



MSc Opportunity

Assessing Apex Predator Reintroductions in the Eastern Cape, South Africa

The project: The MSc opportunity forms part of a long-term research program investigating the re-introduction of apex predators in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. Although there have been many such re-introductions, there are few studies on the success of these, or the consequences for prey communities. The work will be an extension of our 5 year – post reintroduction review (*Oryx* 41, 205-214), but much has changed since then regarding the persistence of reintroduced species and the impacts they have had on the prey communities they interact with. This project will therefore use existing data, and collect additional data through surveys with reserve managers and mathematical modelling to understand the outcomes of the re-introductions of apex predators to reserves in terms of the success of these, the risks of predator overabundance (based on a “carrying capacity” model to be developed in this project) and the consequences for prey communities.

Academic institution: This opportunity is offered by the Centre for African Conservation Ecology (ACE), Faculty of Science, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, South Africa, in collaboration with the University of Bangor, Wales, UK. ACE is a centre of academic excellence in African Conservation Ecology and comprises staff and postgraduate students of the Zoology, Botany and Geography departments, together with collaborating researchers at other institutions.

Requirements: You are ideally a South African citizen who holds an Honours degree, with an excellent academic record in a relevant discipline of ecology. Applicants with strong numerical skills will be given preference.

Offer: The successful applicant will receive a project-specific bursary of R40 000 per annum for a maximum of two years. Qualifying students may also apply for other (e.g. NMMU, NRF) postgraduate bursaries. The offer is inclusive of all operational costs, and the costs of attendance of a relevant conference in South Africa at which the candidate will make a presentation. There is a possibility for limited, incentive-based funding (e.g. production of scientific papers).

Application procedure: Prospective students with excellent academic records are encouraged to apply for this opportunity by writing to Prof Graham Kerley (graham.kerley@nmmu.ac.za) and Dr Matt Hayward (m.hayward@bangor.ac.uk). Applicants should provide CVs, academic records and the names and email addresses of two academic references.

HAYWARD, M.W., ADENDORFF, J., O'BRIEN, J., SHOLTO-DOUGLAS, A., BISSETT, C., MOOLMAN, L., BEAN, P., FOGARTY, A., HOWARTH, D., SLATER, R. & KERLEY, G. I. H. 2007. The reintroduction of large carnivores to the Eastern Cape, South Africa: an assessment. *Oryx*. 41:205-214.