



At the Ontario Science Centre

Survival is keynote in Spaceship gallery

Like the astronaut en route to the moon who looks back and realizes the earth, too, is a spaceship, the earthbound visitor to the Ontario Science Centre is offered a new point of globular view in an exhibit gallery.

The aim of the new exhibit structure is to illustrate—without alarm, without ominous warnings—how life on earth is governed by a system of balances, how this always has been the case and always will be.

It draws upon an analogy: astronauts exist in spaceships which simulate conditions on earth, but which give them only those life support systems necessary for them to stay alive and function in space for a few days.

Integral parts

The earth as a spaceship has, on the other hand, all the integral parts needed to supply life indefinitely—or until the balance of supplies is accidentally or foolishly upset.

This precise balance of life is the underlying theme of the new exhibit gallery, and Spaceship Earth is its name. The title is taken from Buckminster Fuller, who has been talking and writing about Spaceship Earth for years.

Survival is a keynote of the Spaceship Earth gallery. Part of it is a desert exhibit which illustrates how certain forms of life can survive only in a

particular environment. Live snakes and lizards living in a jungle of strange cacti would perish without the heat and dryness of the desert.

Another area of exhibits demonstrates how certain species not only survive when taken to a new environment—they can become ecological disasters. The introduction into Australia of a few pairs of European rabbits seemed harmless. But the rabbits found no natural enemies in Australia. Within a few years they had multiplied to somewhere between one and three billion. It took a disease fatal only to rabbits to bring them under control and stop their destruction of farm land.

Part of web

What does a blade of grass have in common with man? Both are part of the Land Food Web, a large exhibit showing who eats what to survive. An Ocean Food Web is also depicted with tank after tank of live, exotic sea life.

A highlight of Spaceship Earth will be the water re-cycling unit. This intricate series of glass tubing gulps polluted water and swishes it through a series of strange filters until it emerges as pure drinkable water. Some of the filtration processes simulated are ones that occur in nature, while others are processes developed by man.

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