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MSc / PhD Opportunities in Freshwater Crab Phylogeography, Ecophysiology and Parasitology

A number of NRF-funded MSc and PhD opportunities are available, offered jointly by the South African Institute for Aquatic Biodiversity (SAIAB) and the Department of Botany at Rhodes University in Grahamstown. These opportunities, available from 2014, are open to eager, dedicated, suitably-qualified students to work on a National Research Foundation (NRF) supported project linked to the Department of Botany's Great Escarpment Research Programme.

Specifically, this research programme will examine the diversity of freshwater crabs along the eastern portion of the Great Escarpment, the phylogeography of a widespread species across the eastern half of South Africa, the catchment- or population-genetics of crabs in selected Eastern Cape river systems, the effects of Inter-Basin Water Transfer Schemes on migration, gene flow and ecophysiology, and the occurrence and effects of parasites on these crabs. Overarching themes include understanding diversity and speciation along the Great Escarpment, a biodiversity hotspot, and investigating the link between fine-scale patterns of migration/gene-flow and higher biogeographic patterns.

Interested applicants should have an applicable postgraduate degree in a relevant discipline and an interest in systematics and taxonomy, phylogeography or population genetics, biodiversity and biogeography, ecophysiology or parasitology. Applicants are expected to be self-motivated, driven and outcomes-orientated, and enjoy both lab and (sometimes arduous) field work.

For further information, please contact Dr Gavin Gouws (046 603 5843, g.gouws@saiab.ac.za) or Prof. Nigel Barker (046 603 8715, n.barker@ru.ac.za). Prospective candidates are encouraged to submit their expressions of interest as soon as possible, accompanied by a comprehensive CV.