

Plenary Speakers



Prof Nigel Bennett
(University of Pretoria)

Nigel C Bennett is a professor of zoology at the University of Pretoria (UP) and also occupies the Department of Science and Technology/National Research Foundation (NRF) Research Chair in the field of Mammalian Behavioural Ecology and Physiology and the UP Austin Roberts Chair of African Mammalogy. Bennett's research focus is on ecology, animal physiology and behaviour using the African mole-rat as his model animal. He and his co-workers have investigated the ecological and physiological factors that affect the control of reproduction and the evolution of sociality. Unlike other researchers investigating cooperative breeding in mammals, he has done so from a variety of perspectives. The strength of this multi-faceted approach is that it has led to an integrated understanding of reproductive suppression in mole-rats of a type that has not been achieved for any other taxa or group of taxa. His research has set the benchmark for our understanding of phylogenetic and ecological constraints regulating reproductive success and social evolution in mammalian species. His research record ranks him among the best researchers studying social regulation of reproduction in any group of mammals in the world. Bennett obtained his BSc Hons. in 1983 from the University of Bristol in the United Kingdom (UK). After completing his PhD at the University of Cape Town (UCT) in 1988 he was employed as a junior lecturer and senior researcher in zoology at the institution until 1995 when he was appointed as a senior lecturer in the department of zoology and entomology at the UP. He was promoted to full professor in 2001. Bennett holds an A rating by the National Research Foundation. He has been a visiting Professor at the School of Chemical and Biological Sciences, Queen Mary College, University of London since 2005 and more recently a visiting Professor at the Department of Zoology, King Saud University, Saudi Arabia. He has been awarded the UP Chancellor's Medal for his research twice as well as receiving the Exceptional Academic Achiever Award for the past sixteen years. He is a fellow of the Zoological Society of London, a fellow of the Royal Society of South Africa and a member of the Academy of Sciences of South Africa. He has been the recipient of the Gold medal from the Zoological Society of Southern Africa and the Havenga Prize for outstanding contributions to Life Sciences

awarded by the Academy of Science and Arts of South Africa. The University of Pretoria awarded him the University of Pretoria Commemorative Research Medal for being one of the top 100 scientists in 100 years of its existence. In 2015 he was awarded an NSTF ESKOM-sponsored award for his outstanding contribution to Science, Engineering and Information Technology as a developer of research capacity, in 2016 he was made a fellow of the African Academy of Sciences and in 2017 the University recognised him with the Vice Chancellor's award for outstanding postgraduate supervision. Bennett has served as President of the Zoological Community of Southern Africa for two years. He is editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Zoology*, London and a past editor of *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London Biological Sciences B*. In 2013 he took on the handling editor position at *Biology Letters* another Royal Society journal. Bennett has published 365 papers in international peer-reviewed scientific journals, co-authored a specialist book published by Cambridge University Press and has penned twelve chapters in books. Bennett is the world leader in African mole-rat biology and in particular reproductive physiology.



Prof Barry Lovegrove

(University of KwaZulu-Natal)

Barry Lovegrove is Professor Emeritus at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. He obtained his PhD under the supervision of Gideon Louw from the University of Cape Town in 1987, where after he undertook post-doctoral studies at the University of California, Los Angeles, and Phillips University, Marburg, Germany, the latter as an Alexander von Humboldt Fellow. Barry is an evolutionary physiologist. He spent his whole career trying to understand the diversity of metabolic adaptations in birds and mammals. His work culminated in the book *Fires of Life: Endothermy in Birds and Mammals* (Yale University Press). In 2017 Barry gave the prestigious Irving-Scholander Memorial Lecture in Fairbanks, Alaska in anticipation of the book's release. Barry is also the author of *Living Deserts of Southern Africa* (Fernwood Press), which he is currently updating. Barry is an NRF A-rated scientist.



Prof Hugh MacIsaac

(University of Windsor,
Canada)

Hugh MacIsaac is professor and senior Canada Research Chair in Aquatic Invasive Species at the Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research, University of Windsor, Canada. Previously Hugh was Fisheries and Oceans Canada Invasive Species Research Chair, and Director of the Canadian Aquatic Invasive Species Network, a consortium of ~35 faculty across Canada. Hugh is a Distinguished Research Fellow of the Sino-Canada Research Center on Plateau Lakes at Yunnan University, China. Hugh has authored over 200 peer-reviewed papers and books. Hugh is interested in a variety of issues pertaining to invasive species, including analyses of vectors and pathways of introduction, genetic characterization and evolution, and impacts and mitigation. He developed conceptual and empirical models to describe how alien invasive species colonize the Laurentian Great Lakes and other aquatic ecosystems. Recent work addresses use of genetic markers to identify source and destination patterns, and how the problems of false positives and false negatives are affected with this approach.
