

MSc opportunity in Nature Conservation at the University of South Africa (Unisa)

Project: Spatio-temporal ecology of the small spotted genet *Genetta genetta felina*

This is a collaborative research project between the Applied Behavioural Ecology and Ecosystems Research Unit ([ABEERU](#)) at Unisa, the Department of Zoology at the University of Fort Hare, and the Centre for Wildlife Management at the University of Pretoria (UP).

Background

Although native to Africa, the common or small-spotted genet *Genetta genetta* can also be found in the south-western parts of Europe, including Spain, France, Portugal and the Balearic Islands. In South Africa, where individuals have been classified in the subspecies *felina*, the small-spotted genet is common throughout large parts of the country. Although the diet of this species has been studied in Botswana and Mozambique, knowledge on the spatial ecology of small spotted genets is lacking. The few studies that have focussed on small spotted genet spatial ecology were done in Mediterranean habitats, and virtually nothing is known of the spatial ecology of the small-spotted genet in Africa. Moreover, the activity patterns of this, and other genet species, have rarely been studied.

This project will therefore investigate the spatio-temporal ecology of the small-spotted genet in Telperion Nature Reserve (a [Diamond Route](#) property), using radio-telemetry. Habitat characteristics will be quantified in terms of vegetation structure and micro-climate availability.

The successful applicant will have a strong honours degree, and be physically fit. Experience in radio-tracking, handling wild animals, and living remotely in a small community will be advantageous.

An annual NRF grant holder-linked bursary of R40 000, which could potentially be augmented further, will be available for two years. Accommodation is to be provided on the reserve in the ABEERU research house. An ABEERU research vehicle will be available to facilitate movement on the reserve.

Please send a short letter of motivation, a CV (including the names and contact details of 3 referees), and your full academic record to **both** Maartin Strauss (strauwm@unisa.ac.za) and Prof. Emmanuel Do Linh San (EDolinhсан@ufh.ac.za), who will act as supervisors for this project. Prof. Michael Somers (Centre for Wildlife Management, UP) and Dr. Lourens Swanepoel (Centre for Wildlife Management, UP & University of Venda) will be collaborators on this project.

Application deadline: 2 June 2014

Please note that Unisa's MSc application process again commences on 16 September 2014 for registration in 2015.