

1. Camel Trekking, Hiking and Desert Treks

The Sound of Silence

The spectacular Fayoum desert is one of the great attractions for visitors who appreciate nature and want to escape to silent open spaces to gain an inner peace. You can explore the desert on foot, by camel or jeep. Plodding along at a leisurely pace, camels are a suitable means of transport to explore the unspoilt, pristine desert, sand dunes, canyons, agricultural areas and lakeshores of Fayoum. Hiking in Fayoum allows visitors to have a closer encounter with nature and reach the most remote places in the narrow wadis. Other areas of the desert can only be reached by jeep. Whether you choose to sit atop a camel and be swayed along by its rhythmic stride or hike to the summit of an escarpment, rest assured that the views will always be spectacular and memorable.

Ecotourism is responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of the local people. A major goal of ecotourism is sustainability through the preservation of the natural and cultural heritage of a region and the participation of the native community in tourism development. In Fayoum, ecotourism activities such as desert hiking, camel trekking, bird watching, donkey rides, and visits to rural villages and craft centers have been created with the direct involvement of the local people.

The 'Ecotourism for Sustainable Development in the Fayoum' Project is financed by the Italian Cooperation and implemented by the Italian NGO CISS (International Cooperation South South), together with the Fayoum Tourism Authority and the consultancy company NSCE (North South Consultants Exchange). The aim of the Project is to develop ecotourism in the Fayoum Oasis by preserving and increasing the value of the environmental and cultural heritage of the Oasis, while promoting the area as an attractive tourism destination for residents and foreign visitors.

ITINERARIES

Our suggested itineraries have been planned in detail with the help of experienced and knowledgeable local guides from Fayoum. Itineraries are flexible and can be re-scheduled according to your interests. Tours can be arranged with your tour operator, directly with the local guides of the Protected Areas or by contacting the Fayoum Tourist Information Office. Please observe Park rules. Driving off-track may endanger lives and cause damage to natural environments. Desert driving requires well-equipped 4WDs. For your safety and comfort, we suggest that you inform the Park Rangers in advance of any desert activities.

Itinerary 1 Full-day Hiking Excursion

Time	Route and Points of Interest
8.00am arrival	<p>Take the Cairo-Fayoum desert road to the checkpoint at Kom Oshim. (<i>A police escort is mandatory and you will be asked for your itinerary</i>). Follow the signpost to the Auberge du Lac Hotel. The Fayoum Tourist Information Centre is located on the main road 150m before the hotel.</p> <p>Drive along Lake Qarun past fish farms, rich cultivated fields of fruit and vegetables and view Gebel Qatrani escarpment on the northern lakeshore. Drive past Tunis village towards the new Joseph Sadik area and head to Wadi El Rayan Park entrance. Please read the Visitor Regulations signpost. The Visitors Centre displays the variety of biodiversity in Wadi El Rayan listing birds, reptiles, fish, invertebrates and plants. (<i>Open every day from 9-3pm, except feast days</i>).</p>

4 hours hiking tour	Drive to the impressive Mudawarra rock formation above the lower lake. Begin a one-hour walk in fine soft sand and marvel at the symmetrical sand patterns created by wind change. Nummulites, fossilized sea creatures, 40 million years old are scattered over the ocean floor. Clamber up and down sand dunes to reach a towering escarpment overlooking the lake. Good rest stop and picnic area.
	Continue trekking for 3 hours until you reach the land reclamation area, known as Sayidna Al Khidr. Stop for refreshments at the local cafeteria. Transportation picks you up here to return to Cairo.

Itinerary 2 Full-day Hiking Trip from Wadi El Rayan to Anba Samuel Monastery

Time	Route and Points of Interest
8.00am start	This is a spectacular itinerary for experienced hikers. (<i>We recommend that you spend the night in a hotel in Fayoum and have a good nights rest</i>). Start from the outpost of the Wadi El Rayan Protected Area. Coffee & tea will be provided before the trip.
8.30am	Meet the hiking guides. Start walking and follow the green fjords of the Wadi El Rayan lakes through unique desert scenery of white sand dunes and rocky escarpments. The walk is between 6-7 hours though the terrain is not overly difficult. Continue to the remote Monastery of Anba Samuel, 35km south of Wadi El Rayan. Picnic lunch at a breathtaking spot. Return to Cairo at 5.00pm.

Itinerary 3 2 days Camel Trekking through Wadi El Rayan

Time	Route and Points of Interest
Day 1 8.30am	Start from the outpost of Wadi El Rayan Protected Area (<i>We recommend that you spend the night in a hotel in Fayoum and have a good nights rest</i>). You will mount the camels and ride uphill towards the springs area of Wadi El Rayan, home of specialized fauna, including the near-extinct slender-horned gazelles and small mammals.
	The camels will head north over dunes towards the shore of the second Wadi El Rayan lake. Whilst the guides set up camp and prepare dinner, you can go birdwatching, swimming or just soak in the awe-inspiring scenery and stargaze.
Day 2	After an early breakfast, you will ride along the beach and over dunes towards the fjord-like area. The camels will leave the lake and move up towards Gebel Meshgiga, a stunning rock formation and landmark.
3pm	The camels will bring you back to the asphalt road. Drive back to Cairo late afternoon along the Assiut-Cairo desert highway.

2. Rural Life, Handicrafts & Cultural Heritage in Fayoum

Fayoum a tapestry embroidered by nature

Over the centuries, Fayoum, a fertile agricultural area 90km from Cairo, has preserved its natural pastoral beauty and the local population still engages in traditional lifestyles. Resembling an oasis, Fayoum is a living canvas of rural scenes depicting images of farmers tilling the soil using age-old methods; of brightly-dressed children herding sheep and goats along the tranquil country lanes and buffalo resting contentedly under palm-frond shelters. Fayoum provides picturesque snapshots of silvery olive trees shimmering in the sunlight; golden sunflowers nodding towards the sun; drooping clusters of tender red and yellow dates; bales of hand-picked fluffy cotton balls; water birds wallowing in the cool lakes and churning wooden waterwheels, the emblem of the Fayoum Governorate.

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Itinerary 1 Full-day Excursion

Time	Route and Points of Interest
8.00am arrival	Take the Cairo-Fayoum desert road to the checkpoint at Kom Oshim. (<i>A police escort is mandatory and you will be asked for your itinerary</i>). Follow the signpost to the Auberge du Lac Hotel. The Fayoum Tourist Information Centre is located on the main road 150m before the hotel. Relax and have refreshments at the historic Auberge du Lac or on the terrace of the Panorama Shakshouk Hotel.
9.30am 22km	Drive south passing rural villages and farms. Stop and visit one of the small family-run orchards. See lively market stalls at Ibshaway village.
11.00am 31km	Arrive in Nazla, a scenic pottery village located along the Masraf al-Wadi canal which provides the basic mud and clay for the terracotta pots that are fired in towering kilns. The 15 family-run workshops use traditional wheel-thrown and hammer-anvil methods. The pottery is sold at the local market and in Cairo. (<i>As viewing is free, we recommend you leave 5LE per person to the potter who guides you</i>).

11.30am 22km	Drive northeast passing lush agricultural fields of date palms, sunflowers and view a beautiful pigeon house, a familiar sight in Fayoum. Continue towards Tunis, a village perched high on a hill overlooking Lake Qarun.
12 noon	Walk down the path leading to the lakeshore, an important area for local waterbirds and wintering migratory birds. Here the fishermen haul in their nets with the daily catch of fresh mullet, gray shrimp and sole. There is a small sandy beach suitable for a picnic lunch and donkey rides.
1 hour boat ride	Take an enjoyable trip on a fisherman's boat and glide along the lakeshore. Pleasant view of Hassan Fathi-style villas dotted on the Tunis hillside and Gebel Qatrani mountains to the right (<i>70LE per boat for 4 pax</i>)
1.30pm 45 mins camel ride/walk	Camels (and donkeys) from a nearby farm will be waiting at the lakeside to lead you through the peaceful countryside for a closer glimpse of rural life. Pass vineyards, corn fields and olive groves. You can opt instead to walk along the country lane through the villages of Halta and Ahmed Offendi.
2.15pm	The camel ride finishes near the main road close to Qasr Qarun temple. A five-minute walk brings you to the entrance of the Ptolemaic temple dedicated to Sobek, the crocodile god. A flight of steps leads up to the roof giving a splendid view of the surrounding desert and remains of the old town.
2.45pm	Drive back to Tunis village. Visit the Children's Pottery School, started in the 1970s by a Swiss potter who passed on her art skills to the local village children. There is a small garden suitable for a picnic lunch. (<i>Tea can be ordered at 5LE per person</i>). Walk around the village to visit 3 individual pottery workshops. Each potter was trained at the School from an early age. Purchases can be made of hand-made pottery with designs and colours inspired by the natural environment. A walk down the lane brings you to Zad Al Ramal, an ecotourism guest house made from local adobe, palm trees and woven mats. Sit back, relax and enjoy a good Fayoumi home-cooked meal. Depart to Cairo at 4pm.

Itinerary 2 Half-day Excursion (including Options)

Time	Route and Points of Interest
8.00 am arrival	Take the Cairo-Fayoum desert road to the checkpoint at Kom Oshim. (<i>A police escort is mandatory and you will be asked for your itinerary</i>). Visit the Graeco-Roman ruins of Karanis at Kom Oshim, once the trade route with Bahariya oasis. The site includes two temples dedicated to the crocodile god, Sobek. The nearby museum displays funerary objects including canopic jars, jewelry, amulets and children's wooden toys. The Fayoum Tourist Information Centre is located on the main road, 150m before the Auberge du Lac hotel.
10.00 am	Spend the rest of the morning relaxing at either the historic Auberge du Lac, once a hunting lodge of King Farouk or on the terrace of the Panorama Shakshouk Hotel overlooking Lake Qarun. The half-day excursion ends here.
Option 1	If you would like to continue sightseeing, drive directly to the artists' village of Tunis to tour the Children's Pottery School and 3 other pottery workshops producing decorative glazed ceramics. (<i>See itinerary 1</i>) Return to Cairo late afternoon.
Option 2	If you would like to continue sightseeing, drive directly to Nazla village for a guided tour and learn about the traditional methods of producing terracotta pottery using age-old techniques. (<i>It is advisable to hire a local guide as the potters only speak Arabic</i>). (<i>See itinerary 1</i>) Return to Cairo late afternoon.

3. Birding and Heritage in Fayoum

Birds of a feather flock together

Birds have held a special significance for Egyptians since pharaonic times. The walls of many pharaonic temples and tombs depict a variety of scenes of birds, ducks and fowl. Well-known are the famous geese found on a wall painting in Meidun temple. Egypt lies on a major migratory route for hundreds of millions of birds passing through the country on their long journey from the cold climate of Europe and Western Asia to the warmer regions of Africa. Fayoum provides suitable habitats for local and migratory birds that include: cattle egrets, herons, ibis, Senegal coucals, hoopoes, graceful warblers, greater flamingos, purple gallinules, kingfishers and barbary falcons to name but a few. Lake Qarun and the Wadi El Rayan lakes have been listed as Important Bird Area (IBAs) by BirdLife International.

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Itinerary 1 Full-day Birding Trip

Time	Route and Points of Interest
7.30 am arrival	Take the Cairo-Fayoum desert road to the checkpoint at Kom Oshim. (<i>A police escort is mandatory and you will be asked for your itinerary</i>). Rest stop for refreshments at either the Auberge du Lac, once a hunting lodge of King Farouk, or on the terrace of the Panorama Shakshouk Hotel. Meet your birding guide.
	Visit a variety of bird habitats around Lake Qarun and in the nearby agricultural fields. Late morning drive to Wadi El Rayan Protected Area stopping en route at birding sites. The Park Visitors Centre displays interesting and informative panels on the biodiversity in Wadi El Rayan including listings of birds, reptiles, fish, invertebrates and plants. (<i>Open every day from 9-3pm, except feast days</i>).
	Stop for lunch at the lake. Birdwatch at the scenic bays fringed by reed beds and undulating sand dunes. 5.00pm return to Cairo.

Itinerary 2 Full-day Birdwatching and Sightseeing Trip

Time	Route and Points of Interest
7.30 am arrival	Meet your local bird and antiquities guides. Birdwatch at a lake in the desert near Kom Oshim followed by a guided tour of the Graeco-Roman ruins of Karanis, once the trade route with Bahariya oasis. The site includes two temples dedicated to Sobek, the crocodile god. The nearby museum displays funerary objects including canopic jars, jewelry, amulets and wooden children's toys.
	Stop to birdwatch around Lake Qarun. Early afternoon lunch at a nearby hotel on the lakeshore. Drive south to Hawara pyramid built by Amenemhat III. En route stop to photograph the waterwheels. 5.00pm return to Cairo.

Itinerary 3 Full-day Birdwatching, Crafts and Sightseeing Trips

Time	Route and Points of Interest
8.00 am arrival (A)	Meet your local bird and antiquities guides. Drive along Lake Qarun stopping at various sites to birdwatch. Continue to Qasr Qarun, a well-preserved Ptolemaic temple dedicated to Sobek, the crocodile god. A flight of stairs leads to the roof giving a splendid view of the surrounding desert and remains of the old town.
	Continue to the picturesque village of Tunis with its ducks, geese and pigeon house. Visit the Children's Pottery School which has a small garden suitable for a picnic lunch. (<i>Tea can be ordered on site at 5LE per person</i>). Or, have a home-cooked Fayoumi lunch at the Zad Al Ramal ecotourism guest house. The remainder of the day will be spent exploring the village to learn about the rural life of farmers. Also visit 3 local pottery workshops producing unique hand-made glazed pottery with distinctive designs and colours inspired by the natural environment.
	There will be another chance to birdwatch before returning to Cairo at 4.30pm
8.00 am arrival (B)	Meet your local bird and antiquities guides. Drive southwest to Medinet Madi, a 12 th century Ptolemaic temple built by Amenemhat III and IV. The temple is dedicated to the cobra goddess Renenutet and the crocodile god, Sobek. Stop in the desert to see any birds in the wetlands and farmlands along the way. Picnic lunch.
	Afternoon drive to Nazla village to learn about the traditional wheel-thrown and hammer-anvil methods for producing terracotta pots, fired in towering kilns. (<i>As viewing is free, we recommend you leave 5LE per person to the potter who guides you. Potters speak only Arabic</i>). Return to Cairo late afternoon.

Ecotourism in Fayoum

"To care we must understand, to understand we must know, and to know we must have met."

Ecotourism has become the fastest growing segment of the tourism industry worldwide. The heavy burden of repetitive mass tourism in many holiday destinations worldwide has had a devastating effect on the environment. In so many areas, the prized attractions that once lured and mesmerized the traveler are being damaged, destroyed and abandoned.

Whilst travelers will never stop searching for new, out-of-the-way, untouched and adventurous destinations to visit, preventive measures have to be taken to stop unnecessary destruction of a country's natural and cultural heritage. Responsibility rests on the travelers, tour operators, host country and all tourism service providers to ensure that tourism has a positive benefit on a destination and its inhabitants.

What is being done to help Fayoum become an ecotourism destination?

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What are the benefits of ecotourism?

New niche markets in nature travel, culture and heritage tours and adventure trips are becoming popular around the world. Too often such tours are wrongly promoted under the ecotourism label and do not reflect the basic 'eco' principles.

- Ecotourism promotes respect for the natural environment and supports the conservation of sensitive natural areas, which often form the backdrop for outdoor activities and recreation.
- Ecotourism preserves the cultures and traditions of the local people restoring pride and dignity to their heritage.
- Ecotourism encourages close encounters between the traveler and the local community and creates an interesting interchange of ideas and better understanding of social habits.
- Ecotourism improves the social and economic livelihood of the local people by opening up opportunities in tourist activities in which individuals develop new skills and training.
- Ecotourism presents new possibilities to set up locally operated businesses or outlets to sell handmade crafts or food produce.

Responsible Tourism Standards of Behaviour

- ◆ Before you travel, learn about the people, customs and traditions of the area you will visit. Often it is the ‘differences’ between the traveler and the residents that create a bond of interest.
- ◆ Follow Protected Area rules and stay on marked trails during hikes, camel treks and desert trips. Venturing off-track may endanger lives and damage the natural environment.
- ◆ Never leave garbage around which may pollute pristine areas or be harmful to wildlife.
- ◆ Hire locally trained guides who are familiar with the region as their services provide much needed money for the individuals and their families.
- ◆ Buy locally made crafts and support skilled craftspeople that keep age-old traditions alive.
- ◆ Do not buy products made from endangered species. Many animals are cruelly removed from their habitats to be turned into souvenirs.
- ◆ Do not collect fossils and shells as they are a vital part of the ecosystem of the area and should be enjoyed by future generations.
- ◆ Ask permission before taking a photograph of villagers, as they may not understand why visitors consider them to be unusual.
- ◆ Dress appropriately in rural areas where the people have conservative attitudes.

What does Fayoum offer the ecotourist?

- Peace and quiet and fresh air – the perfect place in which to relax.
- Rural landscapes and glimpses into traditional life.
- Wadi El Rayan Protected Area with 2 man-made lakes, waterfalls and a Visitors Centre.
- Wadi El Hitan, an important open-air whale fossil museum.
- Pharaonic, Graeco-Roman and Coptic archeological sites and monuments.
- Displays of Fayoumi artifacts and Fayoum Portraits at the Kom Oshim museum.
- Beautiful scenic spots and picnic areas around Lake Qarun Protected Area.
- Camel trekking through soft yellow dunes and wadis.
- Hiking for casual walkers and experienced hikers.
- Fishermen’s boat trips on Lake Qarun.
- Donkey rides along shaded country lanes.
- Educational visits to farmer’s fruit and vegetable gardens.
- Variety of birding habitats for ornithologists and bird lovers.
- Visits to Nazla pottery village where terracotta pots are fired in towering kilns.
- Visits to glaze pottery workshops in the picturesque village of Tunis.
- Colourful array of handmade palm leaf baskets, rustic wooden furniture, olive-oil soaps, straw floor matting and woven carpets.
- Two comfortable 4-star hotels overlooking Lake Qarun.
- Pleasant economy hotels in downtown Fayoum.
- Family-run guesthouse in Tunis village serving tasty Fayoumi home cooking.
- Safari camp overlooking Wadi El Rayan lake.

Fayoum Tourist Information Centre

We look forward to welcoming you as you uncover the beauty of Fayoum

General Information on Fayoum

Location : 90km southwest of Cairo.

Description : A fertile depression 70km wide and 60km long fed by Nile water through the Bahr Yusuf canal which distributes water along an intricate network of irrigation canals supported by 200 wooden waterwheels.

Population : 2 million

Biodiversity : Lake Qarun - a salty lake, 2 man-made lakes in Wadi El Rayan, desert, canyons, waterfalls, natural springs, sand dunes, flora and fauna.

Designated Protected Areas : Lake Qarun (1985) and Wadi El Rayan (1985).

Archeological Sites : Medinet Madi, Karanis, Kom Umm al Atl, Qasr Qarun, Dimeh, Umm al-Burigat, Hawara pyramid, al-Lahun pyramid, Meidum pyramid

Agriculture : Wheat, corn, cotton, cabbage, onions, olives and tomatoes, plus a wide variety of fruit trees including dates and mangos.

Fishing : Mullet, sole, catfish, Nile perch, catfish.

Flora : Acacia, date palms, reeds, bulrush, tamarisk, salt trees around Wadi El Rayan

Handicrafts : Terracotta pottery, glazed pottery, palm-frond basketry, olive-oil soap, palm wood furniture.

Fayoum Tourist Information Centre

Where is the Tourist Information Centre located?

The Centre is conveniently located on the main road, in front of Lake Qarun, 150m before the Auberge du Lac hotel.

What are the times of opening?

9.00am to 8.00pm daily throughout the year.

What is the role of the Tourist Information Centre?

The Centre has been set up by the Fayoum Tourism Authority to provide a free information service to visitors, local residents and tour operators visiting the governorate. Visitors can pass by the Centre or phone before arriving to obtain details on tourist attractions and places of interest for sightseeing, contact local guides or book transportation within Fayoum.

What information can I find in the Tourist Information Centre?

The Centre offers a comprehensive database providing information on local hotels, restaurants, Protected Areas, historical sites, craft suppliers, local guides and other tourist and leisure facilities in Fayoum. The Centre is equipped with a computer, telephone and displays a wide selection of brochures, pamphlets, leaflets and maps on the different sites and monuments in Fayoum. Toilet facilities are also available at the Centre.

Which languages are spoken by the Tourist Information staff?

English, French, German and Arabic

Why is Fayoum an ideal ecotourism destination?

Fayoum combines unique ecosystems, picturesque rural villages, cultural attractions, historical monuments and warm Fayoumi hospitality – all the right components for ecotourism. Ecotourism is responsible travel to natural areas, which conserves the natural and cultural environment, improves the welfare of the local people and creates respect between visitors and the host country.

How can ecotourism benefit Fayoum?

In Fayoum, the livelihood of local communities is being improved by helping people to get involved in ecotourism activities such as desert hiking, camel trekking, bird watching, donkey riding, fishermen boat trips, traditional craft making and food and lodging services.

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Contacts	Contact details	Description
Fayoum Tourist Information Centre, Lake Qarun Email: ticfayoum@link.net	Tel/Fax: (084) 6980 707	Brochures, pamphlets, maps and a database on all the sites and visitor services available. English/French and German speaking staff.
Wadi El Rayan Protected Area Headquarters	Tel: (084) 6830 535	Contact Park Rangers for detailed information on driving, camping and permits in the Protected Areas.
Hosni Mohamed, Nazla	Tel: (084) 6771 231	Head Potter at Nazla. Speaks only Arabic.
Evelyne Porret, Tunis	Tel: (084) 6820 405	Children's Pottery School.
Abdel Sattar, Tunis	Tel: (084) 6820 827	Potter with own workshop.
Mahmoud El Sherif, Tunis	Tel: (084) 6820 851 010 554 2649	Potter with own workshop.
Rawya Abd El-Kader Salem, Tunis	Tel: (084) 6820 911	Potter with own workshop.
Zad Al Ramal Guest House, Tunis Email: abdogobair48@maktoob.com	Tel/Fax: (084) 6820 180	Guesthouse made from local materials. Good restaurant, children's play area, small pool & garden.
Mohamed Marzouk, Safari Camp, Wadi El Rayan	Tel: 010 276 2670	Eco-lodge with bamboo huts, 2 open-air seating areas; serves tea daily; order cooked meals one day in advance.
Mohamed Saleh, Shalaan village	Tel: 010 370 4987	Experienced trekking guide. Arranges short and long desert treks. Speaks Arabic.
Omar Mohamed Ahmed, Shaalan village	Tel: (084) 685 318	Trekking guide. Arranges short and long desert treks. Speaks Arabic.
Khaled Abdel Sattar, Fayoum	Tel: 012 368 0198	Experienced birdwatching guide. Speaks basic English.
Abdalla Farrag, Fayoum	Tel: 012 368 0197	Experienced birdwatching guide. Speaks basic English.
Mohamed Someida, Khalta village	Tel: (084) 6771 231 010 116 0210	Family-run camel hire. Speaks basic English.

Community Service Center, Faculty of Hotel & Tourism Management, Cairo University, Fayoum Branch	Tel: (084) 6345 702	For qualified antiquities and ecotourism guides or specialized information on sites in Fayoum.
Osama Abdel Naby Email: semsemamon@hotmail.com	Tel: 012 790 2448	Antiquities guide trained in ecotourism activities in Fayoum. Proficient in English.
Ibrahim Abdel Baset, Email: hemoammon@hotmail.com	Tel: 010 542 7679	Antiquities guide trained in ecotourism activities in Fayoum. Proficient in English.
Khairi Yassin, Tunis	Tel: (084) 6820 312 010 365 6773	Local guide for hiking and rural itineraries. Speaks basic English.
Auberge du Lac Hotel, Lake Qarun	Tel/Fax: (084) 6712 730	Comfortable 4 star hotel with all amenities and panoramic views of Lake Qarun.
Panorama Shakshouk Hotel, Lake Qarun	Tel/Fax: (084) 6830 757	Comfortable 4 star hotel with all amenities and panoramic views of Lake Qarun.
Hotel Queen, Fayoum City	Tel: (084) 6346 819 Fax: (084) 6346 233	Comfortable and friendly family-run hotel includes restaurant and room service.
Fayoum Tourism Authority Email: fayoum-ta@link.net	Tel: (084) 6343 213 Fax: (084) 6375 930	Mr.Mahmoud Mustafa Director of Fayoum Tourism Authority
Ecotourism for Sustainable Development in Fayoum Email: ecotourismfayoum@link.net	Tel/Fax: (084) 637 5930	Project of ecotourism development in Fayoum governorate, funded by the Italian Cooperation and implemented by the Italian NGO CISS (International Cooperation South South), Fayoum Tourism Authority and NSCE (North South Consultants Exchange).