>
<td>مساء الخير</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>Masaa’ al Noor</td>
<td>مساء الخير</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your name?</td>
<td>(male) Shu ismak?</td>
<td>اسمك؟</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your name?</td>
<td>(female) Shu ismik?</td>
<td>اسمك؟</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My name is...</td>
<td>Ismi...</td>
<td>اسمي...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are you?</td>
<td>(male) Keef Halak?</td>
<td>كيف حالك؟</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are you?</td>
<td>(female) Keef Halik?</td>
<td>كيف حالك؟</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I see fine</td>
<td>Aa...</td>
<td>انا...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can see</td>
<td>Kwies(eh)...</td>
<td>انا...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please</td>
<td>Low Samah</td>
<td>سلامي</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you</td>
<td>Shukran</td>
<td>شكراً</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>You’re welcome</td>
<td>تستطيع</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodbye</td>
<td>Masalama</td>
<td>مرحباً</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>La</td>
<td>لا</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m sorry</td>
<td>Aisifah</td>
<td>أسفني</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Problem</td>
<td>Maft Mushkilah</td>
<td>ما في مشكلة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Ayya</td>
<td>أيا</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much?</td>
<td>Gdahis or Adahis</td>
<td>كم</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I need help</td>
<td>Sidis musahadah</td>
<td>ما هي مشكلة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t understand</td>
<td>Mish fahem(ah)</td>
<td>لا</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

((To describe a female, add an ‘eh’ at the end))

**Hiking Tips**

Hit trails early for the best chance of seeing wildlife and to avoid being exposed to the sun during the hottest part of the day.

Stay on trails to avoid injury.

To get through a heavy day’s hike, rest at regular intervals and enjoy the views. Don’t overdo it!

**Wildlife**

In Azraq Wetland Reserve, the interaction of three unique habitats results in a rich diversity of wildlife. Tiny water fleas, Great White Egrets, Baluchistan Gerbils, and even non-native Chechen water buffalo all call Azraq home.

As an internationally-recognized area for migratory birds, Azraq hosts hundreds of species each year. Visitors can observe these birds from a rustic brick and mud bird hide in the Reserve.

The Azraq Wetland Reserve is the only habitat in the world for the Azraq Killifish, which is the only vertebrate that is endemic to Jordan. Restoration work has been done on its habitat, in order to protect the species from extinction. KSOs efforts have been highly effective in this area, greatly increasing the numbers of killifish in their natural habitat.

**Weather**

Azraq is characterized by mild winters and hot dry summers. The highest temperatures are in June to September (exceeding 40°C) and the lowest in December to February (average of 9°C). Rainfall is minimal throughout the year, averaging 62 millimeters annually.

**What to Bring**

Cap, sunscreen, comfortable shoes and clothes, drinking water, snacks, backpack, flashlight, extra clothes, binoculars, ID, wildlife guides, first aid kit.

The Reserve is not responsible for the loss of any valuable belongings.

**From the Valley to the Reserve**

*From Amman, the trip is 100km. Start at 7th Circle. Take the Desert Highway/Airport Road south. 3km from 7th Circle is the Na’ur/King Hussein Bridge/Amman East exit. Take the exit to Amman East and continue for 2km. Turn right at first traffic light. Continue straight to a roundabout. Continue straight for 100m and turn right. Go straight through a traffic light and take the Sahab exit. Continue for 60km and follow the signs for Azraq Wetland Reserve/Azraq Lodge.*