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## UCT short courses show how laypeople can contribute to science

The Centre for Open Learning at the University of Cape Town is offering courses designed for members of the public who want to gain greater levels of specialist knowledge in fields of science. Two short courses in biology, which will be offered in conjunction with the Animal Demography Unit (ADU), will include a Science for Citizens component to allow participants to mix with experts and, in some instances, the possibility of helping to conserve wildlife by joining various projects. A course in astronomy will also be offered, with a focus on the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) project.

### **Penguins as Ocean Sentinels (begins 16 August)**

The penguin course will feature both local and international experts discussing the now seriously endangered African (jackass) penguin and will include a visit to a colony at Betty's Bay.

DATES	VENUE	COURSE FEES
16, 21, 23 & 28 August 2012	Kramer Building, UCT Middle Campus	R750

### **Avian Architects – African weaver birds (begins 27 September)**

The weaver bird course will thoroughly acquaint participants with the diversity within this species, demonstrate the technique of bird ringing and show how amateur photographers may contribute to the PHOWN (Photographing of Weavers' Nests) project.

DATES	VENUE	COURSE FEES
27 September, 2 October & 4 October 2012	Kramer Building, UCT Middle Campus	R500

## **Astronomy in the Cape (begins 27 October)**

Eminent Emeritus Professor Brian Warner will guide a tour of the South African Astronomical Observatory in Cape Town and the South African Large Telescope (SALT) at Sutherland in the Northern Cape, exploring the distinguished history of astronomy in South Africa and how interested amateurs can play a role. Recent developments in astrophysics and radio astronomy, relating to MEERKAT and SKA, will also form part of the course.

DATES	VENUE	COURSE FEES
27 October, 1, 3, 4 & 8 November	various (to be advised)	Full course R1500 (shared accommodation) includes overnight excursion to Sutherland
27 October, 1 & 8 November 2012	various (to be advised)	R450 Cape Town lectures only

## **Background: R1m grant supports Citizen Science and diversity monitoring**

Recent recipient of the Harry Oppenheimer Fellowship Award from the Oppenheimer Memorial Trust, Professor Les Underhill, will be available to give more details about the work of the Animal Demography Unit and the possibilities for citizen involvement. Under the terms of the R1-million award, Professor Underhill will develop a toolkit for biodiversity monitoring in South Africa.

Input from the ADU's Citizen Scientists programme is helping to create maps of animal distribution, so that conservationists can gauge the effect of their programmes. The ADU has also embarked on Africa's grandest mammal-research mission yet: MammalMAP, which will compile the first atlas of all mammal species living on the continent today to improve the conservation of all African mammals in a completely unbiased way.

Other ADU projects include:

- The Southern Africa Bird Atlas project, in which about 1300 birders are contributing information about their sightings of bird species in South Africa, Namibia, Lesotho and Swaziland;
- Bird ringing;
- PHOWN (Photos of Weaver Nests) project across Africa;
- MammalMAP;
- African Penguins;
- Verreaux's Eagles; and
- Great White Sharks

For more details visit: [www.col.uct.ac.za](http://www.col.uct.ac.za)

***Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department***

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