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Centre for
Invasion Biology

# National Symposium on Biological Invasions

*From catchments to coastlines:*
*Expanding ecosystem and taxonomic perspectives*

## Programme

9 – 11 November 2026 · Stellenbosch

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Natalie van der Heuvel
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Siya Mnciva
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Clara Steyn
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Thulisile Jaca
Jack Gonete
Duduzile Ngwenya
Refilwe Mofokeng
Freddy Mudede
Katie O'Shaughnessy

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# Day 1

Monday, 9 November 2026

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 08:00–08:30 | | Registration & welcome refreshments |
| 08:30–08:40 | | Opening remarks — Tatenda Dalu |
| 08:40–08:45 | | Housekeeping — MC Jawi Ramahlo |

**KEYNOTE**
08:50–09:35

## Josie South: Upscaling invasion impact prediction (or futilely trying to)

Chair: Tammy Robinson-Smythe

| O-1 · ORAL | | Marine & coastal invasions | Chair: Sabrina Kumschick |
|---|---|---|---|
| 09:35–09:50 | 1 | Looking forward: First watch list for marine alien species in Namibia | **Cathleen Deelie** |
| 09:50–10:05 | 2 | Alien species in South African kelp forests: what do we know and what can we do? | **Clara Steyn** |
| 10:05–10:20 | 3 | Cost-effectiveness of addressing knowledge gaps in important marine systems | **Daniel van Blerk** |
| 10:20–10:35 | 4 | Working towards a standardised approach to detect and manage marine invasive species in understudied regions | **Katie O'Shaughnessy** |
| 10:35–10:50 | 5 | iMarineTrackr: harnessing citizen science for automated marine alien species monitoring | **Sarah Ackland** |
| 10:50–11:05 | 6 | Distribution of the alien bryozoan, *Amathia verticillata*, along the South African coastline | **Zeané Nel** |

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|---|---|
| 11:05–11:35 | **Tea break & Poster Session 1 (P1–12)** |

| S-1 · SPEED | | Speed talks | Chair: Duran Chetty |
|---|---|---|---|
| 11:35–11:41 | 1 | Assessing the viability of fertility control for invasive rodents in informal southern African landscapes | **Armand Engelbrecht** |
| 11:41–11:47 | 2 | Killing the invader is not enough: integrating soil health into assessments of ecosystem restoration | **Bheka Nxele** |
| 11:47–11:53 | 3 | Measuring compliance with the legislative provisions on invasive species in the National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act, 2004 during the 2025/26 financial year | **Zenande Mbana** |
| 11:53–11:59 | 4 | The silky oak (*Grevillea robusta*) in South Africa: Introduction history, invasion ecology, and management options | **Christiaan Gildenhuys** |
| 11:59–12:05 | 5 | New infrastructure or clearing invasive plants: Which secures more water for less? | **Emily McCulloch-Jones** |
| 12:05–12:20 | | *Buffer* | |

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| 12:20–13:20 | **Lunch** |

| O-2 · ORAL | | Freshwater invasions | Chair: Katie O'Shaughnessy |
|---|---|---|---|
| 13:20–13:35 | 1 | Long-term functional changes in the inshore fish community of Lake Kariba are driven by hydrology and Nile tilapia invasion | **Charlotte Clay** |
| 13:35–13:50 | 2 | Habitat modification by *Iris pseudacorus* restructures stream macroinvertebrate assemblages along physicochemical gradients | **Claude Moshobane** |
| 13:50–14:05 | 3 | Native or Introduced? Unravelling the status of Nile Tilapia (*Oreochromis niloticus*) in Lake Tanganyika | **Manda Kambikambi** |
| 14:05–14:20 | 4 | Ecological impacts of the invasive freshwater snail, *Tarebia granifera*, on benthic communities and its role as a parasite host in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa | **Rebecca Cawood** |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 14:20–14:35 | 5 | Informing spread predictions of two alien snails using movement traits | **Tatenda Dalu** |
| 14:35–14:50 | 6 | CRAFTing the profile of a perfect invader: a global database of crayfish traits within and beyond their native range | **Danai Kontou** |
| 14:50–15:20 | | **Tea break & Poster Session 1 (P1–12)** | |
| S-2 · SPEED | | **Speed talks** | **Chair:** Siya Mnciva |
| 15:20–15:26 | 1 | The Global ICPPE project and South Africa's contribution towards gender-specific PPE for Alien and Invasive Species Control | **Debbie Muir** |
| 15:26–15:32 | 2 | Assessing the biodiversity impacts of removing invasive alien trees to supply value-added industries with biomass feedstock in South Africa | **Duduzile Ngwenya** |
| 15:32–15:38 | 3 | The risks *Eucalyptus* species pose to South Africa and options for evidence-based regulation | **Duran Chetty** |
| 15:38–15:44 | 4 | Mapping planted and naturalised alien trees in Stellenbosch using iNaturalist and field surveys | **Freddy Mudede** |
| 15:44–15:50 | 5 | Exploring the genetics of host-plant affinities: how does lineage interbreeding alter *Dactylopius opuntiae* 'ficus' and 'stricta' efficacies in the field? | **Frog Schormann** |
| 15:50–15:56 | 6 | Native vs. invasive seed dynamics: What's really driving invasive Rosaceae in montane grasslands? | **Grant Martin** |
| 15:56–16:02 | 7 | *Buffer* | |
| O-3 · ORAL | | **Biological control** | **Chair:** Jack Gonete |
| 16:05–16:20 | 1 | Assessment of aquatic weed invasions and the status of biological control in Eswatini | **Bongumenzi Matsenjwa** |
| 16:20–16:35 | 2 | An unguarded gate for insect invasion: Are agricultural biological control agents sold in South Africa without proper risk assessment? | **Ruan Veldtman** |
| 16:35–16:50 | 3 | The future of biological control for invasive trees in South Africa | **Grant Martin** |
| 16:50–17:05 | 4 | An update on the biological control programme on wilding pine, *Pinus pinaster*, in the Cape Floristic Region | **Kim Canavan** |
| 17:05–17:20 | 5 | Diversity and community structure of indigenous psylloid parasitoids in citrus environments: an insight into conservation biological control | **Raynold Moagi** |
| 17:20–17:30 | | Closing | |

# Day 2

Tuesday, 10 November 2026

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|---|---|---|---|
| 08:00–08:30 | | Arrival tea / coffee | |

**KEYNOTE**
08:30–09:15

## Andrew Liebhold: The intertwining of insect and plant invasions

Chair: Dave Richardson

| O-4 · ORAL | | **Risk assessment, listing & policy** | **Chair:** John Wilson |
|---|---|---|---|
| 09:15–09:30 | 1 | The processes and evidence to underpin the NEM:BA A&IS Lists | **Ashlyn Padayachee** |
| 09:30–09:45 | 2 | Introduction and establishment status of alien taxa in South Africa | **Promise Mtileni** |
| 09:45–10:00 | 3 | Update on the implementation of the GEF 7-IAS Project on improving efficiency and effective management of high-risk Invasive Alien Species in South Africa | **Rampedi Masemola** |
| 10:00–10:15 | 4 | A prioritisation framework for managing terrestrial invasive invertebrates in South Africa | **Sbongiseni Xolo** |
| 10:15–10:45 | 5 | Panel discussion — Working for Water: past, present and future<br>**Chair:** Prof Dave Richardson | **Dr Guy Preston & Itani Tshivhandekano** |
| 10:45–11:15 | | **Tea break & Poster Session 2 (P13–25)** | |
| S-3 · SPEED | | **Speed talks** | **Chair:** Refilwe Mofokeng |
| 11:15–11:21 | 1 | Heavy metal distribution, bioavailability and water hyacinth uptake across 11 wetlands in the City of Cape Town | **Jane Doherty** |
| 11:21–11:27 | 2 | Distribution, population structure, and risk of introduced *Passiflora* species in South Africa | **Lehlohonolo Adams** |
| 11:27–11:33 | 3 | Beyond invasive plant control: the Onrus Catchment-to-Coast approach to ecological restoration | **Lulutho Mancunga** |
| 11:33–11:39 | 4 | Towards improving decision-making in complex ecological systems: a review of decision support tool application in diverse settings | **Malukhanye Mbopha** |
| 11:39–11:45 | 5 | Strengthening early detection and rapid response through university partnerships | **Nolwethu Jubase Tshali** |
| 11:45–11:51 | 6 | Trophic niche interactions between invasive Australian redclaw crayfish (*Cherax quadricarinatus*) and native freshwater crabs (*Potamonautes* spp.) in relation to nutrient dynamics in the Inkomati River Basin, South Africa | **Charity Sambo** |
| 11:51–12:00 | | *Buffer* | |
| O-5 · ORAL | | **Detection, mapping & monitoring** | **Chair:** Freddy Mudede |
| 12:00–12:15 | 1 | An integrated governance approach to detecting, reporting, and mobilising first records of alien species | **Katelyn Faulkner** |
| 12:15–12:30 | 2 | Species distribution modelling and niche dynamics of cryptic invasive murid rodent species from southern Africa under climate change | **Kemoratile Maseko** |
| 12:30–12:45 | 3 | Early detection, rapid response, and integrated systems for the management of biological invasions in South Africa | **Mlu Nsikani** |
| 12:45–13:00 | 4 | Mapping the invasion and spread of *Pinus patula* and informing management in the Maloti-Drakensberg World Heritage Site, South Africa | **Rodney Quick** |
| 13:00–13:15 | 5 | eDNA-based monitoring in Saldanha Bay and Langebaan Lagoon: Biodiversity assessment and detection of alien species | **Robyn Payne** |
| 13:15–13:30 | 6 | Citizen science reveals incipient naturalisation of non-native palms (Arecaceae) in South Africa | **Luke Potgieter** |

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|---|---|---|---|
| **13:30–14:30** | | **Lunch** | |
| **O-6 · ORAL** | | **Management, control & restoration** | **Chair:** Luke Potgieter |
| 14:30–14:45 | 1 | Eradicating *Mus musculus* from globally significant Marion Island | **Sue Tonin** |
| 14:45–15:00 | 2 | Towards evidence-based management of aquatic invasive alien plants: integrating capacity building with IAP infestation thresholds | **Lethukuthula Mhlongo** |
| 15:00–15:15 | 3 | Towards an improved understanding of the potential consequences of mouse eradication on native and invasive plant and invertebrate communities of Marion Island | **Michelle Greve** |
| 15:15–15:30 | 4 | An adaptive integrated management strategy as a driver of cost-effective invasive alien plant control in the Vaal River barrage reservoir system | **Nhlanhla Mayinga** |
| 15:30–15:45 | 5 | Management of invasive alien species in the City of Cape Town: challenges, strategies and opportunities | **Bongani Zungu** |
| 15:45–16:00 | 6 | Non-target multi-kingdom soil responses to biological control and pesticide use in managed and unmanaged tea plantations | **Itumeleng Moroenyane** |
| **16:00–16:30** | | **Tea break & Poster Session 2 (P13–25)** | |
| **S-4 · SPEED** | | **Speed talks** | **Chair:** Clara Steyn |
| 16:30–16:36 | 1 | Patterns of the invasive house mouse (*Mus musculus*) index abundance across the elevational gradient of Marion Island | **Monique Van Bers** |
| 16:36–16:42 | 2 | An evaluation of the potential risks of importing exotic horticultural plants into South Africa | **Phumudzo Tshikhudo** |
| 16:42–16:48 | 3 | The pollution-invasion nexus: a systematic review of chemical stressors driving biological invasions in Southern Africa | **Refilwe Mofokeng** |
| 16:48–16:54 | 4 | The Asian blue tick (*Rhipicephalus microplus*) in Africa: invasion pathways, spread, and interactions with the native *R. decoloratus* | **Rethabile Motloung** |
| 16:54–17:00 | 5 | Freshwater plastisphere: a review on alien invasive species and microbial community composition, functional roles, drivers, and potential implications | **Salphina Sathekge** |
| **19:00** | | **Gala Dinner**<br>STIAS — Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study | |

# Day 3

Wednesday, 11 November 2026

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 08:00–08:30 | | Arrival tea / coffee |

**KEYNOTE**
08:30–09:15

## François Roets: The Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer invasion in South Africa — where are we now?

Chair: Ruan Veldtman

| S-5 · SPEED | | Speed talks | Chair: Thuli Jaca |
|---|---|---|---|
| 09:15–09:21 | 1 | Metagenomic analysis of the water hyacinth planthopper (*Megamelus scutellaris*) gut microbiome in heavy metal(loid) polluted systems: implications for biological control | **Tafara Bute** |
| 09:21–09:27 | 2 | The status of alien plant species in Gauteng province, South Africa: Insights from citizen science | **Takalani Nelufule** |
| 09:27–09:33 | 3 | Thermal tolerance of *Polymorphomyia basilica* (Diptera: Tephritidae), a biological control agent of *Chromolaena odorata*, and its potential distribution | **Thifhelimbilu Mulateli** |
| 09:33–09:39 | 4 | Floating invasive alien aquatic plants reshape predator–prey dynamics involving mosquito larvae | **Thoriso Masalesa** |
| 09:39–09:45 | 5 | Impacts of invasive alien plant clearing on freshwater biodiversity and ecosystem functioning in South African river systems | **Venerate Mdaka** |
| 09:45–09:51 | 6 | Occurrence and distribution patterns of listed invasive alien plant species in provincial protected areas of Limpopo and Mpumalanga, South Africa | **Itani Tshivhandekano** |
| 09:51–10:00 | | *Buffer* | |

| 10:00–10:30 | Tea break |
|---|---|

| O-7 · ORAL | | Invasion ecology | Chair: Dudu Ngwenya |
|---|---|---|---|
| 10:30–10:45 | 1 | From the invasion history of *Vespula germanica* in South Africa to the role of social complexity in invasiveness | **Damien Gergonne** |
| 10:45–11:00 | 2 | Australian trees and shrubs in South Africa: Insights on introduction status, extent, and invasion debt from iNaturalist | **Dave Richardson** |
| 11:00–11:15 | 3 | Island Biogeography Theory-inspired predictions reveal that urban alien plant richness is source-dependent and defies classical isolation predictions | **Lesibana Sedibana** |
| 11:15–11:30 | 4 | How large should my spots be? Variation in melanisation enhances fitness in the invasive lady beetle *Harmonia axyridis* | **Perryn Richardson** |
| 11:30–11:45 | 5 | From climate to microclimate: Estimating realized performance of an invasive insect in heterogeneous thermal environments | **Tania Pogue** |
| 11:45–12:00 | 6 | Biometric variation in the invasive African Sacred Ibis: sexual dimorphism and comparison with native populations | **Nicola Larroux** |

| S-6 · SPEED | | Speed talks | Chair: Perryn Richardson |
|---|---|---|---|
| 12:00–12:06 | 1 | Cryptic invasion of *Rosa* species in the grassland biome of South Africa | **Zinhle Sithole** |
| 12:06–12:12 | 2 | An assessment of the invasive potential of *Verbascum thapsus* (great mullein) in South Africa | **Thulisile Jaca** |
| 12:12–12:18 | 3 | Enforcement of Alien Invasive Species Regulations under NEM:BA | **Bernard Ndou** |
| 12:18–12:24 | 4 | Invasion assessment of a new cactus species, *Brasiliopuntia brasiliensis*, in KwaZulu-Natal | **Ntombifuthi Shabalala** |

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| 12:24–12:30 | 5 | Integrating socio-economic impacts and perceptions of invasive alien plants: three Western Cape case studies | **Philisa Dunyana** |
| 12:30–12:36 | 6 | Understanding the effects of common carp, *Cyprinus carpio*, on aquatic ecosystems | **Nozipho Madonsela** |
| 12:36–12:45 | | *Buffer* | |

**12:45–13:45** **Lunch**

**O-8 · ORAL** **Impacts & global change** **Chair:** Katelyn Faulkner

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 13:45–14:00 | 1 | Potential environmental impacts of alien species in Mapungubwe and Marakele National Parks, South Africa | **Lesibana Maema** |
| 14:00–14:15 | 2 | Impact of invasive alien plants on herbivores in Kruger National Park | **Llewellyn Foxcroft** |
| 14:15–14:30 | 3 | The impact of *Lantana camara* L. on tree layer species of the Lowveld National Botanical Garden, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa | **Peter Tshisikhawe** |
| 14:30–14:45 | 4 | A step-wise framework to identify the mechanisms of impact of invasive alien species on native species at specific sites: Implications for monitoring | **Dewidine Van der Colff** |
| 14:45–15:00 | 5 | A workflow for impact indicators of alien species | **Sabrina Kumschick** |

**15:00–15:30** **Tea break**

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| 15:30–15:40 | Closing remarks — Guy Midgley |
| 15:40–16:00 | Closing, awards & prizes |

# NSBI 2026: Poster Line-up

| # | Presentation title | Presenter | Institution | Poster session |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| P1 | Understanding the impact of invasive alien plant management on regulations: A Conceptual Framework | **Alungile Jeme** | Rhodes University | Session 1 |
| P2 | Assessing macroinvertebrate diversity and temporal changes in groundwater-dependent pan wetland at Khakhea–Bray transboundary aquifer | **Busisiwe Gumede** | University of Mpumalanga | Session 1 |
| P3 | Impacts of water loss on the performance of African amphibians along an aridity gradient: implications for a changing climate | **Chloé Chappell** | University of Pretoria | Session 1 |
| P4 | Assessing the impact of a new biocontrol agent *Listronotus appendiculatus* (Coleoptera: Curculionidae) on Delta Arrowhead (*Sagittaria platyphylla*) in South Africa | **Eden Hendricks** | Rhodes University | Session 1 |
| P5 | Beyond Initial Clearing: Evaluating the economic, behavioural and institutional factors influencing sustained invasive alien plant control in Western Cape | **Kegomoditswe Tsiane** | Stellenbosch University | Session 1 |
| P6 | The social-ecological impacts of *Agave americana* in Makana Local Municipality, Eastern Cape Province of South Africa | **Lihle Ngcobo** | Rhodes University | Session 1 |
| P7 | Decomposition dynamics of native and non-native leaf litter in subtropical reservoirs | **Linton Munyai** | University of Limpopo | Session 1 |
| P8 | Linking invasive alien plant management and sustainable pest control: Exploring the insecticidal potential of *Schinus terebinthifolia* powders against the fall armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) in a laboratory | **Ntsoaki Sabisa** | University of the Free State | Session 1 |
| P9 | Evaluating the resilience of agricultural systems to the impacts of invasive plants and climate change in the Eastern Cape, South Africa | **Pumeza Cingo** | Nelson Mandela University | Session 1 |
| P10 | Mechanisms, efficiency and resilience of sediment and phosphorus retention in subtropical natural wetlands: the role of native and alien aquatic macrophytes | **Rivoningo Mchavi** | Stellenbosch University | Session 1 |
| P11 | Effect of water temperature on the aerobic scope of the Western Mosquitofish *Gambusia affinis* (Baird and Girard, 1853), from the Sundays River Valley irrigation ponds, Eastern Cape, South Africa: | **Sam Nkosinathi Sibiya** | University of Fort Hare | Session 1 |
| P12 | Barriers or burdens? Investigating the role of river weirs in fish microplastic bioaccumulation and contamination | **Samkelisiwe Themba** | Stellenbosch University | Session 1 |
| P13 | Serotinous woody plant invaders as an invasion syndrome of Mediterranean-type ecosystems and the potential for their eradication from South Africa | **Sibonelo Mhlongo** | Stellenbosch University | Session 2 |
| P14 | South Africa's national list of alien taxa | **John Wilson** | South African National Biodiversity Institute | Session 2 |
| P15 | Native and non-native leaf litter decomposition rates across land cover types in austral river systems | **Sobahle Hlophe** | University of Mpumalanga | Session 2 |
| P16 | The ecological evaluation of *Leucosidea sericea* encroachment | **Sydwell Matsila** | DFFE | Session 2 |
| P17 | Ecological effects of alien invasive plants along riparian areas of Crocodile River System, South Africa | **Zanele Mabaso** | Stellenbosch University | Session 2 |
| P18 | A common garden experiment on seedling recruitment drivers in a biodiversity hotspot | **Jessica Howard** | Stellenbosch University | Session 2 |

| # | Presentation title | Presenter | Institution | Poster session |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| P19 | The genus *Acer* (Sapindaceae) in South Africa: Introduction history, current status, and invasion ecology | **Tristan Bienvenue** | Stellenbosch University | Session 2 |
| P20 | Dynamic multispecies species distribution models applied to UK ladybirds and the invasion of *Harmonia axyridis* | **Seth Musker** | Stellenbosch University | Session 2 |
| P21 | An inventory of plant species along the Eerste River: a benchmark study for future monitoring, management, and restoration | **Raphaelle Moors** | Stellenbosch University | Session 2 |
| P22 | From genes to management: molecular genetics as a tool in biological invasions and weed biocontrol in South Africa – a systematic review and meta-analysis | **Samalesu Mayonde** | Nelson Mandela University | Session 2 |
| P23 | Distribution and perceptions of *Eucalyptus* in the Overberg district of the Western Cape | **Zanlie van Zyl** | Stellenbosch University | Session 2 |
| P24 | Assessing the impacts of invasive black bass (*Micropterus* spp.) on food webs in Cederberg rivers | **Amy Smith** | University of Cape Town | Session 2 |
| P25 | Microplastic ingestion by two invasive fish species, *Cyprinus carpio* and *Oreochromis niloticus*, near wastewater treatment plants along subtropical river systems | **Nombuso Themba** | Stellenbosch University | Session 2 |