

The Rocks and Mountains of Cape Town

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John S. Compton



to Lisa & Ross

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Contents

LOCATION MAP	7
Preface	8
CHAPTER 1 Understanding the landscape	10
Mountains rising up from the Flats	12
The view from space	15
Ancient continental collisions and the African superswell	21
Rocks and their landforms	24
From rock to soil	30
Plants on the rocks	36
CHAPTER 2 Reading the rocks	40
Cape Town's oldest rocks	44
Deep intrusion of Cape Granite magma	50
Uplift and erosion: deep earth exposed	55
An enormous pile of sand	57
The Cape Fold Belt: collision and deformation on a large scale	68
Pangaea breakup and the Great Escarpment	71
Youthful cover on a very old surface	73
Langebaan Lagoon	81
Summary of the rocks' story	83
CHAPTER 3 Living on the rocks	84
Early Capetonians	88
Alien invasion and the loss of soil, water and biodiversity	91
Water from the rocks	95
Altered landscapes	98
Natural hazards	100
The future	104
Acknowledgements	106
Illustration Credits	106
Additional Readings	108
GEOLOGICAL MAP	110
Index	112

Yzerfontein

Dassen Island

Swartland

R27

25

23

N7

26

28

27

Robben Island

29

ATLANTIC OCEAN

TABLE BAY

13

14

N1

15

19

1

12

11

30

31

CAPE FLATS

N2

10

9

4

8

FALSE BAY

5

7

6

CAPE POINT

Hangklip



Figure 1. Topographic road map of Cape Town and the surrounding areas.

- 1 CBD
- 2 Disa River/Hout Bay
- 3 Chapman's Peak Drive
- 4 Noordhoek Beach
- 5 Kommetjie
- 6 Cape of Good Hope Reserve
- 7 Simon's Town/Boulders Beach
- 8 Fish Hoek
- 9 Peers Cave
- 10 Cecilia Plantation
- 11 Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens
- 12 Rhodes Memorial
- 13 Rietvlei
- 14 Tygerberg
- 15 Bottelaryberg
- 16 Sir Lowry's Pass
- 17 Hottentots Holland Mountains
- 18 Kogelberg Reserve
- 19 Stellenbosch
- 20 Franschhoek
- 21 Paarl
- 22 Paarl Rock
- 23 Malmesbury
- 24 Tulbagh
- 25 Darling Hills
- 26 Koeberg Nuclear Power Station
- 27 Blouberg
- 28 Koeberg
- 29 Bloubergstrand
- 30 Rondebosch Common
- 31 Kenilworth Racecourse



Preface

After learning that I am a geologist, acquaintances often approach me with a question about a rock exposure they have seen on a hike or Sunday drive, or present me with a rock that has struck their curiosity. I have come to realise that many people besides the students I teach at university are interested in the rocks and mountains that they see every day on their way to work or on weekend outdoor excursions. It is for these people that this book has been written.

My aim is to provide a basic guide to the rocks and mountains that are so spectacularly on display in the Cape Town area. No prior knowledge of the earth sciences is assumed, and any essential scientific concepts and processes are briefly explained in separate text boxes. The emphasis is on the greater Cape Town area, but easily accessed and popular areas of the Western Cape, most within an hour's drive of Cape Town, are also included (Fig. 1).



Figure 2. The city of Cape Town sits nestled within the City Bowl, a large mountainous amphitheatre that opens to the sea at the northern end of the Cape Peninsula. The suburbs of the city sprawl out over most of the Cape Flats to the east (left).

Part of the joy of visiting or living in Cape Town is the ever-present, dramatic mountain vistas and beautiful rock exposures one views while walking in the mountains or along the coast (Fig. 2). I hope that this book will add new insights and a dimension of understanding that increase both the pleasure of being in Cape Town and a sense of 'connectedness' to the environment. In so doing, my objective has not been to diminish the mystique, but rather to enhance the awe; to get people thinking about and engaged in their surroundings. The main focus of the book is on the deep, geologic time of the rocks and mountains, but I have also integrated the story of the relationship of the landscape, plants and people to the rocks. In this way this book ties into the number of excellent guides available on the natural history, flora, people and hiking trails of the area. It is this interdisciplinary approach that yields a more holistic and deeper understanding critical to our appreciation and responsible use of our natural world.