



Opportunity to fund a MSc Candidate

Project name: Using stereo-BRUV systems to assess chondrichthyan biodiversity and to identify sites for long-term monitoring in the Namibian Islands MPA.

Co-supervisors: Dr. Ruth Leeney (NaRaS project, Namibia Nature Foundation) and Dr. Margit Wilhelm (University of Namibia, Henties Bay campus)

Start date: No later than 01 November 2022

Duration: 24 months

Project description:

The NaRaS project is conducting baseline research on chondrichthyans (sharks, skates, rays and chimaeras) in Namibian waters, with a focus on the Namibian Islands Marine Protected Area (NIMPA). As part of a wide programme of work, surveys using stereo-baited remote underwater video are being conducted in the NIMPA to document the chondrichthyan species present and to identify important and monitorable habitats within the MPA. This work is being carried out in collaboration with the South African Institute for Aquatic Biodiversity (SAIAB). The NaRaS project is funded by the Shark Conservation Fund (SCF), a sponsored project of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors (RPA).

We are seeking applicants for an MSc project that will run over two years, to participate in the BRUV fieldwork, analyse the BRUV data for chondrichthyans, and produce a high-quality thesis on the diversity of chondrichthyans in the NIMPA (and possibly other areas along the Namibian coast), and the usefulness of stereo-BRUVs as a long-term monitoring tool for MPAs in Namibia.

The position covers the cost of two years of registration fees with the University of Namibia, and will provide two annual stipends. The student will be required to complete and submit their thesis within the specified timeframe, as no additional funding will be available for additional university registration fees.

Requirements:

- The successful applicant will have recently graduated from a degree in Biology, Zoology or Fisheries Science, or a related biological field. If not yet graduated at the time of application, the applicant must confirm that they will have completed their degree work by the end of October 2022 and thus be able to enrol in a full-time Masters course by 01 November 2022.
- The fieldwork for this project will involve at least two periods of work in the Namibian Islands MPA, with the field team operating from Lüderitz. The student must therefore be willing to work away from home for up to 6 weeks at a time
- Must be able to work at sea and must not suffer from seasickness



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- The fieldwork will involve long days working at sea, downloading video files and entering data. The successful applicant will be a team player, hard-working and willing to put in extra hours where needed
- Attentive to detail, and open to constructive feedback
- Excellent writing skills – this MSc project should result in the production of at least one paper in a scientific journal, with the student expected to lead on the data analysis and writing of this paper
- Proficiency in Word and Excel, including the use of formulae and pivot tables
- Experience in statistical analyses in programmes such as SPSS and R
- The project will require collaboration with researchers in SAIAB, who will be able to assist with analyses, verify species identification and troubleshoot when needed. The successful applicant must therefore have excellent communication skills with which s/he can communicate professionally and effectively via email, video calls and instant messaging as required
- Hard working, with ambition to continue working in the field of biological research or conservation

The following would be advantageous but are not requirements:

- Experience in using GIS software
- Experience in writing scientific publications
- A driver's license
- Experience in video editing, photography and/ or creating high-quality social media posts for a professional account, or willingness to learn skills in this area

This position is open to Namibian citizens only.

Application process

To apply, please send your CV (maximum 2 pages) and a cover letter (no longer than 2 pages) addressing how you meet the position requirements and what makes you the ideal candidate. The CV should list any scientific publications or projects, or any volunteering activities (related to scientific research or conservation) you have been involved in. Please also provide proof of graduation from or enrolment in the final year of a BSc in a biological field, and transcripts of your grades for all years of tertiary education. If you have experience in either scientific writing (journal publications) or communicating science to a general audience (e.g. magazine article, blog post, podcast), please include links to your work.

Applications should be sent to ruth@nnf.org.na and copied to info@nnf.org.na. Hard copy applications cannot be accepted.

The deadline for submission of applications is 21st September 2022.

Applicants who do not meet the requirements listed above will not be considered. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted for an interview.

For further information contact:

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 Namibia Nature Foundation
 NaRaS Project Manager
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