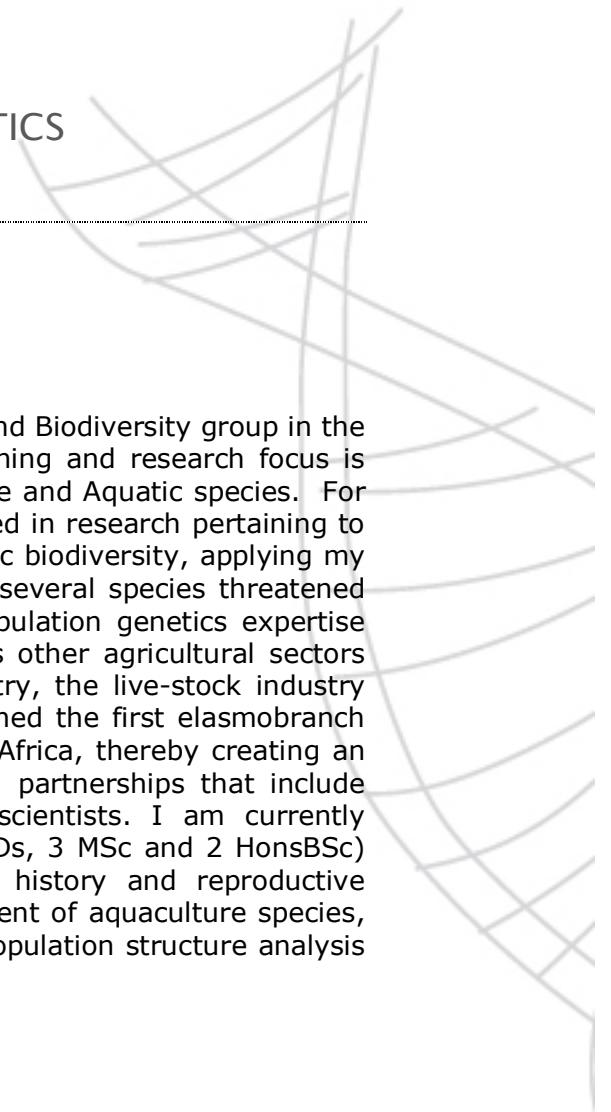


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**ALETTA BESTER-VAN DER MERWE, PHD AGRIC**<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0332-7864>**Biography**

I am a Principle Investigator in the Molecular Breeding and Biodiversity group in the Genetics Department, Stellenbosch University. My teaching and research focus is Molecular Population and Evolutionary Genetics of Marine and Aquatic species. For the most part of my career, I have been actively involved in research pertaining to the conservation and management of marine and aquatic biodiversity, applying my knowledge and expertise in population genetics across several species threatened by anthropogenic and environmental pressures. My population genetics expertise has allowed me to apply my knowledge across various other agricultural sectors including the deciduous fruit industry, the citrus industry, the live-stock industry and the industrial farming industry. In 2013, I established the first elasmobranch (sharks and rays) genetics research group in southern Africa, thereby creating an internationally recognized network of collaboration and partnerships that include governmental organizations, NGOs and other shark scientists. I am currently supervising a total of nine postgraduate projects (4 PhDs, 3 MSc and 2 HonsBSc) relating to population genetic structure, evolutionary history and reproductive biology of elasmobranchs, population structure assessment of aquaculture species, molecular characterization of the black soldier fly and population structure analysis of plant pathogens in citrus.

**Postdocs****Dr Juliana Klein****Dr Beatrix Coetzee****Dr Simo Maduna****Dr Luca Mirimin****Dr Juan Ruiz Guajardo****Graduates****PhD Students****Zama Mbulawa****Juliana Klein****Simo Maduna****Daphne Bitalo****Lise Sandenbergh****Clint Rhode****Belinda Swart****MSc Students****Tamaryn Asbury****Michaela van Staden****Kelvin Hull****Gibbs Kuguru****Rozanne Badenhorst****Charne Rossouw****Simo Maduna****Sonja Blaauw****Jana du Plessis**

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**Hons Students**

**Emma Hubble**  
**Simone Hotarek**  
**Tamaryn Asbury**  
**Katherine Hughes**  
**Michaela van Staden**  
**Kelvin Hull**  
**Jody Bell**  
**Danielle Robbertze**  
**Juanita Schoeman**  
**Charne Rossouw**  
**Malira Masoabi**  
**Shaun Lesch**  
**Marione Niemandt**  
**Simo Maduna**  
**Jana du Plessis**  
**Juli-Ann Hepple**  
**Lize Sandenbergh**

**Recent Publications****2019**

- Kuguru, G., Gennari, Wintner, S., Dicken, M., Klein, J.D., Rhode, C. and **Bester-van der Merwe, A.**, 2019. Spatio-temporal genetic variation of juvenile smooth hammerhead sharks in South Africa. *Marine Biology Research* 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17451000.2019.1695058>
- **Bester-van der Merwe, Aletta E.**, Maduna, S.N., Hull, K.L., Bell, J., Rossouw, C., Wintner, S.P. 2019. Evidence for multiple paternity and confirmation of an Indo-Pacific origin of blacktip shark *Carcharhinus limbatus* occurring in South Africa. *African Journal of Marine Science* 41(3), pp.281-289. <https://doi.org/10.2989/1814232X.2019.1653991>
- Hull, K.L., Asbury, T.A., da Silva, C., Dicken, M., Veríssimo, A., Farrell, E.D., Mariani, S., Mazzoldi, C., Marino, I.A., Zane, L., Maduna, S.N. and **Bester-van der Merwe, A.E.**, 2019. Strong genetic isolation despite wide distribution in a commercially exploited coastal shark. *Hydrobiologia*, pp.1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10750-019-03982-8>
- Juliana D. Klein, **Aletta E. Bester-van der Merwe**, Matt L. Dicken, Kolobe L. Mmonwa, Peter R. Teske., 2019. Genomic resources for the raggedtooth shark (*Carcharias taurus*). *African Journal of Marine Science* 41 (1), 115-118 <https://doi.org/10.2989/1814232X.2019.1576541>
- Juliana D. Klein, **Aletta E. Bester-van der Merwe**, Matt L. Dicken, Kolobe L. Mmonwa, Peter R. Teske., 2019. Reproductive philopatry in a coastal shark drives age-related population structure. *Marine Biology* 166: 26 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00227-019-3467-7>

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- Hull, K.L., Maduna, S.N. and **Bester-van der Merwe, A.E.**, 2018. Characterization of the complete mitochondrial genome of the common smoothhound shark, *Mustelus mustelus* (Carcharhiniformes: Triakidae). *Mitochondrial DNA Part B*, 3(2), pp.964-965.
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- Kuguru, G., Maduna, S., da Silva, C., Gennari, E., Rhode, C. and **Bester-van der Merwe, A.**, 2018. DNA barcoding of chondrichthyans in South African fisheries. *Fisheries Research*, 206, pp.292-295.
- Maduna, S.N., Van Wyk, J.H., Da Silva, C., Gennari, E., **Bester-van der Merwe, A.E.** 2018. Evidence for sperm storage in common smoothhound shark (*Mustelus mustelus*) and paternity assessment in a single litter from South Africa. *Journal of Fish Biology*. 92(4), pp.1183-1191.

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- Maduna, S.N. and **Bester-van der Merwe, A.E.**, 2017. Molecular research on the systematically challenging smoothhound genus *Mustelus*: a synthesis of the past 30 years *African Journal of Marine Science* 39 (4), 373-387
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- Swart, B.L., **Bester-van der Merwe, A.E.**, Kerwath, S.E. and Roodt-Wilding, R., 2016. Phylogeography of the pelagic fish *Seriola lalandi* at different scales: confirmation of inter-ocean population structure and evaluation of southern African genetic diversity. *African Journal of Marine Science*, 38(4), pp.513-524.
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