



VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON
Te Whare Wānanga o te Ūpoko o te Ika a Māui



Call for BSc(Hons) (Zoology) Applications: Black Rhino Parasite Project

The Centre for African Conservation Ecology of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University is calling for applications from students interested in undertaking a BSc (Hons) level project on the parasites of the black rhino (see below). The project would be undertaken in close collaboration with researchers from the Victoria University of Wellington (New Zealand).

The project

Parasites are known to have a wide range of damaging affects on their hosts, including decreasing fecundity and increasing mortality rates, yet they are rarely considered in the management of endangered species. Black rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis*) are infected by a variety of different parasites, however it is unclear whether high parasite burdens are a cause or consequence of poor animal body condition. To improve our understanding of the relationship between parasite burden and the body condition of individual animals this study will test for a negative or positive relationship between parasite egg burden in black rhino dung and diet quality. Black rhinoceros faeces will be collected from throughout a large reserve, faecal egg counts will then be performed on samples, and the eggs of all nematodes and cestodes identified. Each faecal sample will also be used to characterize diet quality.



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The project is funded by the Victoria University of Wellington through the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. The successful application will receive a bursary of R15 000 as well as all research expenses. Qualifying students may also receive NMMU and NRF bursaries.

Prospective BSc(Hons)(Zoology) students with excellent academic records are therefore encouraged to apply for this opportunity by writing to the address below. Applicants should provide CVs, academic records and the names and addresses (email) of two academic references. In addition all applicants should provide a 250 word essay on the role they want to play in science and/or conservation.

Students would need to be registered for the Hons degree with the NMMU Zoology Department, and should also apply for this.

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