

Advertisement for 2 field biologists for Marion Island 2019-2020

The Marine Apex Predator Research Unit (MAPRU), a division of the Coastal and Marine Research Institute at Nelson Mandela University, is offering two suitably qualified South African candidates an opportunity to spend a year on sub-Antarctic Marion Island, collecting field data on seabirds to potentially be used for academic purposes. The positions will be offered under the project '*Southern Indian Ocean Top Predators: linking ecology, oceanography and marine spatial planning needs*'. This project will involve distributional and dietary investigations on a suite of marine top predator species breeding at Marion Island (four penguin, three albatross, four petrel and two fur seal species). This will be done to address questions related to ecosystem level changes in the Southern Ocean marine environment, highlight areas of importance and high productivity relevant for spatial planning, and the projected impact of climate forcing on Southern Ocean marine top predators.

DUTIES:

Successful applicants will be actively engaged in collecting field data on a range of seabirds, and to a lesser extent seals, and dependent on the position (see below), will be involved in tracking at-sea distribution of study species through animal-borne instrumentation and obtaining dietary data from a host of species to among others, assess at-sea distribution and resource partitioning. This will require extensive walking to the respective breeding colonies over rough terrain under demanding environmental conditions. The successful applicants will furthermore contribute towards on-going long-term seabird monitoring programs. The successful applicants will need to manage and keep track of all aspects of research, including electronic tracking equipment. Office work will entail report writing and keeping meticulous records of all collected data.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS:

The incumbents will execute duties at an Antarctic Base and adhere to the health, safety and environmental requirements. The successful applicants will spend a full year (April 2019 to May 2020) on Marion Island. *There is no option to return to South Africa before May 2020.* The ability to work and live with small groups of people is thus essential. Although the base is well-equipped with e-mail, fax and satellite telephone facilities, the applicant has to be self-sufficient and self-motivated. Candidates must be physically very fit, mentally strong and enjoy the challenge of physically demanding work. In addition, the successful candidates may often be

called upon to work long hours in extreme conditions on duties unrelated to their core function. Appointment to these positions is subject to a rigorous medical examination, which will be arranged for at no cost to the applicants.

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS:

1. A strong academic background, with a minimum qualification of BSc Honours in biological field and preference given to applicants with higher qualifications
2. Previous experience in handling and deploying tracking instrumentation on seabirds
3. Strong numerical skills
4. Data management and report writing experience
5. Demonstrated history of field activity collecting biological data

SALARY: Approximately R160,000 p.a dependent on qualification (plus R18,000 potential bonus at end of contract).

Note: preference will be given to previously disadvantaged individuals who are particularly encouraged to apply for these contract positions.

Please send a letter of motivation, detailing why you think you are a suitable candidate for the position, together with your academic record and a comprehensive CV including three references to Prof Pistorius. Correspondence will be limited to short-listed candidates who will be contacted no later than the 31st of October.

Application Deadline: 16 October 2018

Please contact Prof P.A. Pistorius pierre.pistorius@mandela.ac.za for any queries regarding these posts.