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## Ecology MSc project available:

### ***Blown-away? Examining how wind affects mortality and functional traits in a keystone plant species***

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A fully-funded MSc project in Plant Ecology will be available from January 2019 under the supervision of Dr Peter le Roux at the University of Pretoria. This MSc project forms part of a larger NRF-funded research programme which is addressing the ecological impacts of wind in one of the windiest, but also most untouched and isolated, terrestrial ecosystems: sub-Antarctic Marion Island.

The successful applicant will examine changing wind patterns as a component of climate change, focusing on the impacts of wind on the island's dominant keystone plant species, *Azorella selago*. Previous projects have given us a good understanding of several aspects of the biology and ecology of this species (including how important *A. selago* is for structuring plant and invertebrate communities on Marion Island), and several large datasets have already been collected that will be the foundation for the MSc project. However, the student will also travel to Marion Island to conduct fieldwork and collect data for their project.

#### **Minimum requirements:**

- A BSc (Honours) degree in Ecology, Plant Science, Zoology or a related field.
- Experience in data management and report writing.
- An interest in advanced data analysis. Competency in R, spatial analyses, and/or image analysis are highly recommended.
- Must have good organisational skills and must be meticulous in their work.
- Must be willing to conduct fieldwork under extreme conditions.

#### **A grant-linked NRF bursary will be available to the student (R70'000 p.a.).**

The student will be based in the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences at the University of Pretoria, working within an established, productive and supportive research group, and as part of a large collaborative and multidisciplinary network.

Applicants should send their **detailed CV** together with a **cover letter** indicating eligibility for the post, their **academic record (including marks)**, and a list of **two or three potential academic references** via email to Dr Peter le Roux (peter.leroux@up.ac.za). For queries contact Dr le Roux by email or by phone (012 420 6761).

**Closing date for applications: 15 November 2018.** Short-listed applicants will be contacted by mid-December.

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