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**A PhD studentship is available to investigate the reproduction and life history patterns of a non-indigenous *Diopatra* species in the Knysna Estuary**

It was recently established that the *Diopatra* species (moonshine worm) collected as bait in the Knysna Estuary is not indigenous to South Africa. However, its large-scale removal is hampered by its size in conjunction with the protected status of the estuary. The worms live in tubes that are up to 1m deep, so removal by digging is impractical and will cause irreparable damage to the estuary. Thus, understanding its reproductive and life history patterns can identify periods when the worms might be most susceptible to management procedures.

This project will investigate the reproductive characters and cycles of *D. aciculata* by assessing population dynamics, oocyte sizes, and spawning periods, investigate the presence of source and sink sub-populations, and connectivity between populations in South Africa and elsewhere, and census density throughout the estuary over the long term.

The successful candidate will be supervised by Prof. Carol Simon, head of the Simon Polychaete Research Group based in the Department of Botany and Zoology at Stellenbosch University with different parts of the study co-supervised by Prof. Conrad Matthee (Stellenbosch University), Dr Louw Claassens (Knysna Basin Project) and Mr Kyle Smith (SANParks, Garden Route National Park).

The candidate must have an appropriate MSc degree with excellent records; experience in molecular techniques and statistical data analyses are to your advantage but not prerequisites.

The scholarship is valued at R120 000 pa, for 3 years. The position is available as of January 2020, but commencement date is negotiable.

To apply, please send, in a single pdf document, a one-page motivation letter and CV (including your academic record, names and contact details of two referees) to [csimon@sun.ac.za](mailto:csimon@sun.ac.za) by 10 December 2019. All enquiries may also be directed to Prof. Simon.

For information on research conducted by the group, go to <http://www.thesimonpolychaetelab.com/>, <http://academic.sun.ac.za/botzoo/csimon/index.htm>, <http://www.knysnabasinproject.co.za/projects/knysna-bait-project> or follow us @SimonPolyLabSA