

NRF-SAIAB Seminar Series 2026

Wednesday 23 September 2026, 10:30am (SAST)

Venue: Lecture Room, NRF-SAIAB, Somerset Street, Makhanda

Teams Registration Link:

<https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/8b4c2ede-5673-4a43-9ce2-4d4b8dd01da1@30878ba0-2f66-4b77-8fde-8dfc1652ff39?source=copyLinkLegacyShareLinkDialog>

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World Heritage Site, Lake St Lucia, is about to undergo an ecosystem flip



The St Lucia estuarine system, a core feature of the iSimangaliso World Heritage Site, is changing. In its present state, due to its shallowness and intermittent connectivity to the sea, it is prone to large fluctuations in salinity and water level – but now this is all changing. An analysis of recent monitoring data has provided clear evidence that St Lucia is at a ‘tipping point’, with the system about to change forever into a freshwater wetland. This progression has been speeded up by human-caused increases in sedimentation. The stark reality is that soon St Lucia will no longer be able function as an estuarine system and South Africa will have lost half of all its estuarine habitat. This presentation will explore the causes of the loss of connectivity between the lake and the sea, and examine options for the way forward.