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# PHD CALL – SOUTHERN RIGHT WHALE FORAGING ECOLOGY (MRI WHALE UNIT)

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The Mammal Research Institute (MRI) Whale Unit at the University of Pretoria is looking for an enthusiastic PhD student to take on an exciting project related to the in-depth assessment of contemporary foraging ecology and migratory behaviour of South Africa's population of southern right whales, in the context of some recent anomalous demographic shifts in the population. A vital part of this investigation is the assessment of the changed residence time on the South African breeding ground, the identification of (possibly altered) migration routes, and the determination of current feeding distributions. Such information will be attained through satellite tagging of adult individuals during their winter migration. This project will form an integral part of the related work conducted under the Southern Ocean Research Partnership (<http://www.marinemammals.gov.au/sorp/the-right-sentinel-for-climate-change>)

The student will be supervised by Dr Els Vermeulen and Prof Andre Ganswindt, and will be based at the MRI Whale Unit's office in Hermanus, South Africa. Funding is currently available to cover all project related costs. However, the project will only commence once a competitive PhD fellowship has been attained.

We welcome applicants of all backgrounds. Successful applicants will be hard-working, enthusiastic, and independently motivated students with a strong academic background, an advanced knowledge of statistical modelling, and with excellent communication skills. Previous boat-based field experience would be highly advantageous but is not a must.

To find out more about the MRI Whale Unit [here](#), on our '[Adopt a Whale](#)' page, on [Facebook](#), or on Twitter: [@MRI\\_Whale\\_Unit](#)

Please direct all enquiries to Dr Els Vermeulen ([els.vermeulen@up.ac.za](mailto:els.vermeulen@up.ac.za)). For applications to be considered, include a cover letter, an academic transcript and CV. Closing date 31/03/2021.

*Dr Els Vermeulen - Research Manager  
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Department of Zoology and Entomology  
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