



POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP: PHYSICAL DRIVERS OF SPONGE CONNECTIVITY IN THE SOUTHERN BENGUELA

(Full-time, three-year contract)

Department of Oceanography, University of Cape Town

Call for Applications

The Department of Oceanography of the University of Cape Town (UCT), in collaboration with the Department of Biodiversity and Conservation Biology of the University of the Western Cape (UWC), is seeking the appointment of a Postdoctoral Research Fellow to contribute to the SponBIODIV project (<https://sponbiodiv.org/>). SponBIODIV is a key initiative to protect marine sponges and their ecosystems which contributes to the implementation of South Africa's 2030 Biodiversity Strategy. SponBIODIV's main goal is to establish a sponge diversity and distribution baseline knowledge, as well as delivering tools to improve management and conservation of sponges across the Atlantic and Mediterranean.

About the Postdoctoral Position

The UCT Oceanography Department is seeking to appoint a Postdoctoral Research Fellow with experience in numerical ocean modelling and particle tracking to contribute to Work Package 3 "Connectivity and resilience of sponge ecosystems" of the SponBioDiv project. The Fellow will work on the analysis of a high-resolution ocean model simulation of the South African West Coast to investigate sponge connectivity pathways. The Fellow will be expected to run particle tracking experiments to investigate dispersal pathways across regions of high sponge biomass. Initial model validation using satellite and in-situ observations will be expected, followed by a detailed investigation of the physical drivers of sponge connectivity across South Africa's western shores. The Fellow will be based in the Department of Oceanography and will be hosted by Honorary Research Associate Dr. Marjolaine Krug.

Key Requirements

- A PhD in oceanography or a closely related discipline (awarded within the last 5 years)
- The prospective Postdoctoral Fellow has not previously held comprehensive professional or permanent academic positions
- Strong programming skills in Python and proficiency in the analysis of large datasets.
- Knowledge of the South African physical oceanography environment.
- Background in numerical ocean modelling.
- Experience in conducting particle tracking experiments using ocean model datasets.
- Demonstrated ability to analyze and manipulate observational datasets from satellites or in-situ instruments such as CTD (Conductivity Temperature Depth) profilers, or current meters.
- At least two peer-reviewed publications.
- Demonstrated ability to collaborate on research projects
- Excellent interpersonal, planning, and organizational skills

Funding

The value of the Fellowship is **R200 000 per annum with no additional benefits**. Postdoctoral Research Fellowships are exempt from taxation, meaning that Fellowships must be granted without fringe benefits. The Fellowship is offered for one year, renewable, up to a maximum of three years (funding dependent).

To apply:

Send an email application to **Marjolaine Krug (mkrug@dff.e.gov.za)** with the subject "SponBioDiv Postdoctoral Fellowship" and **attach the following documents**:

1. Cover letter describing research experience, interests, and collaborative experience
2. Academic curriculum vitae with list of publications and conference presentations included
3. Certified transcripts of academic qualifications at the tertiary level
4. Contact details for two people willing to write reference letters

Closing date for applications: 20 February 2026

The University of Cape Town reserves the right to disqualify ineligible, incomplete and/or inappropriate application. The University of Cape Town reserves the right to change the conditions of award or to make no awards at all. The successful incumbent must be prepared to comply with the University's approved policies, procedures and practices for the postdoctoral sector.