

M.Sc. position in Marine Ecology investigating the anthropogenic effects on invertebrate larval connectivity

We are seeking an enthusiastic and self-motivated South African Master's Degree candidate to join a multidisciplinary project investigating coastal water quality and the role of the natural environment in mitigating pollution effects on the South African south coast.

Coastal water quality can be highly impacted by agriculture, urbanisation and/or intense human activity, and understanding the role that natural coastal communities play in informing and mitigating the effects of such stressors has become critical. Filter feeders like mussels provide a direct ecosystem service as a food source and their role as a potential tool to mitigate pollution effects in coastal areas has been completely overlooked within the South African geographic context.

In this project, the successful candidate will evaluate possible anthropogenic input effects on benthic invertebrate connectivity and overall mussel communities. The student will be based at the South African Institute of Aquatic Biodiversity (SAIAB) in Grahamstown, but with the possibility to spend time with collaborators at the University of Cape Town.

Applicants must hold an Honours degree in Marine Science or similar and have excellent written and verbal English skills. The ideal candidate should also have a background in experimental design, data analysis, ecology and zoology. Shipboard, rocky shore and laboratory experience will be a further advantage.

The fellowship will be awarded on a two-year full time basis for a value of R60 000 per year funded through the African Coelacanth Ecosystem Programme. It is compliant with SARS policies/rules and is therefore exempt from taxation. There are no benefits or allowances included in the value of the fellowship. The successful candidate will be required to comply with the SAIAB's approved policies, procedures and practises for the master degree sector.

The successful candidate will be required to commence the fellowship in April 2018 or shortly thereafter.

Suitable candidates are required to submit the following:

- a motivation letter stating areas of expertise, research interests, experience and the reasons why you are a suitable candidate;
- academic Curriculum Vitae;
- official academic transcripts of undergraduate and Honours degrees;
- names (and contact details) of two referees.

Enquiries and complete application packages should be submitted as a single PDF to Dr Francesca Porri (f.porri@saiab.ac.za) and Dr Eleonora Puccinelli (eleonorapuccinelli@gmail.com). The closing date for submission of applications is 12 March 2018.

We reserve the right to disqualify ineligible, incomplete and/or inappropriate applications; to change the conditions of the award or to make no award should there be no suitable candidate for this position.