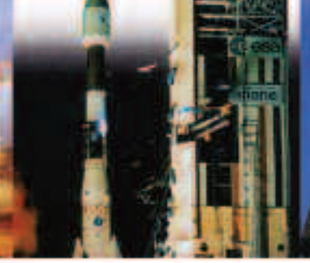
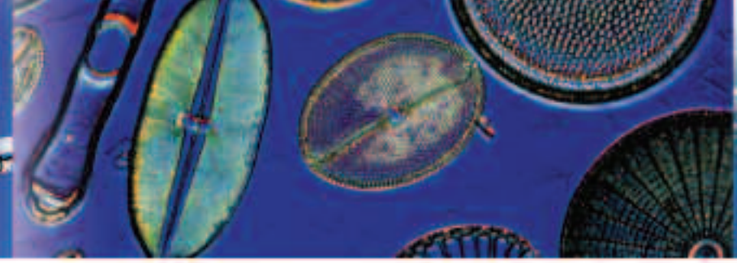


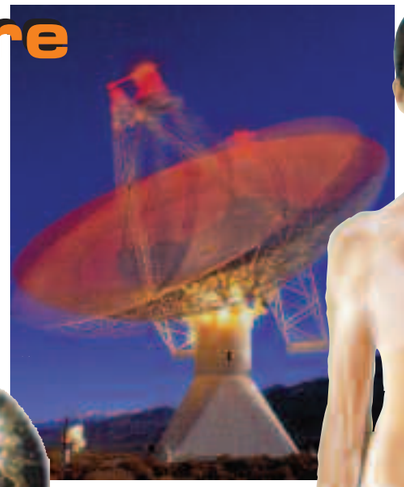


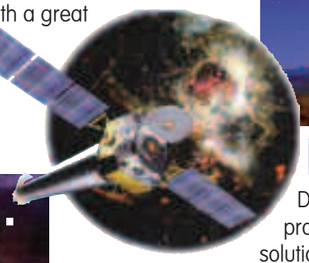
Scifest Africa 2009: Space to Explore

SciFest Africa is South Africa's National Science Festival and it will transform the way you think about science! It takes place in Grahamstown, Eastern Cape, 25-31 March 2009.

SciFest Africa was the first festival of its kind on the continent and was launched in 1997 as a national event to promote a culture of science in South Africa in a fun way. The Festival aims to change the way you think about science and create a new generation of fans! It highlights how science, technology, engineering and mathematics form a major part of our everyday activities. Visitors will be able to interact with science in a colourful and safe environment, while the Festival's incredible range of interactive events also provides you with a great opportunity to discover science outside the classroom.

At SciFest Africa, South African and the world's leading scientists share their work and make science accessible to ordinary people. They give career guidance and act as role models for our youth.

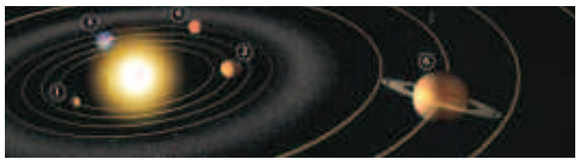




Space to Explore all of this…

International Year of Astronomy

The United Nations has declared 2009 the International Year of Astronomy (IYA2009). According to the declaration, "the vision of the IYA2009 is to help the citizens of the world rediscover their place in the Universe through the day and night time sky and thereby engage a personal sense of wonder and discovery." SciFest encourages that sense of wonder… space to explore!



Innovation

Design and innovation provide us with simple solutions to everyday problems, whether on a massive scale in industries or on a smaller scale at home. SciFest Africa showcases, encourages and supports such design and innovation ideas.

Darwin 200

SciFest Africa will also be celebrating the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin and exploring the ways that his books and writings totally changed thinking in the biological sciences, and is still being felt today.

Did You Know?

Charles Robert Darwin (12 February 1809 – 19 April 1882) was an English naturalist, who realised and demonstrated that all species of life have evolved over time from common ancestors through the process he called natural selection.

Great Minds

Some of the world and South Africa's leading scientists will be sharing their knowledge with us at SciFest Africa:

Nina Jablonski

She will talk about skin – its colours, its importance in our daily lives and why we shouldn't take it for granted. Did you know that humans are the sweatiest of mammals? Why is skin and sweating important in terms of our evolution? Join her for a fascinating lecture and learn more than ever before about the self-decorating ape – us!

Mike Bruton

He's baffled your brain with questions about boys and girls. He's wowed you with the history of Islamic science and now he's here to tell us more about Darwin. If you think you knew something – make sure you attend his lecture to find out more!

Science Shows

Chris Smith from 'The Naked Scientists' in the UK has confirmed he will be bringing what he does best to the 2009 festival – and that is to present science in its purest form and without the big words and confusing equations; just the bare essentials! The Naked Scientists is a group of physicians and researchers from Cambridge University.

Talkshops, workshops, science shows, exhibitions and more, science can't get more exciting than this!

What will be Happening at SciFest Africa?

There will be more than 600 events going on! Just take a look at some of them:

- Astronomy lessons
- Educational theatre
- Documentaries and feature films
- A hobbies fair
- Interactive exhibitions
- SciFest Africa Laser Show
- Scikidz Experience

If you cannot make it to Grahamstown to experience SciFest Africa, look out for other events that will take the best of what the festival has to offer to your city!

Spoor of the Year

Every year SciFest Africa draws attention to the plight of an endangered animal and 2009 will concentrate on the Cape Vulture. The Cape Vulture is the only endemic vulture species that occurs in southern Africa and is currently listed as 'vulnerable'.

They are identified by their large size and creamy-white plumage. The bare neck and shoulder patches with blue-grey skin is distinctive in this species. Adult birds also have yellow (straw-coloured) eyes, while younger birds have a dark eye. They have sturdy legs and feet, but lack the sharp talons of other birds of prey. The bill is large and curved with a sharp tip and cutting edges which assist them in removing chunks of meat from carcasses when feeding.

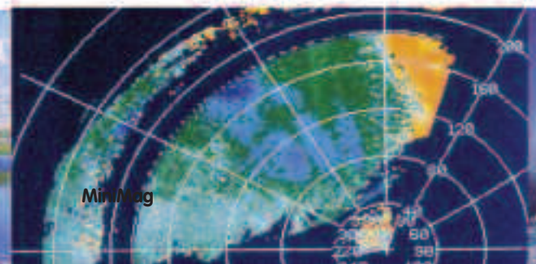
Cape Vultures play an important role in the ecosystem in cleaning up carcasses of dead animals, both wildlife and livestock, in the veld. This can prevent the possible spread of disease and assists in the rapid recycling of nutrients into the system.

The Cape Vulture breeds in colonies along suitable cliff faces from the Western Cape to as far north as the Blouberg in Limpopo. These birds range far and wide in their search for food and can cover considerable distances in a day on their foraging flights. Research has shown that some birds can cover more than 500km a day during the peak of the breeding season when they need to provide a regular supply of food to their chicks!

How to Plan your visit to SciFest Africa 2009

Visit our dynamic website at ***www.scifest.org.za***. It contains up-to-date information and allows visitors to check for cancellations, changes and extra shows.

Tickets

Book early to avoid disappointment.

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