About us

Situated in the city centre, the Durban Natural Science Museum (DNSM) is one of the oldest and most popular museums in South Africa. Our mission is to acquire and disseminate knowledge about the Earth, its history, and life on Earth, both past and present. The DNSM was established in 1887 and has two sites, the City Hall galleries, which ensure that the public and schools are exposed to an enhanced visitor experience, and the Research Centre, which houses the collections and is where research is undertaken. The Research Centre in many ways is an exhibit in itself and is used as a tool to educate the public about our collections, which form the heart of our museum. We also have satellite museums which are found in areas further afield in the city. One such site is KwaZuzulwazi which is based in KwaMashu.

The City Hall galleries feature realistic dioramas, which depict an unrivalled collection of small and large mammals, a diverse collection of African birds, including a fossilized egg of an Elephant Bird, the largest bird ever to have graced the planet, the “KwaNunu Insect Arcade” – where you can inspect some of the 750 000 identified species of insects on earth today, and a variety of reptiles and amphibians in their natural habitats. The museum is also renowned for the close-to-life-size *Tyrannosaurus rex* (T-Rex) model and a near-complete Dodo skeleton that the Museum has housed for nearly 100 years. The Dodo skeleton is the second-most complete specimen in the world after the skeleton in Port Louis, Mauritius.

Our most recent and exciting development has been our GO-WILD Mobile Museum. GO-WILD serves as a practical tool to strengthen and increase learners’ understanding of class work, as the programmes offered are aligned to the school curriculum.
What Do We Offer:

- Guided Tours,
- Self-guided Tours,
- Curriculum-linked Mobile Museum Programmes
- KwaZuzulwazi (KZ) Programmes
How To Make A Booking

Step 1: **Visit, call or email** our information desk at 234 Anton Lembede Street, 031-3112256, nsm.frontdesk@durban.gov.za

Step 2: **Outline your requirements in detail**, including access needs. At this point a tentative reservation will be diarised in the name of your school (please note the times of the Mobile Museum, requirements and its services).

Step 3: **Complete a booking form and return it**. The form would have been handed, faxed or emailed to you. The completed form can be returned by dropping it off at the Museum’s information desk, by fax or email.

Step 4: Once the completed form has been returned, a booking confirmation will be forwarded to you – either by fax or email.

* Admission to the Durban Natural Science Museum is FREE

Please note all programmes represented in this booklet can be adapted for a Grade you wish for it to be presented to.
ACTIVITY: BODY PARTS AND FUNCTIONS
The body is the entire structure of an organism and its main parts are: head, neck, trunk and limbs. Each part has different functions and is adapted to the environment in which it lives.

ACTIVITY: CLASSIFICATION
Living organisms are sorted and classified in groups according to their shared characteristics.

Fast Fact:
All living organisms are first placed into different kingdoms. There are five different kingdoms to classify life on Earth, which are:

• Animals
• Plants
• Fungi
• Bacteria and
• Protists (single-celled organisms)
GRADE 1

ACTIVITY: ANIMALS AND THEIR HOMES
Animals have various adaptations that enhance their survival. Animals depend on their adaptations to help them obtain food, protection, build homes, withstand weather, and attract mates. Adaptations make it possible for the animal to live in a particular place and in a particular way.

GRADE 2

ACTIVITY: NIGHT ANIMALS
Nocturnal creatures generally have highly developed senses to help them avoid predators and find food and mates.

GRADE 3

ACTIVITY: INSECTS AND ANIMAL LIFE CYCLES
We examine the concept that animals can change in form as they grow older, and how the sexes can look different.
Intermediate Phase Modules
(Grades 4 - 6)

GRADE 4

ACTIVITY: TROPHIC LEVELS AND ENERGY FLOW
Energy Flow refers to the flow of energy through a biological food chain.

GRADE 5

ACTIVITY: FOOD CHAINS
A food chain explains how nutrients and energy are passed from one trophic level to another.

GRADE 6

ACTIVITY: FOOD WEBS
A food web is a natural interconnection of food chains in an ecological community.

Did you know?
Giraffes are herbivores and are exclusively browsers - feeding primarily on leaves and the protein-rich shoots of trees and shrubs, particularly the very thorny Acacia species.
ACTIVITY: ADVANCED CLASSIFICATION
Living organisms are sorted and classified according to their shared characteristics; and scientists have grouped all organisms into a classification system. The five main groups (called kingdoms) of living organisms include bacteria, protista, fungi, plants and animals. The animal kingdom includes both vertebrates and invertebrates.

Did you know?
The hamerkop is the only living species in the genus *Scopus* and the family *Scopidae*. The most fascinating aspect of the hamerkop behaviour is that they are compulsive nest builders, constructing three to five nests per year (about 1.5 metres wide) and it is strong enough to support a man’s weight. These birds decorate the outside with any brightly-coloured objects they can find (such as household and clothing items).
ACTIVITY: INTERACTIONS IN THE ENVIRONMENT

Organisms interact with other organisms and with the environments in which they live. This section is structured so that learners explore the impact of people on their environments (global, regional and local).

Learners are encouraged to look for and suggest solutions to local environmental problems.
GRADE 10

ACTIVITY: TROPHIC ENERGY LEVELS AND FOOD CHAINS/WEBS
An introduction to terms related to energy levels, food chains and food webs.

ACTIVITY: DIVERSITY LEVELS/COMPONENTS
We highlight the three different levels of biodiversity: ecological, species and genetic.
ACTIVITY: BIODIVERSITY/ECOSYSTEM SERVICES AND HUMAN IMPACTS ON BIODIVERSITY

This focuses on the three different levels of biodiversity/ecosystem services and how human impacts can affect these services.

ACTIVITY: SPECIES INTERACTIONS AND SPECIALISATION IN THE ENVIRONMENT

An introduction to terms related to energy levels, food chains and food webs.

ACTIVITY: ECOLOGICAL NICHE

This refers to the role that a particular species plays and the space that the species occupies in an ecosystem. A niche includes the unique set of resources that each particular species requires and utilizes.

LOSS OF BIODIVERSITY

This focuses on biodiversity loss with specific examples that are currently topical.

Did you know?

Rhinos act as “flagship species” because they require large areas and significant protection measures that help to conserve a wide range of biodiversity, particularly where wildlife-based land-use systems have been established.
KwaZuzulwazi (KZ) Programmes

GRADE 4

TERM 3

ACTIVITY: TROPHIC LEVELS AND ENERGY FLOW
Energy Flow refers to the flow of energy through a biological food chain.

ACTIVITY: FEEDING ADAPTATIONS
The focus is on the different types of skulls and four main types of teeth.

GRADE 5

TERM 1

ACTIVITY: FOOD CHAINS
A food chain explains how nutrients and energy are passed from one trophic level to another.

Fast Fact:

- Ostrich eggs are 15 cm in diameter and can weigh up to 1.3 kg.
- Ostriches have very small brains.
- Ostriches have powerful legs and clawed toes. One strong kick can kill a lion.

The flightless ostrich is the world’s largest bird. It is also the fastest runner of any bird or other two-legged animal and can sprint at over 70 km/h.
GRADE 6

TERM 1

ACTIVITY: FOOD WEBS
A food web is a natural interconnection of food chains in an ecological community.

GRADE 7

TERM 1

ADVANCED CLASSIFICATION AND TAXONOMY
Living organisms are sorted and classified according to their shared characteristics and scientists have grouped all organisms into a classification system. The five main groups (called kingdoms) of living organisms include bacteria, protista, fungi, plants and animals. The animal kingdom includes both vertebrates and invertebrates.

For this activity, we will only be looking at the classification of animals.

GRADE 11

TERM 3

ACTIVITY: SPECIES INTERACTIONS AND SPECIALISATION IN THE ENVIRONMENT
An introduction to key concepts related to species relationships and specialisations.

GRADE 12

TERM 3

ACTIVITY: THE HUMAN BODY
Learning about the human body, form and function.
Visit us at:

**Museum**
1st Floor City Hall
234 Anton Lembede Street
Durban

**Research Centre**
151 KE Masinga Road
Durban

**KwaZuzulwazi (KZ)**
KwaMashu 1136
Malendela Road, Section E
KwaMashu
*(Opposite the police station)*

Please note: Guided tours require prior booking
**CONTACT: 031 311 2256 OR nsm.frontdesk@durban.gov.za FOR BOOKINGS**