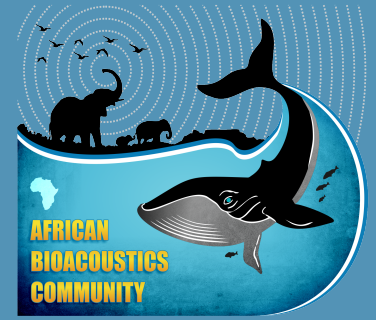


# STUDENT FEEDBACK

## 1<sup>st</sup> African Bioacoustics

# Community Conference

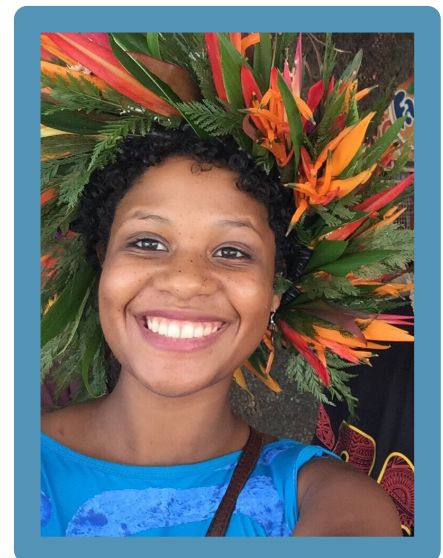


**3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> December – Cape Town 2018**

[www.africanbioacoustic.wixsite.com/abcommunity](http://www.africanbioacoustic.wixsite.com/abcommunity)

### Ida-Wenona Hendricks

I had such a great time at the conference, sitting in a lecture theatre filled with people that has the same interests as me. Not having to explain anything every time I used a scientific term. I met really interesting people and it was great getting to know them and the contributions they've done to science. Some of the talks were a little bit repetitive but interesting nonetheless. What I would have done differently would perhaps to space out talks that had similar topics instead of putting them back to back, or perhaps have one long talk where people that worked on the same project told their different parts instead of listening to the same introductions and methods over and over. I loved that the topics were so diverse and that the experience levels of the speakers were varied as well. I truly had a great time and I thought it was very well organized. It was a huge honor to be sponsored for this great event and I hope to attend many more and eventually be one of the speakers myself based on the ideas I've gotten from this truly educational experience. Thank you to the Acoustical Society of America for this opportunity



### Akash Jaiswal

I am very thankful to ASA for providing financial support to attend the conference and am glad to share my experience at the ABC Conference. The conference was very well organized and the venues for all the events were very convenient and beautiful. What I loved the most about the conference is the diversity of speakers and the topics. Topics ranging from species of terrestrial environment such as Meerkats, cheetah, birds to marine environment such as humpback whales, seals, penguins and the science of their communication kept my interest going on. I learned a lot from all the talks and interactions with participants. The workshop on Eco acoustics in nutshell by Jerome Sueur was very insightful for my research. The timekeeping of all the sessions was perfect. I enjoyed the food and wine at the conference. I appreciate the organizing team for being very responsive to the participants in all pre and post conference communications. And lastly, Cape Town is a beautiful city with breathtaking landscape and so as the University. I will be looking forward to the future ABC conferences with more and more interesting contents.



## David Wechuli

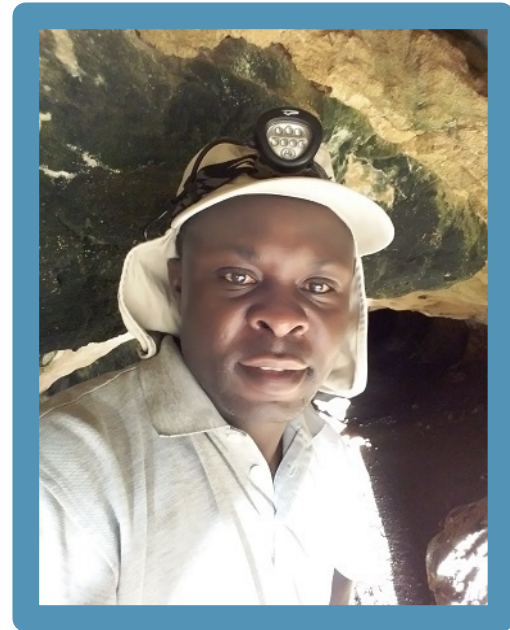
It's my great pleasure to acknowledge and appreciate the opportunity given to me by the Acoustical Society of America to attend at the African Bioacoustics community conference. The conference theme was pertinent because its centered-on acoustics across the diverse animal community.

The eminent plenary speakers were timeous and gave informative talks. They broadly shared what (and research groups) projects are working on. Whereas, they have good opportunities, they also acknowledged the myriad of research challenges. I value this opportunity as an eye opener to me and I now have roadmap what I can focus on to develop my career front.

Both oral and posters presentations provided highlights on use of current technology to better understand how ecological systems operate. Nevertheless, I suggest that in future we encourage those presenting posters to avail themselves at specified time because they could easily clarify emerging questions to their research.

Also, the conference served as prime opportunity to interact with peers and high-profile professionals, bringing together different ideas that are beneficial. Shared information from researchers, about their experiences and skills acquired on use of current technology was vital to me. These skills are sorely needed, particularly in Africa, where technology lags, yet additional valuable information is needed to better understand animal community.

In addition, the direct access to exhibits and presentations from organizations that develop bat acoustics products where valuable information about current hardware and software was shared. This is especially important given that my current project focus is on use of equipment with associated software and ideally significant to know the new developed applications.



## Ralph Watson



The first African Bioacoustics Community Conference was absolutely fantastic and I would like to thank the Acoustical Society of America for providing me with the financial support to attend this conference. The combination of talks between both marine and terrestrial bioacoustics allowed for a diverse range of topics and points-of-view. The quality of research amongst the multi-disciplinary talks was inspirational, and definitely gave me motivation to continue with my research, and push to further advance my career in science. I was privileged to present my work on the movement behaviour of two *Scyliorhinidae* species using acoustic telemetry amongst the long listed of highly regarded scientists. The conference also sparked a host of new ideas, and allowed me to network with a wide-range of people from multiple research fields. I'm currently in talks about setting up a multi-partnered project as a result of meeting people at this conference. The workshop at the end of the conference allowed people to expand their skill-set to include state-of-the-art methods applicable to the wide-range of topics presented at the conference.

## Darren du Plessis

The African Bioacoustics Community conference was amazing and I am grateful that I was allowed the opportunity to be sponsored by the Acoustical Society of America to attend the first conference of its kind in Africa. The first day of the conference started off great, it was an icebreaker evening at Moyo in Kirstenbosch Gardens, which has a reputation of being the most beautiful garden in Africa. We were treated to a welcome cocktail, African styled face paint which added an African atmosphere as well as a 3 course meal where we were able to network with fellow bioacousticians over dinner. The next day the talks started, I was impressed by the quality of plenary speakers chosen to start each day as they are some of the top researchers in their field and I believe they were well chosen for the context of this conference. As for the talks by delegates, I found that there was a nice variety of different topics from Marine life (mammals, fish and birds) to terrestrial life (elephants, birds, bees, cheetahs etc.), these talks were informative and beneficial for me as it expanded my knowledge about bioacoustics and the type of research going on within this broad field. This conference was great as it gave students who were stuck in a rut with their research the chance to receive help from professionals in their field, it also allowed attendees to network with each other and to start new or strengthen old collaborations. Again, I would like to thank ASA and the ABC team for allowing me the chance to attend this well organised conference. Looking forward to the next one!



## Rachel Probert

I would like to say a huge thank you to the Acoustical Society of America and the African Bioacoustics Community team for the opportunity to attend the first African Bioacoustics Community conference. This conference was very different to the last, and my first, conference that I attended in 2017 which, unlike this one, was more tourism focussed. It was a great experience attending an academic conference and I really feel that I learnt a lot in that week. The icebreaker evening on the first night was a really good way for people to meet and socialise before the conference. It also gave students, such as myself, a bit more confidence once we had met some of the scientists that we were going to spend the week with. I really enjoyed the structure of the conference, how each session was opened with a plenary given by a top researcher in their field, followed by shorter talks and then the speed sessions. There was a wide range of research topics and study species, both aquatic and terrestrial, and I thoroughly enjoyed each and every talk that was given.

Thank you again for this opportunity that allowed me to not only learn and network, but to also present my current research to fellow scientists, which was an amazing experience and good practice. As a volunteer to the ABC team, I was also exposed to, and somewhat involved, in the planning and smooth-running of the conference and I learnt what hard work and dedication goes in to planning a successful conference. I had a phenomenal time and I thoroughly look forward to the next one.

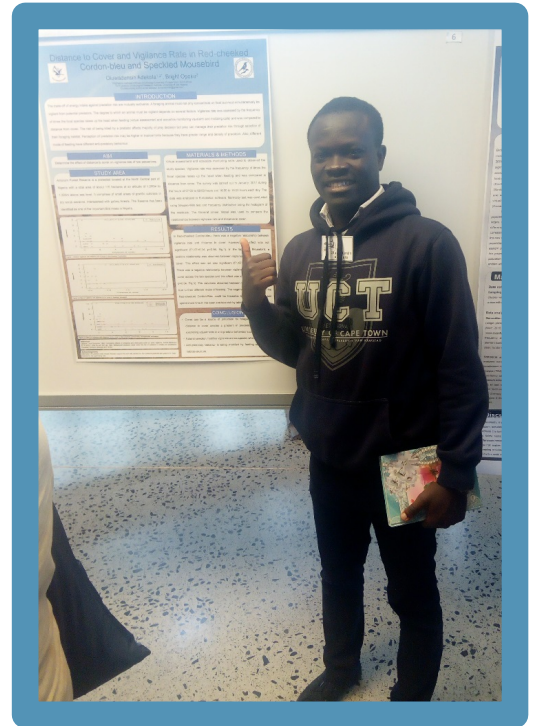


# Oluwadunsin Adekola

My experience at African Bioacoustics Community (ABC) conference was amazing because I was tremendously loaded with so much information for the good of science and humanity. My first day at the conference was an eye-opener to the nitty-gritty of bio-acoustics. I was thrilled by the awesome researches done ranging from bats, other mammals and birds. The bio-acoustic studies on birds especially seabirds really caught my attention because I am presently working on the endemic and vulnerable cape gannets in South Africa. The knowledge gained in this conference would be of immersed advantage in my present and future research works. The wonderful tips illustrated on how to carry out acoustics studies were incredible. In addition, the conference opened my eye to other user-friendly statistical packages. Prior to the conference, I never knew about the software called "Pamguard" for analysing acoustics data. The conference provided me with so much information and instructions about the use of the software. The people were so exciting and the presentations were top-notch. The atmosphere for the conference was so friendly with amazing attendees who were not only courteous in approach but also willing to answer questions related to their research. The meal was so delicious as well. The highlight for me was the network I got through this conference which I believe will foster collaboration in the nearest future.

I really appreciate ABC and Acoustical Society of America (ASA) who provided sponsorship to attend this enjoyable and educative conference.

Thank you



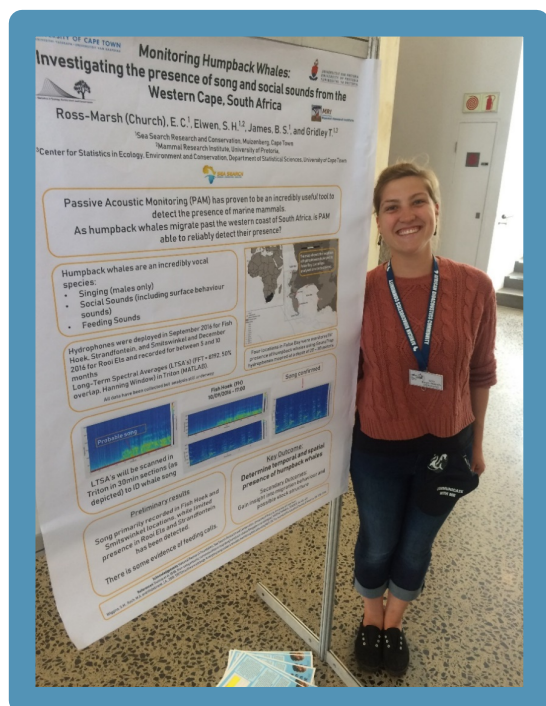
# Erin (Church) Ross- Marsh

I was very privileged to receive ASA sponsorship to be a volunteer at the first African Bioacoustics Community Conference from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> of December 2018. I have never been behind the scenes of an event this large and so it was very exciting to be able to be involved in the organisation and seeing the conference come together step by step.

I was proud to be able to help out the very capable team tasked with organising the ABC conference and was privileged to meet many prestigious scientists. I thoroughly enjoyed the plenary talks given by the various speakers throughout the week and was able to speak to some about their work afterwards which was a wonderful experience. I learnt a lot during the talks, some of which proved very valuable as I was able to incorporate this new information into research work I was currently working on.

I was especially honoured to be able to present a poster of proposed work that I will be completing early this year in connection with Sea Search Research and Conservation, a non-profit conservation company based in Muizenberg, Cape Town. I was able to engage with several other conference delegates regarding the work presented in my poster.

My overall impression of the conference was very positive. The conference team was very professional, the plenaries were amazing and very engaging, the ice-breaker and evening events were very enjoyable and informative, and the overall atmosphere was one of collaboration and engagement. It was a thoroughly enjoyable experience.



## Tinyiko Maluleke

I would like to thank the Acoustical Society of America for sponsoring me to attend the conference. It was a well-planned and organised first African bioacoustics community conference and the turn up was phenomenal. I really enjoyed attending the conference and I salute all the organisers of the conference for doing a great job. The conference was very informative and I have learnt a lot from it. The ABC conference gave me an opportunity to mingle and network with the best bioacoustics researchers in the world. This has opened the doors for me to start collaborating with the best bioacoustics scientists in the world. We also had a very successful workshop entitled "using scientific understanding to inform and improve passive acoustic mitigation." This was also very informative. I would also like to thank all the guest speakers / presenters for delivering the best talks that stimulated our minds on acoustic communication, behaviour, systematics, evolution, human impacts in the marine environment, methods and man, new technology, acoustic monitoring in marine and terrestrial habitats. The conference was a successful one and it has expanded my horizon on bioacoustics. My wish is to see it happening again.

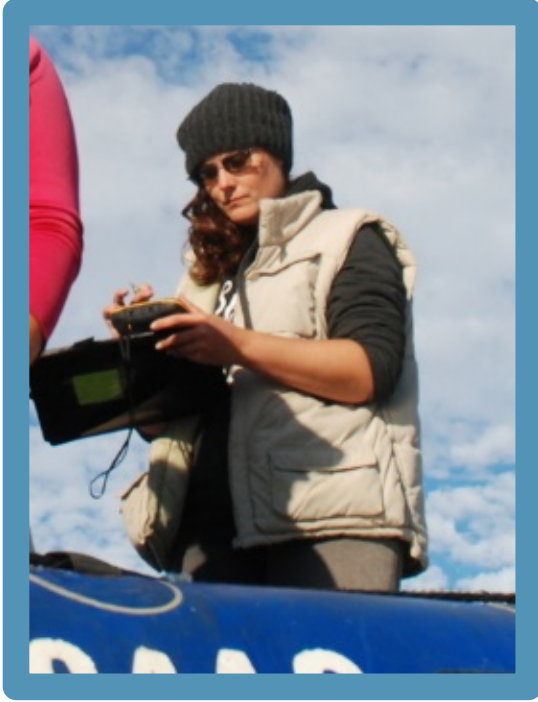


## Mohammed Kajee



The opportunity to attend the African Bioacoustics Community conference was an incredible professional opportunity for me. It was the first conference I have ever attended and I thoroughly enjoyed the experience. I currently do not work in the bioacoustics field, but have always been intrigued by this research area and plan to do a PhD in a related topic. As a result, I was deeply grateful for the opportunity to build networks and relationships with experts from around the world. The conference also afforded me the opportunity to gain insight into research areas that interest me and the current state of knowledge within the field. I also attended a workshop on machine learning, which resulted in me formally registering for an online course with Stanford University to further develop this skill. The highlight of the conference for me was chairing a session, which was equally rewarding as it was daunting. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Acoustical Society of America for funding my attendance to this conference. I am grateful for your support.

## Bridget James



Attending the first African bioacoustics community conference was a wonderful experience. All the talks were interesting and it was amazing to see the broad range of study species and locations where acoustic research is being conducted. The plenary speakers were all very knowledgeable and engaging. As marine mammals are my focus I found the talks about humpback and Bryde's whale research from Madagascar particularly interesting. I also enjoyed the poster session and the evening event about science communication as both of these provided a valuable opportunity for networking and some helpful advice on communicating science to the general public. I found it particularly valuable to be able to see the various research methodologies used in these studies as I move forward with my own studies. I am grateful to ASA for allowing me the opportunity to attend such an interesting conference. On the whole I think the conference was a huge success and a wonderful opportunity to engage with pre-eminent bioacousticians in this field of research.