

# SANCOR celebrates excellence in marine science

The South African Network for Coastal and Oceanic Research (SANCOR) is proud to announce the recipients of the triennial SANCOR Awards. The awards were presented on 22 June 2022 at the gala evening of the 17<sup>th</sup> Southern African Marine Science Symposium (SAMSS) in Durban. The awards aim to recognize outstanding scientists, technicians, communicators and young researchers in the field of marine science. Nominations for these awards were submitted by members of the marine science community and assessed by independent expert panels.

Citations are listed below.

## About the Awards:

The Marine & Coastal Communicator Awards are made to individuals or groups of individuals in recognition of their outstanding contributions towards communication of information about the marine and coastal environment to the public via various media at various levels. This award serves as an acknowledgement of, and a symbol of appreciation for, the dedication, enthusiasm and diligence of the persons performing such communication.

The SANCOR Young Researchers Award has been established to acknowledge a new generation of scientists and to encourage research excellence in science in the marine and coastal environment.

Derek Krige Medal is awarded in recognition of outstanding achievements in the field of technical support to marine science in South Africa. The award of this medal serves to emphasize the valuable contribution to marine science made by those who provide the technical and logistical support services that make research possible.

The Gilchrist Medal is awarded to distinguished marine scientists. The Medal serves as recognition of the recipients' contributions to marine science, to further stimulate excellence in South African marine science, and to focus attention on South Africa's marine and coastal environments.

## MARINE AND COASTAL COMMUNICATOR AWARD



Russell Stevens



Kerry Sink

## DEREK KRIGE MEDAL



Johan Rademan



Dagmar Merkle

## SANCOR YOUNG RESEARCHERS AWARD



Nasreen Peer



Denham Parker

## GILCHRIST MEDAL



Carl van der Lingen



Lynne Shannon

*Recipient of the*

# MARINE AND COASTAL COMMUNICATOR AWARD 2022

Scientific Category

Professor Kerry Sink

In recognition of outstanding contributions towards communication of information about the marine and coastal environment to the public. This award serves as an acknowledgement of, and a symbol of appreciation for, the dedication, enthusiasm and diligence of the persons performing such communication.

As marine programme manager and principal scientist at the South African National Biodiversity Institute, Kerry Sink is at the forefront of science to policy in the marine realm and she has been an instrumental role player across both of these spheres. In her role as principal scientist, she is responsible for coordinating and producing key scientific publications, but she has also made significant efforts to communicate her science to broader audiences. Her dedication, enthusiasm and diligence to shifting perceptions, making the case for protection and highlighting economic and emotional value of South Africa's offshore environment has resulted in some instrumental science communication pieces. Kerry was able to establish South Africa's marine biodiversity as a national asset, a representative Marine Protected Areas network as a practical solution for integrated ocean management and as a legacy for future generations using scientific information, economic data and emotional values. Kerry used a highly visual approach in her scientific communication, showing people the ecosystems, species and benefits of protection drawing from her own research, literature and personal stories. Her passion for the ocean is her primary driver, not her ego, and it is this passion that makes her such a wonderful and honest communicator. This is evident in the amount of time she has dedicated to ensuring that her research is communicated to the people who can use that knowledge, especially decision makers.

SOUTH AFRICAN NETWORK FOR COASTAL AND OCEANIC RESEARCH

*Recipient of the*

# MARINE AND COASTAL COMMUNICATOR AWARD 2022

Professional Category

Russell Stevens

In recognition of outstanding contributions towards communication of information about the marine and coastal environment to the public. This award serves as an acknowledgement of, and a symbol of appreciation for, the dedication, enthusiasm and diligence of the persons performing such communication.

Russell has established an Education Department at the Aquarium with 26 employees. They are involved in the presentation of lessons to visiting school groups, ranging from pre-school right through to tertiary student groups. In addition to daily presentations on site, there are three mobile Outreach programs, taking animals and lessons to previously disadvantaged communities. Under Russell's leadership, it has become possible to make use of suitable live animals (kept in dedicated holding facilities in the classrooms) for use in a range of interactive hands-on lessons. He has also guided the introduction of enrichment courses running over weekends and during school holidays. Russell is also in regular communication with Education dept officials and serves on the board of the school Governing Body association to ensure that our programs are seen as valuable and remain accessible to all target groups. Russell not only shows an interest in and attends the conferences of various Education and Environmental Education organisations, but that he is also prepared to network extensively and become involved in the moulding and management of these vital organisations. It is his incredible passion, foresight and determination which culminated in Marine Sciences being considered and finally accepted as a National FET subject in South Africa, launching at six Western Cape schools in 2020 and destined to be rolled out at many more once it has established itself.

SOUTH AFRICAN NETWORK FOR COASTAL AND OCEANIC RESEARCH

*Recipient of the*  
**GILCHRIST MEMORIAL AWARD 2022**

**Dr. Carl van der Lingen**

In recognition of the contributions of a distinguished scientist to marine science, to further stimulate excellence in South African marine science and to focus attention on South Africa's marine and coastal environments.

Carl van der Lingen is an exceptional scientist who has published at least 117 peer-reviewed publications in excellent local and international journals and books, 15 of which have been cited more than a 100 times and a further 20 have been cited more than 50 times. He is well known internationally for his studies on the ecology of sardine and anchovy, and his research on their feeding ecology has been seminal, stimulating similar work in other ecosystems. On top of this, he has authored more than 250 non peer-reviewed Reports and Scientific Working Group documents. As a specialist scientist, based at the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment for many years now and not at an academic institution, these outputs are exceptional. He stands out head and shoulders above peers in both government and academic institutions. He held an NRF B2 rating from 2013 to 2018, and currently boasts an H-Index of 41 and a ResearchGate score of 35.18. In addition, he has delivered more than 40 oral presentations at local, regional and international conferences, several of which were invited Session or Plenary Keynote orals. Throughout his career he has created substantial local collaboration with researchers from government, tertiary education and parastatal institutions. He has also collaborated substantially in regional and international research programmes. Carl is an exceptional mentor and supervisor of postgraduate students from BSc(Hons) to PhD level. His students will attest to this incredible enthusiasm, and meticulous understanding of and help with their projects. Through his position at Branch: Fisheries of DFFE, Carl has made sustained, ongoing contributions to multiple aspects of fisheries management and research in South Africa. Internationally, he has been involved in regional and international research programmes, often in a leadership role. Carl exuberates enthusiasm. His work and life ethic is one to be admired and a role model to follow.

SOUTH AFRICAN NETWORK FOR COASTAL AND OCEANIC RESEARCH

*Recipient of the*  
**GILCHRIST MEMORIAL AWARD 2022**

**Dr. Lynne Shannon**

In recognition of the contributions of a distinguished scientist to marine science, to further stimulate excellence in South African marine science and to focus attention on South Africa's marine and coastal environments.

Lynne has an exceptional publication record and has, to date, published more than 120 papers in peer-reviewed journals. Her H-Index is between 37 and 43, depending on the source of the information, in any case flagging her as an “outstanding scientist”. Her top ten papers span citation rates of 108 to 949. Her top five first-authored papers have collectively been cited 581 times. The papers represent a breadth of topics that fall under her general umbrella of modelling research directed at incorporating ecosystem effects of fishing and climate change, as well as developing and testing marine ecosystem indicators by which these effects can be gauged. Lynne has – globally - made a major contribution in developing and refining models and sets of indicators to accomplish this. Lynne has supervised or co-supervised many students to completion. Many of these students and Post-Docs have gone to stamp their own mark on science. Lynne Shannon continues to provide input to scientific fisheries and conservation management working groups at DAFF and DEA (now DFFE), advises BirdLife and WWF-SA. She is also making substantial contributions as a scientific editor. She has been involved as a guest editor for five journals or books. She is also in hot demand as a reviewer and has provided 72 reviews for more than 25 different journals or publishers – all but two of these at the international level. Her regular participation in international programmes ensures that South Africa gains high visibility in terms of its implementation of Ecosystem Approaches for Fisheries Management. With her deep knowledge and calm and considered personality she is, indeed, an outstanding ambassador of South African marine science.

SOUTH AFRICAN NETWORK FOR COASTAL AND OCEANIC RESEARCH

*Recipient of the*  
**DEREK KRIGE AWARD 2022**  
**Dagmar Merkle**

In recognition of outstanding achievements in the field of technical support to marine science in South Africa.

Dagmar's understanding of hydro-acoustic data processing techniques means that the surveys group of the Fisheries Branch has remained at the forefront of acoustic applications in marine science. Dagmar ensures that surveys are properly designed, and is meticulous in her planning of surveys – from sole-destroying administrative tasks (such as 18 months to renew software), to the acquisition of trawl nets, repair of equipment, and taking an active leading role in the surveys. Dagmar has spent a large chunk of her life on the various research vessels, and despite often feeling green about the gills, she has worked her way up through all the laboratories on board, from plankton, to eggs and larvae, to fish sampling and finally acoustic team leader and chief scientist. The success of the acoustic survey program is due in a large part to Dagmar's dedication and pride in her work. She takes a leading role in passing on acoustic data processing skills to junior staff and students. She has trained many acoustic operators to do acoustic watches at sea and master the art of directing a midwater trawl at elusive anchovies. In pursuit of perfect data, Dagmar has spent countless days "cleaning bottoms" – or more accurately removing spurious seabed echoes from acoustic data. Her conscientious attitude towards ensuring the accuracy of all data provided is laudable. Her dedication to her work, even after more than 30 years in the government service is unwavering.

SOUTH AFRICAN NETWORK FOR COASTAL AND OCEANIC RESEARCH

*Recipient of the*  
**DEREK KRIGE AWARD 2022**

**Johan Rademan**

In recognition of outstanding achievements in the field of technical support to marine science in South Africa.

Johan has developed acoustic systems for use during small boat surveys. This includes the design of the vessels such as modifications to reduce flow noise around custom built transducer mounts and cabin design to enable customized installation of scientific equipment. In the past 10 years Johan has spent in excess of 500 days at sea on a rubber duck trying to find the answers to questions that office-chair scientists have conjured up. This included estimating the biomass of anchovy and sardine around important penguin breeding islands. Launching in treacherous isolated locations along the rugged West Coast to measure the inshore biomass of small pelagic fish. He has also conducted surveys in the worst sea conditions, trying to understand how weather impacts the schooling behaviour of anchovy and on several occasions zig-zagged his way across the Amathole MPA between East London and Port Alfred collecting valuable bathymetry information. He has been at the forefront of developing acoustic methods to detect squid egg beds and spawning aggregations. In his role as Control oceanographic technician, Johan has successfully trained junior technicians for the past 30 years. He has provided on-the-job-training and mentoring of technicians in small boat launching and skippering, acoustic system design and integration, data acquisition and analyses. He has effectively been doing the work of two full-time technicians for the past few years and while his workload continues to increase, Johan will stop at nothing to provide support to any of his colleagues or managers.

SOUTH AFRICAN NETWORK FOR COASTAL AND OCEANIC RESEARCH

*Recipient of the*

# SANCOR YOUNG RESEARCHER'S AWARD 2022

Dr. Denham Parker

Acknowledging research excellence in a new generation of scientists in the marine and coastal environment.

Denham has contributed significantly to the advancement of marine science in South Africa. He has published 20 peer reviewed scientific papers. Amongst them are contributions in high impact journals. Much of his work is applied and has direct implications on how fisheries are monitored, assessed and managed in terms of stock status, population risk and impact on ecosystems. His work already has considerable international reach and he is regularly invited to contribute to papers and reports on global tuna fisheries and their bycatch. Denham has co-supervised an impressive number of students in his capacity as Honorary Research Associate at UCT. He regularly lectures at UCT and has received a number of awards for his presentations at national and international conferences. Denham has already made his mark in the world of international tuna science. He has attended and presented at an impressive number of working party meetings for South Africa's most relevant regional Fisheries management organizations, the International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT) and the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC). He was recently elected by his international peers into the position of vice chair of the scientific committee of the IOTC, the highest scientific body of this important forum. Very few scientists are entrusted with such a responsibility so early in their career, an indicator of his growing eminence in his field.

SOUTH AFRICAN NETWORK FOR COASTAL AND OCEANIC RESEARCH



*Recipient of the*  
SANCOR YOUNG RESEARCHER'S AWARD 2022

Dr. Nasreen Peer

Acknowledging research excellence in a new generation of scientists in the marine and coastal environment.

Nasreen has produced 26 publications between 2013 and 2020 in local and international journals, many of which have been produced in collaboration with colleagues across South Africa. Nasreen has produced some of the seminal work on brachyuran crabs in South Africa and is particularly well known for her work in mangrove forests. Her involvement in the Inhambane Bay Mangrove Survey used a combination of standard ecological survey methods and traditional knowledge. This project is a multinational project which has integrated the indigenous knowledge of the people of Inhambane. Nasreen is an advocate for meaningful community engagement and co-ownership of research done in an ethical way. As one of the founding directors of Argonaut Science (Pty) Ltd, Nasreen has already perfected the art of translating science to both young and old. Her enthusiasm, whether along a rocky shore or estuary, is contagious and her boundless knowledge is inspiring the next generation of marine scientists.

SOUTH AFRICAN NETWORK FOR COASTAL AND OCEANIC RESEARCH

# Proposers of nominations

| Award                                         | Recipient              | Proposer                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Marine and Coastal Communicator Awards</b> | Mr Russell Stevens     | Mr Thomas Mtontsi and Mr Xavier Zylstra                                                                                           |
|                                               | Dr Kerry Sink          | Drs Ryan Palmer, Judy Mann, Lara Atkinson, Jock Currie and Mari-Lise Franken                                                      |
| <b>Gilchrist Medal</b>                        | Dr Carl van der Lingen | Prof Mark Gibbons, Prof Coleen Moloney and Dr Cecile Reed                                                                         |
|                                               | Dr Lynne Shannon       | Prof George M Branch, seconded and supported by Profs John Field, Larry Hutchings, Astrid Jarre, Coleen Moloney, Ursula Scharler. |
| <b>Derek Krige Medal</b>                      | Ms Dagmar Merkle       | Dr Janet Coetzee                                                                                                                  |
|                                               | Mr Johan Rademan       | Dr Janet Coetzee                                                                                                                  |
| <b>SANCOR Young Researchers Award</b>         | Nasreen Peer           | Dr Anusha Rajkaran                                                                                                                |
|                                               | Dr Denham Parker       | Dr Sven Kerwath                                                                                                                   |