SOUTHERN AFRICAN SOCIETY FOR SYSTEMATIC BIOLOGY 10TH MEETING

"SYSTEMATICS IN THE ERA OF INTEGRATIVE BIOLOGY"

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The 10th meeting of the Southern African Society for Systematic Biology (SASSB) was organized by the Departments of Botany and Zoology of the University of Cape Town, as well as members of the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI). The main focus of the meeting was the integration of systematics with other areas of biology. A workshop on how taxonomy and taxonomic revision can be revived in modern research was also presented.

The presentations covered a wide range of topics with most focussing on eukaryotic systematics and phylogeography. Keynote speakers included Professors H. Peter Linder (University of Zurich), with his talk on the evolution of danthonioid grasses and Michael J. Donoghue (Yale University), who discussed integration of phylogenetics with other disciplines. Doctor Ulrich Schliewen (University of Munich) presented research on the hybrid origin of fish species.

Professor Fanus Venter and Marike du Plessis from TPCP/CTHB also attended the meeting. Marike presented her BSc (Honours) research, entitled "*The validation of genomic approaches for the delineation of species in the genus Pantoea*". Her presentation was very well received and she won the prize for the best MSc presentation of the conference.

Although most of the talks were focussed on plant and animal taxonomy, various principles of systematics were addressed which could also be applied to fungal and bacterial taxonomy. Observing research of taxonomists in other fields provided a broader perspective on novel concepts that can be integrated in one's own research. It was also observed that genomics is becoming a prominent aspect of systematics and can be applied at various levels for the taxonomy of different kingdoms. The conference provided attendees with the opportunity to discuss systematics in its broadest sense and provided a more complete view of this multi-disciplinary field.