



UNIVERSITY OF THE
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UFS·UV
AFROMONTANE
RESEARCH UNIT (ARU)

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP FOR 2021

**ZOOLOGY & ENTOMOLOGY DEPARTMENT & AFROMONTANE RESEARCH UNIT, UNIVERSITY OF THE
FREE STATE (QWAQWA CAMPUS)**

Postdoctoral Fellowship on ecosystem services of bat biodiversity in Afromontane agricultural and natural ecosystems

The Afromontane Research Unit (ARU), University of the Free State (UFS), is an active and growing mountain research hub situated at the foot of the Maloti-Drakensberg in the eastern Free State Province, South Africa. The vision of the ARU is to become '*A Continental Leader in African Mountain Research, with an immediate focus on the Maloti-Drakensberg*'. The ARU Mission is to encourage the development of a cohesive, multi-disciplinary Community of Practice for southern African mountains.

Bats comprise a fifth of mammalian diversity. Despite rapidly-growing evidence of their huge ecological and economic value as ecosystem service providers and ecological indicators, many bat populations are declining and a third of species worldwide are classified as either data deficient or threatened. Both modelling and field surveys in southern Africa have demonstrated the importance of mountainous regions as hotspots of bat diversity. Recent research involving the grant-holder and his students has demonstrated that the hypothetical loss of insectivorous bats in macadamia orchards in the foothills of the Soutpansberg Mountains would result in losses to farmers of up to 30% of their expected yield. Ongoing research is exploring practical recommendations to increase ecosystem services due to biological control of macadamia insect pests, including the use of bat houses to increase bat populations.

The University of the Free State (Department of Zoology & Entomology in collaboration with the Afromontane Research Unit) is offering an exciting opportunity for a Postdoctoral Fellowship to strengthen and extend this research programme on the value of ecosystem services of bats in both agricultural and natural ecosystems focussing in the Maloti-Drakensberg and Soutpansberg Ranges.

He or she will be expected to work independently, to help with field work and mentoring postgraduate students from disadvantaged backgrounds and to publish internationally competitive peer-reviewed scientific papers.

FELLOWSHIP DETAILS

- One year with the option of renewing for a second year, depending on performance including at least three scientific publications (applicants should consider a work plan that covers two full years).
- The Fellowship is valued at ZAR220,000.00 stipend per year (12 months); there is R30,000 running costs per annum associated to the Fellowship for the Fellow to use at their discretion.
- Commencement: 1st January 2021 or soonest thereafter.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Candidates should have completed their Doctoral studies within the past 5 years
- There is no restriction on nationality
- Candidates may not hold full-time salaried employment during the tenure of the award.
- Project management and leadership skills, proficiency with GIS technology, statistical modelling and ecology, experience with conducting biodiversity surveys, a passion for fieldwork, good communication skills and a sound understanding of principles of conservation biology and practical management and policies relating to nature conservation in South Africa.
- Willing to spent extensive time in remote mountainous areas with limited communications and under often challenging conditions.
- It is strongly preferred that the Fellow has a valid drivers' license.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- Motivation Letter.
- Full Curriculum Vitae (CV) (including a list of academic outputs to date).
- Full transcripts of academic record.
- Copy of degree certificates.
- Copy of South African identity document or Passport (international candidates).
- Signed letters of recommendation from three academic references.

The appointment will reflect the UFS's equity and diversity imperatives, including those for gender, racial/cultural and intellectual diversity. A Fellowship is currently available for this position, and will be awarded on a competitive basis, taking into account the applicants' academic achievements and research potential.

Application Deadline: 30th September 2020

Contact Person:

Professor Peter John Taylor Pri.Sci.Nat.

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