



SOUTHERN AFRICAN SOCIETY OF AQUATIC SCIENTISTS

NEWSLETTER – March 2006

1. Call for medal nominations

From Wynand Vlok, as Chairman of the Medals Committee:

In terms of our Constitution, members may be nominated for various awards in the form of gold, silver or bronze medals. The criteria, taken from the Constitution, are set out below. Nominations must be submitted to the medals committee chairman (Wynand Vlok wynandv@ul.ac.za) by the end of March.

- (a) The Society shall award Gold and Silver Medals on appropriate occasions.
- (b) A Gold medal shall be awarded on rare occasions in recognition of an exceptionally high standard of research in the aquatic sciences, or an exceptionally valuable contribution to the management, conservation or development of aquatic ecosystems or resources, over an extended period.
- (c) A Silver medal shall be awarded irregularly in recognition of the exceptionally high standard of a specific piece of research in the aquatic sciences or of the exceptionally high standard of a particular contribution to the management, conservation or development of aquatic ecosystems or resources.
- (d) A Bronze Medal shall be awarded irregularly in recognition of the exceptionally high standard of a specific piece of work by a junior scientist or manager. This work shall normally be in the form of a dissertation.
- (e) Awards may be to anyone through formal nomination by a member of the Society at least three months before an Annual General Meeting. Nominations must include a statement regarding the nominee's eligibility for the award (including the contribution of his/her colleagues in the case of collaborative work) and citation of the particular work or works for which the nomination is made.

The Medals Committee is a standing committee of Exco and reviews each submission individually.

2. Matters for the AGM 2006

The AGM will be held during the conference in Maputo (19-23 June). If there are any issues or points you want to raise or discuss, please let me have them by the end of April so I can include them on the agenda.

3. E-mailing list reminder

This is a reminder to those "Unknown" recipients of the newsletter to respond to me with your name so I can link you to your e-mail address. Thank you to those that have responded.

4. PhD/MSc position at UCT

From Heather Malan:

WETLAND HEALTH AND INTEGRITY RESEARCH PROGRAMME:

FRESHWATER RESEARCH UNIT, UCT

PhD (or MSc) ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A WETLAND INDEX OF ECOLOGICAL HEALTH BASED ON INVERTEBRATES

Wetlands are vulnerable and threatened ecosystems in South Africa and a national research programme has been initiated by the Water Research Commission in order to optimise wetland conservation. Phase II of this programme is currently being coordinated from the Freshwater Research Unit (University of Cape Town) and is largely concerned with wetland health and integrity. The ecological condition of a given wetland needs to be ascertained for effective implementation of the National Water Act and for other activities such as conservation planning and management. In South Africa although the assessment of river health using macroinvertebrates (SASS) is well established, in the case of wetlands it is not clear if this approach can be used. This project will be directed towards examining the feasibility of a wetland biotic index based on invertebrates.

The project will involve examination of the (limited) existing records of wetland invertebrates and collection of new samples in order to gather baseline data needed for development of an index to assess the ecological health of a given wetland. The feasibility of using invertebrates (including micro-crustaceans) to assess wetland ecological condition in South Africa, using either sensitivity scores or a multi-metric index based on more than one attribute will be investigated. The work will be conducted in close collaboration with a study to identify indicators of ecological health for wetlands in the dry state.

This project will be based at the Freshwater Research Unit, University of Cape Town and will involve fieldwork to collect samples, both in W. Cape and in other parts of the country. It is envisaged that this will be a PhD position (alternatively an MSc position with the possibility of up-grading to PhD).

Timeline: Starting (approximately) April 2006 – March 2009 (3 years).

Supervisor: Prof. Jenny Day

Contact person: Dr Heather Malan, Freshwater Research Unit, Dept. Zoology, Room 3. 24. (Tel. 650 3872). hmalan@botzoo.uct.ac.za.