

2024



Intern Experience

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Our STORY

Our mission is to enable an integrated stakeholder effort that is proactively involved in issues that impact on the environmental resilience of the area.

In December 2000 a group of Nature's Valley families launched a community initiative whose goal was to engage all stakeholders and contribute to proactively maintaining the environmental integrity of Nature's Valley and the surrounding area. The current, relatively pristine condition of the area is largely due to the legacy of a few committed individuals, whose commitment we celebrate and dedicate our work to.

Nature's Valley lies on one of the most sought after stretches of South Africa's coastline and development in the area is occurring at an unprecedented rate. The Nature's Valley community has the potential to play a role in ensuring that proposed development is appropriate and sustainable, and that environmental impact is minimized. In order to achieve this, an involved and proactive community is essential, and this is why the NVT was established to focus on environmental issues.

Purpose

To maintain the environmental integrity of Nature's Valley and surrounds for future generations.

Vision

To be a catalytic conservation initiative that is inclusive and effective.

Meet OUR TEAM

Prof. Hendri Coetzee

Director

Prof Hendri joined NVT at the beginning of April, 2022. Before taking up the role of Director he was a lecturer at North-West University and brings his wealth of knowledge in both the fields of scientific research and community upliftment and social research.



Lauren Moriarty, MSc.

Conservation Scientist and Environmental Education Coordinator

Lauren first joined the team in 2019 as a WWF intern and then again in 2021 as a WESSA Blue Flags intern before joining staff in January 2022. She heads up the estuary research programme as well as coordinates the environmental education programme.



Giorgio Lombardi, MSc.

GUrban Conservancy Manager

Giorgio has for the past 23 years led the environmental integrative management between three diverse-run nature reserves, namely Fernkloof, Vogelgat Private Nature Reserve and Maanschynkop. Currently, Giorgio serves on various conservation committees regarding estuaries, baboon/human conflict resolution, and interacts with multi-disciplinary conservation organisations, local communities, and international NGOs.



Sky Beveridge, BSc.

Graduate Scientist

Sky, as of October 2022, has graduated from the University of the Western Cape and holds a BSc degree in the Biodiversity and Conservation Biology field.

Sky is heading our newly introduced forest research and management program where he aims to create a better understanding of what state our indigenous forests are in as well as how we can manage these forests effectively.



Kayla Webster, MSc.

Conservation Scientist

Kayla completed her Honours year in 2020 with a project that explored restoration in the presence of extralimital species in fynbos. In 2021, Kayla went on to study her Master's degree in Conservation Biology at the Percy Fitzpatrick Institute of African Ornithology at UCT. Kayla also has experience in the environmental consulting industry, particularly for the renewable energy sector.





What to EXPECT

Our goal is to ensure that you get the most out of your time with us and experience a range of different research, community, and education projects.

A typical week will be structured in a way that allows you certain days to focus on specific activities.

Weeks are broken down into:

- A research day
- A training day
- A community service day
- A project focus day
- A fun day

On research days you are required to head out into the field with staff and work with them to collect valuable data in several ecosystems: coastal, estuarine, forest, fynbos, and urban.

Training days will involve an NVT staff member taking a deep dive into their field of expertise. These days will be both theoretical and practical.

Community service day will take you out into the surrounding communities of

Plettenberg Bay. Here you will be involved in clean-ups, establishment of vegetable gardens and assist with community needs.

Project days will allow you to focus on a specific project that aligns with your educational needs. Under the mentorship of staff, you will take responsibility for this project from the development phase. There are a range of topics to choose from that can be catered towards your main interests.

What is life without a bit of fun?

We want you to enjoy your time with us and that's why once a week will include something fun to do. We will take you out to visit our partnering organisations which will allow you to experience encounters with seals, birds of prey, snakes and so much more, up close and personal, while learning at the same time.



What to EXPECT

Example of a two month internship with NVT.

Week
1

Research/fieldwork - Coastal
Training - Rocky shores, shorebirds, coastal fynbos & marine debris
Service learning/community service - Nature's Valley Community
Special project - to be determined
Fun day - Day trip to Offshore Adventures

Week
2

Research/fieldwork - Marine
Training - Community engagement
Service learning/community service - Covie Community
Special project - to be determined
Fun day - Salt River Hike

Week
3

Research/fieldwork - Forest
Training - Introduction to forests
Service learning/community service - Kurland Community
Special project - to be determined
Fun day - Day trip to Raptor Rescue Plett

Week
4

Research/fieldwork - Rivers & Estuaries
Training - Estuary systems, fish ID & sampling
Service learning/community service - Keurbooms Community
Special project - to be determined
Fun day - Kalander Kloof hike

Week 5

Research/fieldwork - Fynbos
Training - Identification workshops, medicinal & cultural uses, pollination, bird-ringing
Service learning/community service - Wittedrift Community
Special project - to be determined
Fun day - Day trip to Lawnwood Snake Sanctuary

Week 6

Research/fieldwork - Urban
Training - Social research
Service learning/community service - Green Valley/Ganse Vallei
Special project - to be determined
Fun day - Groot River & Pig's head hike

Week 7

Research/fieldwork - Coastal
Training - Appropriate data collection practices
Service learning/community service - Plettenberg Bay
Special project - to be determined
Fun day - Day trip to Monkeyland & Birds of Eden

Week 8

Research/fieldwork - Marine
Training - Scientific writing
Service learning/community service - Qolweni/Bossiegif/Pinetree
Special project - to be determined
Fun day - The Point hike

Our PROJECTS



1. Tsitsikamma Fynbos Programme

Currently undergoing an expansion with new projects being developed and existing ones improved upon. Projects will include a wider range of ecological research studies covering pollination, seed dispersal, fire dynamics and more.

These project results will inform the development of, freely available, environmental education and community awareness resources.

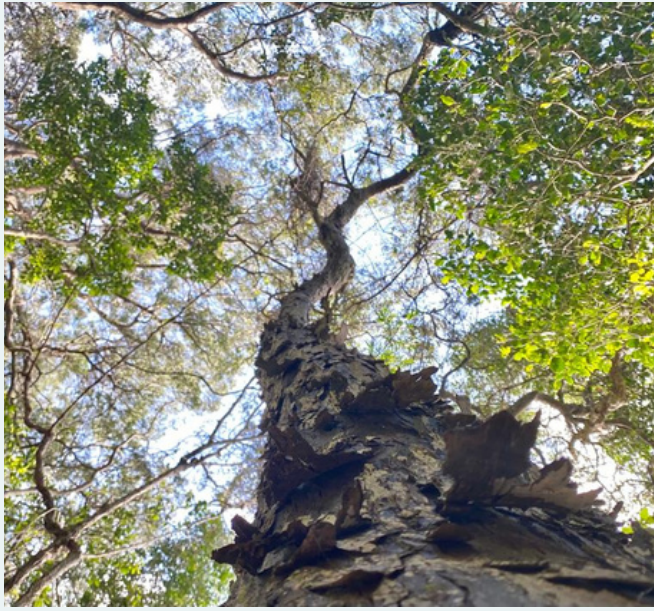


2. Rivers and Estuary programme

- **Groot River Estuary Project** consists of two components. The first being monthly water quality sampling; inspecting various water quality parameters to ensure a healthy system for all who depend on its functioning. Secondly, we conduct monthly CWACs (coordinated waterbird counts) for monitoring of waterbird utilisation of the estuary and River. The CWACs form part of a larger citizen science project monitoring the health of waterbodies across the country, through avian activity.
- **Salt River Project** in the early phases of its development with endless opportunity to be immersed in thought-provoking ecological and social research. This project will feature an ecosystem wide approach, monitoring the systems from source to sea, with emphasis on the biodiversity that inhabit it and anthropogenic impact on the river and estuary. The Salt River is, interestingly, home to a unique assemblage of macro-invertebrates; a significant number new to science.



Our projects continued...



3. Forest programme

A newly launched programme currently in its developmental stages. These initial projects will focus on keystone species monitoring, which includes the Bush Pig, various bird species and Cape Leopard (in partnership with the Cape Leopard Trust). We will also look at the impacts of tourists and hiking trails on bird activity.

As the projects gain traction, NVT will expand the programme to include an added variety of fascinating projects.



4. Coastal Programme (#ShareTheShores)

- **White-fronted Plover (WFPL) breeding success project** monitors the breeding success of the WFPL - a declining beach-breeding species. The project involves surveying four local beaches for WFPL activity and nests as well as newly hatched chicks; monitoring eggs, adults and chicks over time; banding individuals for ease of monitoring; and on our experimental beaches implement simple intervention and create public awareness. This project runs from August until the end of March with peak nesting activity from November to January.
- **Micro-plastics Project** takes an in-depth look at the scale of the microplastics problem on the Nature's Valley beach, and ways to address it through education and awareness.



Our projects continued...



5. Adopt-a-Beach Education Programme

A flagship environmental education programme, that has been running for over a decade. This programme, takes learners out of the classroom and onto the beach to learn about beach formation and the various aspects of beaches as a component of the coastal ecosystem. In partnership with The Two Ocean's Aquarium, learners also do online learning, working towards a accreditation in Marine biology.



6. Birding Connect Programme

focuses on a small group of learners from participating schools who have a keen interest in birds. In partnerships with Birdlife Plettenberg Bay, NVT teaches learners to ID birds by sight and call, use binoculars and field guides, explore different bird habitats and about their role in the ecosystem as a whole. The programme also has a skill development component where we focus on communication skills, photography and use of virtual technology.



7. WESSA Eco-schools Programme

is a WESSA (Wildlife and Environmental Society of South Africa) initiative which encourages schools to become sustainable and environmentally aware. NVT facilitates the enrolment of schools into this programme and assist with the development of their portfolios and achieving WESSA targets.



8. Community Engagement Programme

aims to raise awareness around the importance of the environment, and how to use it sustainably. The programme has included events, such as, community greening, clean-ups and recycling drives along with various workshops on a myriad of topics, from alien vegetation identification and control to sustainable fishing practices. NVT are working on updating this programme to include more upskilling workshops, based on a community needs assessment.



Internship COSTING

The intern programme costs will be discussed in the interview process, a minimum stay of two months is preferable.

Included in the Price:

- Experience in research and education programmes
- Accommodation
- Cleaning & gardening service for intern accommodation
- Mentorship
- Work related travel
- One town trip per week for groceries
- Field equipment
- Technical equipment
- Access to online courses
- Day outings to assist some of our partnering organisations (excluding additional entry costs)

Excluded from the Price:

- Flights
- Airport transfers
- Food and drinks
- Social/personal activities
- Travel insurance
- Medical insurance
- Entry fee of optional, fun excursions offered by our partners (you will receive a 20% discount on entry fees)



Our

PARTNERS

Here are some of our partnering organisations. During your stay you will have the opportunity to enjoy the optional, guided tours offered by these organisation at a 20% discount.

In some instances (at no extra cost) you will have a day outing to some of our partners to assist them behind the scenes.

Africanyon

Birds of Eden

Lawnwood Snake Park

Monkeyland

Ocean Blue Adventures

Ocean Safaris

Offshore Adventures

Pro Dive Plett

Plettenberg Bay Game Reserve

Plett Surf School

Raptor Rescue Plett



Key STAKEHOLDERS

Here are our key stakeholders and partners:

Birdlife Plettenberg Bay
Birdlife South Africa
Bitou Municipality
BotSoc (Botanical Society of South Africa)
CapeNature
Ingwe Adventures
Local Communities
Local Conservancies
Local Schools
Lunchbox Theatre
NMU (Nelson Mandela University)
NVRA (Nature's Valley Rate Payers Association)
NWU (North-West University)
Percy Fitzpatrick Institute of African Ornithology
Plett Tourism
SAEON (South African Environmental Observation Network)
SANBI (South African National Biodiversity Institute)
SANParks (South African National parks board)
Two Oceans Aquarium
WESSA (Wildlife and Environmental Society of South Africa)
WWF-SA (World Wildlife Foundation South Africa)

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