

---

## Advertisement for field biologist(s) Marion Island (sub-Antarctic) - Ornithology -

---

The Marine Apex Predator Research Unit (MAPRU; Coastal and Marine Research Institute at Nelson Mandela University) in collaboration with the FitzPatrick Institute of Ornithology (University of Cape Town) and the newly established South African Polar Research Infrastructure (SAPRI), is offering one (potentially two) suitably qualified candidate(s) an opportunity to spend a year on sub-Antarctic Marion Island.

The first position will consist of collecting field data on seabirds and avian scavengers to be used for conservation and academic purposes. This position is made available thanks to the South African National Antarctic Programme (SANAP; <http://www.sanap.ac.za>). The post falls within the project 'Avian scavengers as indicators of recovery of an island biota' led by Dr Maëlle Connan (Nelson Mandela University) and Prof. Peter Ryan (FitzPatrick Institute, University of Cape Town). The project stemmed from the proposed mouse eradication at Marion Island, which will happen within the next three years. It focuses on the three poorly known avian scavengers: Brown Skuas, Kelp Gulls and Black-faced Sheathbills, as well as some of the skua's prey, the burrowing petrels. This project aims at (i) filling identified knowledge gaps that are crucial for best planning of the eradication, and (ii) establishing baselines for the scavenger guild and their prey base, against which the impact of a successful mouse eradication can be measured in years to come.

The second position will contribute to the long-term monitoring of seabird species started thirty years ago by the FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology. ***Please note that appointment for this second position is contingent on funding and approval from the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment.*** The position will consist of regular monitoring of demographic colonies collecting parameters on a suite of surface nesting seabirds. Data collected contribute to national and international research including on the impact of mice on these seabirds.

### MAIN DUTIES:

#### Post 1:

- Systematic counts and behavioural descriptions of the three avian scavengers that require dedication and careful note taking;
- Updates of population and breeding success data for some of the burrow-nesting species;
- Assisting with duties of Post 2 when necessary.

#### Post 2:

- Responsible for the ongoing long-term monitoring study population of Wandering and Grey-headed Albatrosses and Northern Giant Petrel;
- Regular visits to the monitoring colonies, with careful observations and data collection;
- Assisting with duties of Post 1 when necessary.

### **SPECIFIC ATTRIBUTES:**

The successful applicant will need to manage and keep track of all aspects of the research. Office work will entail report writing and keeping meticulous records of all collected data and samples. It is thus essential that the candidate meet the following criteria:

- Strong academic background (minimum of a MSc), with a possibility of working towards a PhD within the project (preference will be given to candidates with higher qualifications);
- Attention to details and organized as data management is a crucial part of both posts;
- Demonstrated history of field activity in demanding environments collecting biological data;
- Curious, self-motivated and well-organized, as many different field activities need to be conducted in a short period, especially in summer;
- Computer literacy with strong experience in data management and report writing;
- Previous experience in handling birds including ringing will be a distinct advantage.

### **GENERAL REQUIREMENTS:**

The incumbent will execute duties at an Antarctic Base and adhere to the health, safety and environmental requirements of the managing authority for Marion Island, the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment. **The successful applicant will spend 13 months (April 2023 to May 2024) on Marion Island. There is no option to return to South Africa before May 2024.** The ability to work and live with small groups of people is thus essential. The base has e-mail and satellite telephone facilities, but these can be intermittent, so the applicant must be able to do without constant supervision or links to family and friends in South Africa.

Both posts will require extensive walking over rough terrain under demanding environmental conditions. Candidates must be physically very fit, mentally strong and enjoy the challenge of physically demanding work. In addition, the successful candidate may often be called upon to work long hours in extreme conditions on duties not directly related to core project functions.

Short-listed candidates will be subjected to screening and security vetting to determine their suitability for the position. Appointment is subject to a rigorous medical (physical and psychological) examination, which will be arranged for at no cost to the applicant.

### **SALARY:**

The total remuneration package is R 247,000 for the duration of the contract (April 2023 – May 2024, including a potential bonus).

### **APPLICATION:**

- Cover letter indicating eligibility for the post and which post has your preference;
- Comprehensive CV, including contact details of at least three referees;
- Certified copy of ID.

**Note:** South African citizens or foreigners holding a South African permanent residency permit will receive priority. Preference will be given to previously disadvantaged individuals who are particularly encouraged to apply for this position.

If you have not been contacted by 15 December 2022, please accept that your application was unsuccessful.

Queries or Applications should be directed to Dr Maëlle Connan  
([maelle.connan@gmail.com](mailto:maelle.connan@gmail.com))

*Closing date: 18 November 2022*