



Vacancy for field researcher on Marion Island (March 2024 – May 2025)

Mouse impacts on invertebrates and plants

The Department of Plant and Soil Sciences at the University of Pretoria is offering one suitably qualified candidate an opportunity to spend a year on Marion Island to measure various aspects of the impact of the house mouse on the diversity and function of the terrestrial ecosystems of Marion Island. This work will entail collecting baseline data, mostly on invertebrates and plants.

Posts: Field researcher

Location: Marion Island

Salary: ± R240 000 (incl. benefits) for 15 months, depending on qualification level. Food and accommodation in the field will be provided.

Requirements:

- Candidates must have a minimum of a BSc (Hons) degree in an ecological field, preferably with experience of invertebrates and/or plants. Candidates whose degrees will be conferred by April 2024 will also qualify for consideration.
- Experience of field work in rugged terrain is required. Prior experience of working on a sub-Antarctic island will be an advantage.
- Must be physically fit, self-motivated, mentally robust and enthusiastic about research. Must have experience of working in physically challenging environments. Experience of navigating in rugged terrain highly recommended.
- Excellent organisational skills, attention to detail, meticulous observation, note-taking and record-keeping abilities.
- Able to work independently but also to function in a team.
- Experience of invertebrate and/or plant surveys.
- Computer literacy with experience in data management, statistical analysis (at least one undergraduate statistics course) and report writing are required.
- Exposure to conducting manipulative field experiments will also be an advantage.
- The ability to work and live with small, diverse groups of people in an isolated social environment is essential.

Expedition Requirements:

- Undertake fieldwork, sometimes for long hours, under very onerous conditions (i.e. cold, wet, marshy and windy).
- Fieldwork will occupy a significant portion of the work-time on the island, with the remaining time dedicated to office and laboratory work, including sorting and identifying insects and entering, curation and analysis of data.
- Candidate may be called upon to conduct *ad hoc* tasks not related to core functions of the post.
- The successful candidate may have to help others with their work occasionally.

Other Information:

- Note that the isolated conditions can be psychologically challenging for candidates.
- Appointments to these positions is subject to a rigorous medical and psychological examination, which will be arranged at no cost to short-listed applicants.
- The opportunity exists to conduct a postgraduate degree based on the data collected.
- Successful applicants will spend a full year (April 2024 to May 2025) at Marion Island. *Note that there is no option to return before the end of the expedition.* The well-equipped new base station has internet and satellite telephone facilities, although periods of little to no possible communication do occur.
- The University of Pretoria reserves the right to appoint a candidate to this position.

Duties:

- The primary responsibility will entail collecting invertebrate community data and identifying invertebrates.
- Surveying and monitoring vegetation plots. Measuring plant traits.
- Mapping species and events.
- Installing, maintaining and downloading data from loggers.
- Note that duties may change during the course of the year.

Shortlisted candidates will undergo rigorous competency tests to ensure adherence to requirements.

Application:

Applicants should submit their applications here: <http://tinyurl.com/2s4xmvee>

The below information is required. (All attachments must be submitted as pdfs.)

- **Detailed CV, including contact details of at least three referees**
- **Cover letter indicating eligibility for the post**
- **Copies of qualifications (including marks)**
- **Copy of ID document**

Deadline for applications: 4 February 2024

South African applicants will receive priority. **Please note that appointments will be contingent on availability of ship berths and funding.**

For queries contact Prof Greve (michelle.greve@up.ac.za) by email.

