



UNIVERSITY OF THE
FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE
VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA
FREISTATA



UFS·UV
AFROMONTANE
RESEARCH UNIT (ARU)

PHD BURSARY AVAILABLE FOR 2021

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

Bats as ecological indicators of anthropogenic change in Drakensberg Afromontane grasslands

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 to encourage the development of a cohesive, multi-disciplinary Community of Practice for southern African mountains.

Largely through the ongoing work of the ARU, the Great Escarpment of South Africa has been revealed to be a centre of rich, under-studied and threatened floral and faunal diversity and endemism. In particular, high elevation grasslands and wetlands harbour great diversity and endemism but are very vulnerable to anthropogenic change and predicted climate change. The Great Escarpment is a centre of bat endemism in South Africa and Lesotho, with two rare species known to be endemic to montane (> 1500m) grasslands, Lesueur's wing-gland bat and De Winton's long-eared bat. The study will undertake acoustic and capture surveys of bats in grassland and wetland sites in the Eastern Free State province in order to evaluate the efficacy of endemic and other bat species and bat communities as ecological indicators of anthropogenic degradation of montane grassland and wetlands.

The University of the Free State is offering a PHD position for the above project. All necessary equipment and other project expenses will be provided. The successful candidate will be expected to work independently.

BURSARY DETAILS

- The bursary is valued at ZAR 80,000.00 per year (with possibility of top-up) renewable for up to three years, pending adequate annual progress
- Commencement: 1st January 2021 or soonest thereafter.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Candidates should have completed their Masters study.
- Applications from South Africans and international candidates will be welcomed.
- Candidates may not hold full-time salaried employment during the tenure of the award.
- Willing to spent extensive time in remote mountainous areas with limited communications and under often challenging conditions.
- Passion for conservation and bats.

- Willing to learn new computer-based and field-based methods of ecology.
- Sound understanding of principles of conservation biology and ecology.
- It is strongly preferred that the recipient 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 MSc degree certificate.
- Copy of South African identity document or Passport (international candidates).
- Signed letters of recommendation from two academic references.

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

Application Deadline: 30th September 2020

Contact Person:

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