



MICHELLE BLANCKENBERG

CONSERVATION BIOLOGIST

PERSONAL SUMMARY

I am a 29-year-old conservation biologist with an interest in landscape scale conservation within southern Africa. It is my ambition to contribute to the improvement of the environmental status of South Africa as well as the greater African continent.

KEY SKILLS

- Proven ability to develop and implement effective research projects across multiple scales
- Excellent skills integrating and interpreting complex datasets and quantitative data analysis
- Experience in a communication role during applied research projects
- Advanced computer literacy including MS Office, R programming, QGIS and ArcGIS
- Strong organisational and planning skills
- Excellent project manager
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Strong and motivating leader
- Comfortable and confident working in a variety of environments, thriving on collaboration and innovation
- Effective networker
- Demonstrable financial management abilities

STRENGTHS

- Disciplined and tenacious work ethic
- Passionate and ambitious
- Excellent attention to detail
- Independent and conceptual thinker
- Excellent time management skills
- Creative
- Upbeat and open-minded
- Fun, active and adventurous

EXPERIENCE

PhD in Conservation Biology (submitted for examination and awaiting results)

University of Cape Town

2017 - 2021 (expected graduation December 2021)

I studied the impacts of land use change on the mammal populations of the Karoo, South Africa in an effort to improve baseline knowledge about these communities and contribute to their management and conservation. During this degree I acquired advanced knowledge in project management, data management and data analysis (specifically within the R language and environment). I conducted several challenging fieldwork sessions within a harsh Karoo environment, sourcing and training several volunteers over a three year period. My fieldwork experience helped develop my organisational skills as well as helped me improve my tenacity and ability to thrive in challenging situations and harsh terrains.

In addition, during this time I gained valuable experience communicating conservation messages and results to a variety of stakeholders (scientific conferences, informal reports and management meetings), improving my abilities to work across hierarchical levels as well as develop adaptive communication skills

Operations Manager

Institute for Communities and Wildlife in Africa (iCWild)

2018 to 2020

Administrator for the director, and postgraduate students working with the institute iCWild (based out of UCT). Work included budget reports, annual reviews, day to day student administrative work and bursary applications.

Receptionist

Blue Cross Veterinary Hospital

January to December 2016

I worked as a front desk receptionist for a vet based out of Newlands, Cape Town. I was required to organize and schedule appointments, assist with sales and perform basic admission examinations on animals before first appointments.

NVT Conservation Volunteer

Nature's Valley Trust

November to December 2013

Assistance with field projects on a volunteer basis, including Plettenberg Bay kelp gull project and Nature's Valley Watsonia project. Further assistance with administrative work.



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CONTACT INFORMATION

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REFERENCES

Prof Justin O'Riain (PhD supervisor)
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Dr Cecile Reed (M.Sc. supervisor)
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Dr Dan Parker (B.Sc. Hons supervisor)
University of Mpumalanga
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Zoe Woodgate (iCWild peer)
University of Cape Town
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EDUCATION

PhD in Conservation Biology (submitted for examination and awaiting results)

University of Cape Town

2017 - 2021 (expected graduation December 2021)

- Thesis title: "The Effects of Landscape Level Changes in Land Use on Mammal Communities and Mesopredator Conflict in the Ska Region of the Northern Cape, South Africa"

Master of Sciences in Conservation Biology

University of Cape Town

2016 - 2017

- Graduated with a first class course mark
- Minor dissertation titled: "Resurrection ecology of invertebrates in temporary wetlands in the Cape Floristic region: effects of urbanisation and fire"

Bachelor of Science (Honours) in African Vertebrate Biodiversity

Rhodes University

2014

- Graduated with distinction
- Two mini dissertations both receiving a first class mark

Bachelor of Science in Zoology and Environmental Science

Rhodes University

2011 - 2013

- Graduated with distinction in Environmental Sciences

NOTABLE AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- Awarded academic full colours - 2014
- Awarded academic half colours - 2012 & 2013
- Placed on Dean's List - 2012, 2013 & 2014
- Golden Key Member since 2012
- Awarded Mellon Foundation Postgraduate Bursary 2013
- Awarded Masters Research Scholarship 2017
- Awarded Doctoral Research Scholarship 2018
- Published multiple articles in peer-reviewed journals



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