
Field researcher position on Marion Island (sub-Antarctic) - 1 post: Ornithology -

Through the South African National Antarctic Programme (SANAP; <http://www.sanap.ac.za>), the Marine Apex Predator Research Unit (MAPRU; Coastal and Marine Research Institute at Nelson Mandela University) in collaboration with the FitzPatrick Institute of Ornithology (University of Cape Town), is offering one suitably qualified candidate an opportunity to spend a year on Marion Island collecting field data on seabirds to be used for academic purposes.

The post falls within the project '**Small Procellariiformes as indicators of ecosystem changes and plastic pollution**' led by Dr. Maëlle Connan (Nelson Mandela University) and Prof. Peter Ryan (FitzPatrick Institute, University of Cape Town). The project intends to use small Procellariiformes breeding on the Prince Edward islands, the Tristan da Cunha archipelago and possibly Antarctica as indicators of the health and status of the Southern Ocean ecosystem. One aspect of the project focuses on the trophic ecology of these species while the other uses the birds as biological samplers to investigate the extent and temporal trends of plastic pollution in the Southern Ocean. This project is the first, since the 1980s, to focus on burrowing nesting seabirds.

DUTIES:

- The Prince Edward Islands are thought to house 12 burrow nesting species of birds, and the work will first entail prospecting to identify the breeding areas, which are still unknown for some species. This will require extensive walking over rough terrain under demanding environmental conditions;
- Dietary data and a wide range of samples will be collected from seabirds to study their trophic ecology and the current extent of pollution;
- The successful applicant will need to manage and keep track of all aspects of the research;
- Office work will entail report writing and keeping meticulous records of all collected data and samples;
- The successful applicant will furthermore contribute towards on-going long-term seabird monitoring, involving penguin, giant petrel and albatross species.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS:

The incumbents will execute duties at an Antarctic Base and adhere to the health, safety and environmental requirements of the managing authority (Department of Environmental Affairs). **The successful applicants will spend a full year (April 2019 to May 2020) on Marion Island. There is no option to return to South Africa before May 2020.** The ability to work and live with small groups of people is thus essential. The base is equipped with intermittent e-mail, fax and

satellite telephone facilities; therefore, the applicant must be able to do without being constantly connected.

Candidates must be physically very fit, mentally strong and enjoy the challenge of physically demanding work. In addition, the successful candidates may often be called upon to work long hours in extreme conditions on duties unrelated to their core function.

Appointment to this position is subject to a rigorous medical examination, which will be arranged for at no cost to the applicant.

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS:

- Strong academic background (minimum of a BSc Honours), with a possibility of working towards either an MSc or a PhD within the project (preference will be given to candidates with higher qualifications);
- Previous experience in handling birds including tissue sampling;
- Demonstrated history of field activity in demanding environment collecting biological data will be a distinct advantage;
- Curious, self-motivated, well-organized and demonstrated attention to detail as several samples will be collected for further chemical analyses for which strict protocols need to be followed;
- Computer literacy with experience in data management and report writing.

SALARY:

Approximately R 170,000 p.a. dependent on qualification (plus R17,000 potential bonus at end of contract).

APPLICATION:

- Comprehensive CV, including contact details of at least three referees;
- Cover letter indicating eligibility for the post;
- Certified copies of academic records and ID.

Note: South African applicants will receive priority. Preference will be given to previously disadvantaged individuals who are particularly encouraged to apply for this contract position.

If you have not been contacted by the 15th of December, please accept that your application was unsuccessful.

**Queries or applications should be directed to Dr Maëlle Connan
(maelle.connan@gmail.com)**

Closing date: 15 November 2018
