

RESOURCE CENTRE AT THE SOUTH AFRICAN MUSEUM

Joanne Harrison and Brett Hendey

The new extensions to the South African Museum include a Resource Centre where members of the public, in particular teachers and pupils, can obtain information on natural history and anthropology from books, magazines, videos, slides and other educational resources. Specimens found by the public are identified here. A specimen loan library will be made available for use by teachers, students and scholars in the future. It is anticipated that this facility will be especially useful to teachers and pupils from disadvantaged schools.

INTRODUCTION

The new additions to the South African Museum were opened to the public in August 1987. Included in the new facilities is a Resource Centre where members of the public can find information on natural history and anthropological subjects by referring to the books and other materials kept in this area. The museum's Resource Centre differs from others in the Western Cape in that it is backed by the expertise of the museum's scientific staff and the extensive collections of materials representing people and their natural environment.

The chief aim of the Resource Centre is to help children find information for school projects. We also encourage teachers to use the Resource Centre to prepare for museum visits and follow-up activities. The general public are also catered for. Specimens found by the public may be brought to the Resource Centre where they will be identified by an appropriate member of the museum's scientific staff. It is anticipated that this facility will be especially useful to teachers and children from poorly equipped schools, and to persons from communities that lack adequate library and other educational resource facilities.

The Resource Centre is open from 10h00 - 16h30 daily and 14h00 - 16h30 on Sundays. It is anticipated that the Resource Centre will be expanded to include a library which will enable the museum to make specimens available to scholars, students and teachers on a loan basis.

RESOURCES CURRENTLY AVAILABLE:

Books

These include standard references such as *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Roberts' *Birds of South Africa*, Smithers' *The Mammals of the Southern African Sub-region*, Smith's *Sea Fishes*, *Cambridge Atlas of Astronomy* and many more.

Magazines

Magazines, journals and periodicals dealing with natural history, general science and anthropology such as *National Geographic*, *Natural History*, *Australian Natural History*, *African Wildlife*, *The Digging Stick*, *Rotunda* and publications from other overseas museums are available.

Resource material from other institutions

Copies of published material from other organisations such as the Cape Department of Nature and Environmental Conservation, BP Teacher's Resource Centre and the Department of Environment Affairs are available

for reference only. Visitors wishing to obtain this material are either referred to the source or given duplicate copies.

Material from other museums

Worksheets, activity books, guides, pamphlets and other educational material from museums in Southern Africa and overseas are kept in the museum education section of the Resource Centre. General information on museums and museum technology are also collected.

Maps and posters

A small collection of topographic, geological and vegetation maps of Southern Africa is kept. Posters from various institutions and museums are used for display purposes. Multiple copies of posters obtained free of charge from the Cape Department of Nature and Environmental Conservation are kept to send to teachers and children who request such items.

Video films

National Geographic and other natural history videos are available for screening to the public. Under special circumstances these may be made available for loan.

Colour transparencies

Slide tape shows on subjects such as biological classification, palaeontology, geology and African music are being produced. Copies of these programmes will eventually be made available for loan to schools.

Address and publication lists

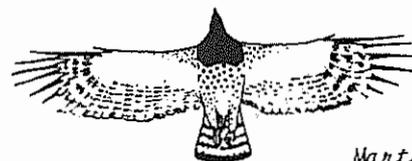
Addresses of museums, societies and conservation bodies are available. These will ultimately be computerised for ease of access. Current publication lists are sent to the Resource Centre from publishing houses. Catalogues of teaching aids from biological supply companies are also kept.

Specimens

Teaching specimens such as a model of a human skeleton, sheep skull, stone artefacts, fossils, snakes in alcohol and insects are kept on the bookshelves and provide a great source of interest to visitors who are able to touch most of them. A small collection of such specimens are available for loan to teachers from local schools.

Other articles of interest

Articles and pictures from newspapers and magazines on natural history, conservation, archaeology, ethnography and education are collected and filed for reference purposes. Photocopies of these are distributed on request to children for use in their school projects.



Martial Eagle