

# **United Arab Emirates**

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## **Location and area**

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) are a federation of seven independent states lying along the east-central coast of the Arabian Peninsula. The states making up the UAE are: Abu Dhabi, 'Ajman, Dubai, Al Fujayrah, Ra's al Khaymah, Sharjah (or Ash Shariqah), and Umm al-Qaiwain. The states are bordered on the north by Qatar and the Persian Gulf, on the east by the Gulf of Oman, and on the south and west by Saudi Arabia. The area of the UAE is 83,600 km<sup>2</sup>. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

## **Topography**

The territory of the UAE is mostly low-lying sandy desert with extensive salt flats and an average elevation of less than 150, although the eastern Al-Hajar Mountains along the border with Oman rise sharply to almost 3,000. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

## **Climate**

The climate of the UAE is hot, with average January temperatures of 18° C and average July temperatures of 33° C, though temperatures may be higher in the desert interior. The coastal regions are humid, while the interior is dry: average annual rainfall is 75 to 100 mm. Winter and spring bring sandy shamal winds from the north and northwest. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

## **Land use**

Desert conditions are prevailing. Less than 0.5 % of UAE territory is cultivated. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

## **Wetlands**

Large-scale losses of intertidal area have been brought about either by dredging or by burial ie reclamation. It is mostly *sabkha* that has suffered from alteration, although various *khors* have been lost, or reduced to some extent. Possibly no site exists that has not already been altered or presently receives no form of adverse human activity or development. (Spiers 1999)

## **Peatlands**

According to the interpreted World Soil Map (Van Engelen & Huting 2002) no histosols nor gley soils exist in the United Arab Emirates..

## **Still to be checked:**

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Mangroves of the United Arab Emirates : Diversity at the bioclimatic extreme.

Aquatic Botany, 63, 291-304.

