

# University of Cape Town



## Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology

DST/NRF Centre of Excellence  
Birds as Keys to Biodiversity Conservation



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## Press Release

For release: 26 October 2009

# The Nature Conservation Corporation sponsors infrastructure for a conservation biology MSc programme

“Conservation Biology has been termed the ‘crisis discipline’ and is among the most relevant of modern sciences, striving to balance the needs of people with those of nature.” That is the explicit message of Prof. Phil Hockey who is the Director of the Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology at the University of Cape Town.

In response, The Nature Conservation Corporation, based in the Westlake Business Park, Cape Town, has committed sponsorship for the purchase of 15 computers to be used by the Conservation Biology Masters students at the FitzPatrick Institute.

The FitzPatrick Institute, which will celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2010, views conservation biology as the scientific study of how best to sustain and manage linked systems of people and nature. South African society has experienced a set of massive changes in the last 20 years, and much of the resulting dynamism and openness to new ideas is mirrored in South African conservation. Similarly, the discipline of conservation biology is undergoing a paradigm shift, in which outdated notions of preservation and paternalism are being replaced by an ethic that recognizes the complexity of linked social and ecological systems and the critical need for solid interdisciplinary research. The FitzPatrick Institute is contributing to this transformation through research and teaching, while also encouraging and supporting sound, action-oriented science.

“Our sponsorship of computers to the FitzPatrick Institute demonstrates our value of innovation and of advancement within our sector, for the benefit of our natural environment. We strive to be holistic and thorough in our approach to conservation, as we want what is best for the environment,” says Dean Ferreira, Managing Director of The Nature Conservation Corporation.

### Note to the editors:

The Conservation Biology Masters Programme at the FitzPatrick Institute had a major revamp to its curriculum recently to keep pace with the rapidly changing face of the science of conservation biology. With support from the UCT Science Faculty, the facility for the course was relocated to a vastly improved facility. The new sponsored computers will make the course a leading capacity development opportunity for future conservation biologists.

**About the FitzPatrick Institute:**

The Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology at the University of Cape Town was founded in 1960 through the vision of Cecily Niven, daughter of Sir Percy FitzPatrick of *Jock of the Bushveld* fame. In 2004, the Institute was awarded the prestigious status of one of only six 'Centres of Excellence in Science and Technology' by the South African Department of Science and Technology and the National Research Foundation. The Institute's mission is to promote and undertake scientific studies involving birds and contribute to the theory and practice affecting the maintenance of biological diversity and the sustainable use of biological resources. See [www.fitzpatrick.uct.ac.za](http://www.fitzpatrick.uct.ac.za) for more information on the activities of the Institute.

**About The Nature Conservation Corporation:**

The Nature Conservation Corporation is a leading environmental consultancy, providing environmental management and conservation services, so as to mitigate environmental impacts and facilitate optimal ecosystem functioning. Their portfolio broadly includes ecological assessment, management planning, and environmental and conservation best practice management. The company was founded in 2003, is 34% BEE owned and has grown tremendously, being the largest service provider of environmental staff across the country. The company values our natural environment and comprises a team of passionate and competent individuals in a positive working environment. They strive to achieve service excellence and encourage innovation and advancement in our sector.

**For more information:**

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