



1st & 2nd Papegaaiberg iNaturalist BioBlitzes: Seeding the nexus between community interaction, good governance and conservation in Stellenbosch

Prof Ruan Veldtman

(Stellenbosch University & South African National Biodiversity Institute)

Monday, 24 August 2026 | 16h00–17h00 SAST

HOW TO ATTEND:

In person (main venue):

- Road House Cinema
(Neelsie)
Stellenbosch University

Watch at satellite venues:

- MITP Boardroom P215,
2nd Floor Physics Building
University of the Witwatersrand
- Seminar Room K310
Physics Building G5
North-West University

Online (live stream)

--- Please note, a recording of the lecture will be published on the NITheCS YouTube channel following the event ---

ABSTRACT

This talk is about an initiative to promote the biodiversity of the iconic Papegaaiberg and showcase the sorry state of the 10-year-old Papegaaiberg Nature Reserve (PNR). In the heart of Stellenbosch and roughly six times the size of Jan Marais Park near Stellenbosch University, the PNR is one of the few remaining areas of Renosterveld, with regionally less than 5% left in the Western Cape. Some of the pressures facing the reserve are the lack of municipal management, urban sprawl, proliferation of alien plants and an absence of ecologically based fire management.

The initiative uses a BioBlitz format (seeing how many species can be photographed in a few hours) and the global biodiversity platform iNaturalist. Two events on 1 and 22 August 2026 were, and will be, held to get citizen scientists to document some of the biodiversity in the reserve.

Data will be presented on the number of participants, observations made and species photographed. A case for multiple sustainable uses for public benefit is also suggested. In this way, a positive narrative can be used to highlight what still needs to be done to make Papegaaiberg the pride of Stellenbosch.

BIOGRAPHY

Ruan Veldtman is a Senior Scientist at the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) and an Extraordinary Associate Professor in the Department of Conservation Ecology and Entomology at Stellenbosch University.

He is an entomologist specialising in ecology applications. His research focuses on the entomological aspects linked to services provided by ecosystems and the impact of biological invasions. Other interests include wild silk moth ecology, plant–insect interactions, biological control, pollination services and social wasp invasions.

He is an avid supporter of interdisciplinary approaches to entomology, from serious games to sustainable agriculture. His vision is to launch the Centre for Economic Entomology.



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