PhD opportunities in conservation genomics and climate change

Two NRF PhD funded positions are available in the lab of Prof. Sophie von der Heyden lab at the Department of Botany and Zoology, Stellenbosch University. Both students will be involved in the newly funded “Project SeaStore: integrated research to support seagrass restoration and to build estuarine resilience in South Africa”, that combines transcriptomic and functional diversity in natural and experimental populations of the seagrass, Zostera capensis, throughout its range. The project is a collaboration involving Stellenbosch University (Profs Sophie von der Heyden, Guy Midgley), Nelson Mandela University (Prof Janine Adams), University of Cape Town (Dr Deena Pillay) and the Knysna Basin Project (Dr Louw Claassens).

Students will be based at the von der Heyden Lab at Stellenbosch University, one of Africa’s leading marine research groups specializing in the use of molecular tools to understand patterns and processes driving southern Africa’s rich marine biodiversity. We are a dynamic lab, with a strong emphasis on research excellence as well as student training and support. Our work spans population genetics and phylogeography, fisheries management/stock identification, historical biogeography and the impacts of historical and contemporary climate change on species distributions. To do this, we utilise a wide range of tools including genomics and environmental DNA, with our overarching goal of promoting the integration of molecular tools into conservation and sustainable utilization of southern African marine species and resources. You can find out more about the von der Heyden lab and marine research at Stellenbosch University here: www.vonderheydenlab.com or via FB www.facebook.com/vonderheydenlab or on Twitter: @vonderheydenlab

Applicants for these positions will hard-working, enthusiastic and independently motivated students, with an average of at least 65% for your MSc (or equivalent degree). Ideally you would have some experience in molecular methodologies (even basic applications such as DNA extractions, PCR and sequencing are a bonus), have had some exposure to bioinformatics and some background in marine/estuarine ecology or biodiversity. We do provide training in all analytical methodology and this is a great opportunity for students who wish to gain more exposure in genomics, bioinformatics and their application to conservation.

Please direct all enquiries to Prof Sophie von der Heyden, svdh@sun.ac.za. For applications to be considered, include an academic transcript, CV and if applicable, details of molecular experience. The bursaries (R120,000 per annum for three years), are only available for full-time study for South African citizens or permanent residents, although exceptional international (including SADC) students can be considered. Closing date 18th February 2019.