

WEBINAR

22

DAY

05

MONTH

26

YEAR

South Africa's offshore benthic biodiversity: Progress, challenges and opportunities

Dr Lara
Atkinson

Dr Atkinson has served as the Offshore Biodiversity Scientist with the NRF South African Environmental Observation Network (SAEON) since 2010, focusing on long-term monitoring of offshore benthic epifaunal invertebrates and assessing human impacts on the marine environment. Dr Atkinson collaborates actively with offshore industries including commercial trawl and petroleum mining, promoting sustainable resource use and marine conservation. As an Honorary Research Associate at the University of Cape Town, she contributes to capacity development through lecturing, mentoring, and postgraduate supervision.

In celebration of International Biodiversity Day on 22nd May, this presentation showcases fifteen years of foundational offshore biodiversity research in South Africa, sharing discoveries, lessons learnt and the growing momentum. From the initiatives that helped to mobilise and collate critical offshore benthic datasets, to how these data have been taken up across the research-to-management value chain, this presentation shares the progress achieved so far. With a focus on deep sea benthic invertebrates, she will explore how foundational knowledge has been translated to inform conservation and management outcomes, while acknowledging some obstacles encountered and the solutions that helped to move us forwards. Finally, she will touch on some exciting opportunities that lie ahead for this research in South Africa as we build international partnerships and contribute towards the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.



Friday, 22 May 2026, 12:00 - 13:00 SAST

Ocean Sciences Campus, B Block, Conference Hall, Nelson Mandela Uni

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