

# GUIDED TOURS FOR SCHOOL YEARS 5-8 (10-14 YEARS) AT THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM VIENNA

The NHM Vienna offers guided tours of the exhibitions and talks on various different topics. All guided tours are adapted to the age and knowledge level of the participants.

## Highlights

A guided tour of the museum's most eye-catching and impressive exhibits gives visitors an insight into the world of collecting and researching.

## Mammals

Mammals are by far the most successful of all the vertebrates. They all share two common characteristics: milk ducts and hair. This guided tour shows the biggest and smallest mammals on Earth, explains how mammals procreate and raise their young, and presents certain mammals with special abilities: Flying, jumping, sprinting, smelling, hearing, and supreme strength.

## Sharks

Wherever they appear, sharks cause panic – or admiration. This tour gives participants the chance to look into the mouth of a Great White Shark and learn how a “revolver jaw” works. Sharks have incredible senses far more powerful than even modern-day vertebrates: their sense of touch enables them to recognize differences in pressure from a long way away, while their electric sensitivity means they can pick up electromagnetic waves. Shark skin feels rough to the touch, but in fact it glides through the water with ease. Indeed, sharks are not the murderous killing machines they are often portrayed as. Many more sharks are killed by humans than humans by sharks.

## Insects

More than half of all known animal species are insects. Scientists have already identified around one million different types of insects, but they believe that there are many more millions that have not yet been found and described. Insects include parasites, disease vectors, flower pollinators, and honey makers. In the NHM Vienna's Insect Hall participants will learn much about this group of animals: Appearance, camouflage techniques, warning alerts, habitat, and group behavior.

## On the snail trail (bookable from April until September)

The mollusk exhibition shows the huge range of snails and their relatives that inhabit our planet – land-dwelling species, ocean-dwellers which breathe through gills as well as freshwater species which have lungs. In some regions snail shells were used as a form of payment, while whelks provided valuable crimson dye. School pupils learn to identify poisonous, edible, and unpopular snails, both with and without shells, and have the chance to hold a living land snail.

## Life in the forest

The forests of Europe are home to many well-known mammals: Roe deer, deer, wild boars, squirrels, badgers, wild cats, lynx, bears, and wolves. We try to find out why predators in particular have become so rare in Europe's forests or have even become extinct. Participants will also have the chance to learn more about many bird species they are already familiar with. Moorland forests are a popular habitat for beavers, the Black Stork, grass snakes, dice snakes, and many amphibians. In mountain forests you will often find wood grouse, viviparous lizards, and the Rosalia longicorn, one of the most beautiful beetles in the Alps.

### **Life in the rainforest**

Rainforests are some of the most diverse yet also endangered habitats in the world. This guided tour through the NHM Vienna focuses on both aspects. Groups can choose if they prefer to take a closer look at a specific geographical area or if they would like to receive an overview of rainforests around the world.

### **Life in the ocean**

This guided tour takes participants on a journey through oceans, coastlines, and their inhabitants. Snails, mussels, crabs, and fish are important sources of nutrition for humans. Other mammals and certain birds have also adapted to life in and around the world's oceans. The blue whale, for example, is the largest animal to have ever lived on Earth. The tour also makes participants aware of how important seas and oceans are as habitats and what humans are doing to destroy them.

### **Records in the animal kingdom**

School pupils learn about animals with exceptional abilities, from the speed of the leopard and the deadly poison of the sea snake to the incredible jumping power of the flea and the deep-sea diving prowess of the sperm whale. The guided tour underlines that the "records" set by humans often pale into insignificance when compared with what animals are capable of.

### **Animal senses**

Many animals have senses far more powerful than us humans. School pupils learn why wolves and dogs have such a good sense of smell and if the eagle really is "eagle-eyed". Other weird and wonderful highlights include the house fly, which "tastes" using its legs, and dolphins, which produce sounds that cannot be heard by humans.

### **Animals in winter**

How do brown bears, ermines, snow hares, squirrels, marmots, and hedgehogs survive the winter? Which strategies help them make it through the cold months of the year? Hibernation, food storage, extra layers of fat, minimal movement, and migration to warmer climes are just some of the techniques found in the animal world. Many animals also remain active in winter. Mice search for food under the snow, while the ermine hunts for prey. The exhibits at the NHM Vienna show many winter survival techniques such as thick fur, extra fat, and white feathers. The tour guide will point these out to participants and explain how they help the animal get through the winter.

### **Wild animals – domestic animals**

This guided tour introduces participants to early ancestors of modern-day domestic animals such as the wolf, African wildcat, mouflon, wild boar, mallard duck and red jungle fowl. Together with the guide, participants will be invited to talk about similarities and differences between pets and wild animals as well as to think about the process of how an animal becomes increasingly domesticated. It is interesting to notice that despite the fact there are so many different animal species in the NHM's collection, only few have been successfully domesticized by humans.

### **Development of life**

We set out to discover how life on Earth has developed. Participants have the chance to touch a stromatolite 1.8 billion years old, underlining just how far the evolution of life on Earth dates back. Further highlights include the first multicellular organisms and the earliest armored creatures. This journey through the history of evolution takes us from the earliest vertebrates and the first fish in the oceans to the largest mammals of the Ice Age.

### **Dinosaurs and their contemporaries**

This tour through the geological and paleontological galleries introduces children to the different kinds of saurian: pterosaurs, dinosaurs, ichthyosaurs, and plesiosaurs. Highlights include skeletons as well as fossilized eggs, excrement, and footprints; participants can also touch a real fossilized dinosaur bone. Using these objects and many other fossils, participants have the chance to see what life on Earth would have been like when dinosaurs were alive.

### **Meteorites – messengers from space**

What are meteorites? Where do they come from? How do they arrive on Earth? The tour presents the world's largest display of meteorites, demonstrating the origin and features of meteorites by means of selected objects and interactive displays. The tour also explains their role in exploring the universe. Being the oldest pieces of matter found in our solar system, meteorites provide important information about its origins.

### **Changing climate – changing life**

From the formation of the Earth all the way through to the modern day – our climate has always been and still is in constantly changing. Which factors determine and influence the climate? How are processes reinforced or mitigated? We try to find the answers to these questions on our guided tour through the geological and paleontological galleries. We will go back in time, move the continents around, and take a look at the Ice Age exhibition in the hope of finding signs of climate change past and present. Finally, the gaisphere – a virtual globe standing two meters high – gives us an insight into the processes which influence our climate.

### **Earth's system – minerals, rocks, and their formation**

What is a mineral? How can you identify minerals? The tour presents the largest, most beautiful and most valuable pieces of the NHM's mineral collection. It also provides information about the origin of minerals and rocks and uses interactive displays to demonstrate how the lithosphere interacts with the hydro-, bio- and atmosphere.

### **The finite nature of raw materials (suitable for school year 7 and above)**

Mobile phones, transport, energy, food – we use all these things every day without questioning where the raw materials behind them come from. How much longer will we be able to exploit these resources? How does recycling work? When will non-renewable energy forms run out? How does the loss of farming land in the Western world affect us? A special guided tour on raw materials through the Earth science collection of the NHM Vienna.

### **NHM Archeology**

A multimedia journey through prehistory and early history in Austria – from the Stone Age to the Early Middle Ages. Highlights of this guided tour include finds from the Neanderthal period, the Venus of Willendorf, the pile dwellings in Carinthia and Upper Austria (a UNESCO World Heritage Site), the prehistoric salt mine in Hallstatt, and the Celtic settlement in Roseldorf. The tour concludes in the first millennium AD, when Austria was mentioned for the first time in a written document.

**Opening times of the NHM Vienna**

Thursday to Monday from 9:00 until 18:30, Wednesday until 21:00, closed Tuesdays

**Duration**

50 minutes

**Group size**

Max. 29 pupils per group

**Price**

Admission Free up to the age of 19 years; 2 accompanying adults free for every 17 pupils

Guided tour € 4.00 per school pupil

€ 60.00 flat rate for groups of fewer than 15 school pupils

**Booking**

It is recommended to book three weeks in advance.

01/52177/335 (Monday 14:00 until 17:00, Wednesday to Friday 9:00 until 12:00)

[https://www.nhm-wien.ac.at/en/exhibitions/school\\_kindergarten/appointment\\_request](https://www.nhm-wien.ac.at/en/exhibitions/school_kindergarten/appointment_request)