

### Postdoc Opportunity - 'Climate change mitigation and adaptation benefits of wilder rangelands'

**Academic institutions:** This opportunity is offered by the Centre for African Conservation Ecology (ACE), Nelson Mandela University (NMU), Port Elizabeth, South Africa, and the Department of Wildlife, Fish and Environmental Studies (VFM) of the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), Umeå, Sweden. ACE is a centre of academic excellence in African conservation ecology and comprises staff and postgraduate students of the Zoology, Botany and Geography departments of NMU. VFM is internationally recognized for its high quality research in wildlife ecology and management. ACE and VFM are offering

**a 6-month postdoc at R125 000, to be based at NMU, with possibility for a performance-based 6-month extension.**

**Project description:** You will join a team of senior researchers and PhD students working within the Wilder Rangelands program, which is a collaborative research program between Nelson Mandela University, SLU and Utrecht University. The program studies the climate change mitigation and adaptation benefits of wilder rangelands. Wilder rangelands are open ecosystems that are grazed or browsed by wild mammalian herbivores and/or where livestock grazing practices more closely mimic natural grazing systems. For this postdoc you will work on a specific side project that was funded by the South Africa – Sweden University Forum (SASUF) and also includes researchers from Umeå University, Rhodes University and the University of Fort Hare. You will contribute to the organization of a series of virtual workshops during a period of 4-6 months with key academic and policy leaders in rangeland and grassland science and actively collaborate with different working groups to develop a detailed road map for implementing wilder rangelands, including new business models such as carbon credit schemes, as well as identifying key research gaps. The emphasis here will be on both ecological as well as socio-economic perspectives. We also expect you to lead the writing of a policy brief and initiate at least one scientific publication.

**Requirements:** You are ideally a South African citizen who holds a PhD degree with an excellent academic record in a relevant discipline, such as rangeland or grassland ecology, wildlife ecology or sustainability science. You combine a strong interest in fundamental science with a passion to contribute to solving real-world sustainability challenges, specifically with respect to climate change. Ideally, you can show experience with facilitating workshops and working with diverse stakeholders. You are able to work independently and fluency in English is required. You are keen to spend several months at VFM in Sweden. You can ideally start immediately or by May 1 2021 the latest.

**Offer:** We offer a postdoctoral position for at least 6 months hosted at the Centre for African Conservation Ecology (ACE), Nelson Mandela University (NMU). The postdoc will be based at ACE and receiving the bursary through NMU. There will be no formal work contract with VFM. The postdoc will receive a flat-rate, tax free, bursary that does not include secondary benefits such as e.g. a pension scheme, holiday bonus or maternity leave. There is a possibility for a limited, incentive- and progress-based, 6-month extension of the bursary. The successful postdoc will be encouraged to apply for additional bursaries. There is also an opportunity to apply for funding for an extended stay in Sweden through an ongoing Erasmus exchange program between NMU and SLU. This is an excellent career building opportunity for those keen to establish themselves in sustainability and climate change issues.

**Contact person:** For further information, we encourage you to contact project coPIs Prof. Joris Cromsigt ([joris.cromsigt@slu.se](mailto:joris.cromsigt@slu.se)), Prof. Graham Kerley ([graham.kerley@mandela.ac.za](mailto:graham.kerley@mandela.ac.za)) and Assistant Prof. Mariska te Beest ([m.tebeest@uu.nl](mailto:m.tebeest@uu.nl)).

**Application procedure:** Please send your written application consisting of a motivation letter (max 2 pages), CV incl publication list (max 4 pages), 2 academic referees (e.g. former supervisors) and full academic transcripts of obtained qualifications to the contact persons mentioned above. Closing date is **31<sup>th</sup> of March 2021**.

**Selection:** In addition to the listed requirements, the foremost selection criterion will be scientific excellence of the candidate. Selection will be done by a committee of relevant staff from both ACE and VFM. **We reserve the right not to award a postdoctoral bursary if a suitable candidate is not identified.**