

## NEWS FROM:

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### **New wiki welcomes fynbos fans and fundis**

The University of Cape Town has joined forces with the University of Regensburg in Germany to start a FynbosWiki that makes information on fynbos and fynbos ecology easily accessible online.

Researchers from the two institutions are using the site to collate and exchange knowledge of the fynbos biome and beyond, and to share this information with others.

“The idea originated because we researchers within the Biodiversity Monitoring Transect Analysis (BIOTA) project were looking for a way to make our research accessible to a broader audience – not just fellow scientists via papers and conference publications,” explained Dr Cornelia Krug, a BIOTA research associate based at UCT's Department of Zoology.

Krug said they also wanted other people to share their knowledge, “and a wiki where people can add or edit articles and post comments seemed the best way to go for us”.

Other conservation agencies (for example, CapeNature and the City of Cape Town) often ask for current information, such as the latest student research, and the wiki will address this. It features articles of the month, introduces projects and people working on fynbos ecology, provides a reference database where scientific and other articles on fynbos are collected, and includes a news section, researchers' blogs and links to other sites. The site also contains contact details for principal researchers.

Krug said they had decided to focus on the fynbos region as much of their work is done there, and because three of the province's four tertiary institutions have a long history of fynbos research. Their model could easily be extended to other plant biomes, or the wiki could be expanded, depending on interest.

Krug and her colleagues face some challenges, as climate change and land transformation (caused by housing and agriculture) pose a threat to the Cape Floristic Region. “One of the vegetation types we worked in (Renosterveld) has only 5% of its original extent left,” she said. “Many plants and animals in the lowland are threatened.”

The FynbosWiki can be viewed on [http://fynbos.hallowiki.biz/index.php/Main\\_Page](http://fynbos.hallowiki.biz/index.php/Main_Page). The reference database is on <http://www.fynboswiki.org/refbase/>.

**ENDS**

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