

M. Sc. opportunities: Wild bird study in Africa

Location: Mbuluzi Game Reserve in eSwatini (southern Africa) (www.mbuluzi.com)

Period: 3 months, starting in June/July 2019

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Several MSc research positions are currently available in our “Social Savanna” project. This project is a collaboration between researchers at the University of Groningen, Wageningen University, and the University of eSwatini. We collect data on the physiology and behaviour of a variety of different species, including speckled mousebirds, arrow-marked babblers, white-crested helmet shrikes and dark-capped bulbuls. Our study site is Mbuluzi Game Reserve, a typical African savanna habitat with fantastic animal life.



We are looking for masters students to join us for the non-breeding season (June-September 2019). Fieldwork will involve a large amount of catching – both with mist nets and walk-in traps – some experience with wild bird study is therefore preferable, but not strictly necessary.

We are very open for students to bring their own research ideas, but some potential project topics could include:

- *Avian malaria prevalence (all species)*
How does avian malaria prevalence vary across the reserve, and how does it impact individual condition?
Winter group sizes and individual condition (mousebirds, babblers, helmet-shrikes)
Social species that live in groups must share the resources available in their territory. How and why does group size affect individual body condition, and how does this vary with resource availability?
- *Dominance hierarchies at feeding stations (mousebirds, bulbuls)*
What sort of social interactions occur at artificial feeding stations and how does an individual's status within its group affect its body condition and social behaviour?

Other practical work is also possible, for example tracking individuals using radio transmitters, ecological mapping, etc. In short: plenty of opportunities!

We are always happy to discuss these, or any other, project ideas further – please get in touch!

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