

## SEMINAR: INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIODIVERSITY - SHOWCASING PLANKTON DIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY DYNAMICS WITHIN ALGOA BAY



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Marine phytoplankton and zooplankton are fundamental and form the basis of the ocean's food web. Plankton biodiversity is essential for ecosystem health and enables the various ecosystem services provided by coastal ecosystems. Shifts in phytoplankton community structure have significant implications on higher trophic levels. Zooplankton is one of the highly diverse and critical components of aquatic systems as it includes holoplanktonic (spend their entire life as planktonic) and meroplanktonic (spend part of their life as planktonic) organisms. Zooplankton functional and species diversity are key indicators of change in coastal ecosystems given their high sensitivity to environmental change; and because they are not commercially harvested; changes to their abundance and distribution can be attributed to environmental change. Increased anthropogenic pressures such as nutrient loadings and warming events alter the natural oscillations and species distribution of zooplankton and ultimately impacting the entire ecosystem.

*This talk draws from an ongoing SAEON Elwandle Node's Pelagic Ecosystem Long-Term Ecological Research (PELTER) monitoring programme and highlights zooplankton diversity, biodiversity hotspots and associated trends.*

**DATE:** 23 May 2025, 09:00 - 10:00 SAST

**VENUE:** Conference Hall, Ocean Sciences Campus, B Block

**RSVP FOR ONLINE OR IN-PERSON:**

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