

Brief Bio of Jacobus Hendrik Visser

As I was born and grew up in the Sandveld along the West Coast, my love for this region has led me to try and elucidate the patterns and processes driving biodiversity within it. I



currently focus on the interaction of the landscape and species biology in influencing unique evolutionary patterns and processes in the Sandveld. The project is centred around the use of poorly dispersing species to achieve this. In particular, I am investigating the ecological interaction of dispersal of *Oxalis hirta* by the Cape dune mole-rat, *Bathyergus suillus* through searching for congruence in phylogeographic patterns across the Sandveld landscape. By elucidating barriers to gene flow and unique evolutionary units, I hope to help focus conservation efforts on the key biodiversity areas within the Sandveld. My future aims

include the use of comparative gene approaches to elucidate some of the intricate questions on biological diversity, like for instance the evolution of true bulbs in South African *Oxalis*. I also have a particular interest in the radiation of the Afrotheria and aim to focus investigation into the biology, behaviour and evolution of one of this groups most enigmatic species – the aardvark (*Orycteropus afer*). The Western Cape of South Africa harbours a unique biodiversity and it is critical that we understand the patterns and processes driving this diversity and its evolution in this region – mostly because contemporary factors are putting pressure on many of the taxa. We therefore have only a limited amount of time left to study these taxa before they disappear forever. I have thus made it my life's mission to understand our beautiful natural heritage and its history. – Jacobus H. Visser