NRF-SAIAB 7TH ANNUAL STUDENT SYMPOSIUM

60
Presentations

11
Universities

7 of 9
Provinces

Navigating the future of aquatic biodiversity in a changing environment for sustainable livelihoods.



26 November, 2026

08:00 - 17:00

Amazwi Museum, Makhanda

science, technology & innovation
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Science, Technology and Innovation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NRF National Research Foundation | SAIAB South African Institute for Aquatic Biodiversity

NRF-SAIAB's 7th Student Symposium: Advancing aquatic biodiversity research for a sustainable future

How do we safeguard aquatic biodiversity in a changing world and what does this mean for the ecosystems, economies and communities that depend on it?

The 7th NRF-SAIAB Student Symposium, taking place on 26 November 2026, under the theme Navigating the Future of Aquatic Biodiversity in a Changing Environment for Sustainable Livelihoods, brings together emerging researchers to explore these questions and showcase research contributing to the future of aquatic science.

As South Africa's national facility for aquatic biodiversity research, the National Research Foundation's South African Institute for Aquatic Biodiversity (NRF-SAIAB) advances marine and freshwater research through specialised infrastructure, multidisciplinary expertise and national, regional and international collaborations. With nodes in Makhanda, Gqeberha, Johannesburg and Durban, the Institute's research reaches beyond its geographical base, contributing to biodiversity conservation, water resource management, fisheries, aquaculture and climate-change adaptation.

This research matters because healthy aquatic ecosystems underpin food and water security, economic development and human wellbeing. By generating scientific knowledge that informs evidence-based decisions, NRF-SAIAB contributes to protecting biodiversity, strengthening rural livelihoods and supporting sustainable development.

This year's Symposium will feature more than 60 oral and poster presentations, representing NRF-SAIAB students coming from 11 South African universities, two regional African universities and seven of South Africa's nine provinces. The programme will also include special keynote presentations by NRF-SAIAB Honorary Research Associates, Professor Thulani Makhalanyane (South African Research Chair in African Microbiome Innovation, Stellenbosch University) and Dr Samuel Motitsoe (University of the Witwatersrand).

More than a platform for sharing research, the Symposium celebrates the next generation of aquatic scientists and the collaborations needed to address shared environmental challenges.

Join us as we connect science, knowledge and collaboration to shape a future where aquatic biodiversity and sustainable livelihoods can thrive.

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