



## **DST – NRF Centre of Excellence for Invasion Biology Post-doctoral position**

**Host Universities:** University of Pretoria and Stellenbosch University

**Project title:** Genetic structure, spatial dynamics and local scale impacts of the invasive common myna *Acridotheres tristis* in South Africa

**Salary:** R150 000 tax free per year for two years.

The common myna *Acridotheres tristis* is an Asian starling that has become established in many parts of the world outside of its native range due to accidental or deliberate introductions by humans. The South African population of this species originated from captive birds that escaped in Durban in 1902. A century later, the common myna has become abundant throughout much of South Africa and is considered to pose a serious threat to indigenous biodiversity. This species has significant potential to spread further in southern Africa as populations are expanding north into Limpopo, Botswana and Zimbabwe, and west and south-west into the Free State and Eastern Cape.

Except for the occasional documentation of their overall distribution range, very little is known about the general movement dynamics of mynas. Using molecular techniques and ecological principals, this project will investigate questions related to common mynas focusing on (i) the spatial distribution of genetic variation, (ii) movement patterns in relation to certain landscape variables, (iii) factors affecting the relationship between genetic diversity and gene flow, (iv) source and sink populations, and (v) the distance decay of genetic similarity and gene flow.

Fieldwork will be conducted across the full distribution range of the common myna in South Africa. Work will be conducted in conjunction with the University of Pretoria and Stellenbosch University and time will therefore be spend at both universities. Field experience working with birds and a strong molecular background is an advantage.

**Please send a CV and full academic record, letter of motivation, and two reference letters to Chantal Strumpher ([cstrumpher@zoology.up.ac.za](mailto:cstrumpher@zoology.up.ac.za)) by no later than Friday 16 October 2009.**

Start date: January 2010.

More information on the collaborators can be found at:

Bettine van Vuuren (website: <http://academic.sun.ac.za/botzoo/vuuren/index.htm>),

Cang Hui (website: <http://academic.sun.ac.za/cib/team/staff/cang/canghui.htm>),

Berndt van Rensburg (website: <http://www.up.ac.za/zoology/staff.php?person=164>).