



A Lockdown Project: SA Shelling Spots

Dear Members,

Things can really change in the blink of an eye! Since my last letter, circulated in January, the world has been thrown into turmoil by an invisible enemy, leading to lockdowns and social distancing measures across the planet. Health services and governments have been struggling to find viable solutions to the pandemic, and many of you are probably still stuck at home – hopefully exploiting the time and opportunity given to reconnect with family, loved ones and even rediscover forgotten talents and old pastimes.

In light of the above I thought it would be an opportune time to tackle a project I've been entertaining in my mind for some time now. It centres on the creation of an interactive resource providing information on the best shell collecting areas along South Africa's coasts. The Committee has endorsed the concept and we now need to flesh out the content. The goal is to develop an interactive map, accessible from our website, providing visitors with basic information guiding them to some of our best marine shelling areas.

This is where you come into the picture. We need to collaborate on this, to help make it a success. No single person in the Society has all the knowledge to prepare such a resource, and the Committee is relying on all our Members to provide us with as much information as possible to help complete it. It will obviously remain a "living resource", in other words we will update it as new information becomes available, but we need a good starting point to work from for the first edition.

Attached to this email is a short template containing the instructions for the information we require. Although this is also contained in the template, I repeat the following for clarity:

The resource will focus on marine shells and marine shelling areas only (i.e. no fresh water or land snails).

No deep water areas will be identified, i.e. no shelling areas accessible through utilisation of SCUBA or dredging equipment will be shown, only areas accessible on foot from land. This will include beaches, rock pools/gullies, tidal pools, shallow coastal reefs and other shallow water areas limited to snorkelling depth only.

It should be noted that this resource is not meant to be a tool to be used for the exploitation of our natural marine ecosystems and should therefore not be viewed in this light. It is, however, hoped that it will enhance coastal visits and shell collecting experiences for local collectors and those visiting our shores from abroad.

Please provide whatever information you can or want – anything can be useful and we as a Committee will flesh out the details once we have received the feedback from our Members. Any feedback, in whichever format – whether completed template, photos, maps, or other information – should be emailed to me (andrepm32@gmail.com) as well as our Editor (brownkenneth924@gmail.com).

Till next time, happy shelling!

President, SCSA
22 April 2020

