

Andrea Marais-Potgieter, PhD

Conservation Psychologist - social-ecological systems

PERSONAL DETAILS:

- Full Name: Andrea Marais-Potgieter
- Date of Birth: 21 February 1979
- Nationality: South African
- Gender: Female
- Languages fluent: Afrikaans, English
- Place of residence: Noordhoek, Cape Town
- E-mail: andrea@plunge.co.za or andrea@conservationpsychology.co.za
- Phone: 071-677-0974

EARLY CAREER RESEARCH:

2024-2025: University of the Witwatersrand Postdoc, Faculty of Science, Global Change Institute

- Working on the Solving the Sustainability Challenges at the Food-Climate-Biodiversity Nexus to support and facilitate the development of viable Food-Climate-Biodiversity strategies
- Focusing on the qualitative futures components of the research, designing tools and supporting workshops that use the Nature Futures Framework across case studies in Canada, China, Costa Rica, West Africa and the Netherlands. <https://solvingfcb.org>
- Many of the case studies include research with indigenous communities

2021-2023: University of the Witwatersrand Postdoc, Department of Psychology, School of Human and Community Development

- Awarded a prestigious postdoc position at the University of the Witwatersrand, extended to 2023 due to amount of potential publications
- Funded by the Carnegie
- Research focussed on people's relationships with the biosphere/nature, terror management theory, and climate change risk perception during COVID-19 (included was how different types of people - "segments" - perceive the world and climate change risk)
- Ethics course with Council for Counsellors in South Africa

EDUCATION:

2020: University of Witwatersrand

- PhD in Psychology awarded in March 2020
- Title of PhD: Developing typologies (similar to segments) to use as an ecopsychological framework for understanding the relationships that people have with the biosphere (nature) in South Africa - my study included exploration of values, worldviews, climate change risk, wildlife perceptions, and environmental behaviours
- Awarded a publishing grant from the University of the Witwatersrand

2020: ECOPSICHÉ – Scuola di Ecopsicologia (Italian School of Ecopsychology)

- Completed Diploma in applied ecopsychology with the Italian School of Ecopsychology (ISE)

2016- 2018: Southern African Systems Analysis Centre (Prof. Mary Scholes)

- Awarded a full PhD scholarship by Southern African Systems Analysis Centre (SASAC) (affiliated with International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis in Austria)
- SASAC Capacity Development Programme at Stellenbosch University: Journal writing and publication, Science Community and Policy, Mixed research methods, Climate Change research and Communication, Atlas.ti, Introduction to SPSS
- IIASA, Austria, visit to discuss my research with leading scientists (funded by SASAC)

2004: University of Johannesburg

- MA Research Psychology Cum laude (with distinction)
- MA field: Post-traumatic stress disorder in journalists in South Africa
- Awarded bursary for further post graduate studies

2003: University of Johannesburg

- Completed Psychometric internship, passed board examination with distinction was registered with Health Professions Council of South Africa

2002: University of Johannesburg

- BA Honours Psychology Cum laude (with distinction)
- Post graduate certificate in *community psychological practice* Cum laude (with distinction)
- Awarded UJ highest merit bursary

1999 – 2001: University of Johannesburg

- Completed BA Journalism
- Distinction for Journalism and Psychology
- Awarded UJ highest merit bursary

- Invited to join Golden Key International Honour Society as top of faculty achievement

PUBLICATIONS:

2024: Paper invited for a special issue with journal Ecology & Society

- Tcheton, S. & Marais-Potgieter, A. (2024). How locally-led initiatives are driving positive social and environmental change: Evidence from the Mono Transboundary Biosphere Reserve in West Africa.

2024: Paper invited for a special issue with journal World Futures

- Tcheton, S. & Marais-Potgieter, A. (2024). Future of the Food-Climate-Biodiversity Nexus: Evidence from Indigenous and Local Peoples of the Mono Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Benin-Togo) in West Africa.

2024: Submission pending with Environmental Research Letters

- Juri, S., Marais-Potgieter, A. , Achieng, T., Kabisa, M., Nkgothoe, B., Ojino, J., Tcheton, S., Carpenter-Urquhart, L., Pereira, L.M. (2024). Transforming towards what? A review of futures thinking applied in the quest for navigating sustainability transformations.

3

2024: Submission pending with Heliyon

- Marais-Potgieter, A., Thatcher, A. & Siemers, I. (2023). The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on environmental issues, attitudes and climate change risk perception.

2023: Sustainability and Climate Change

- Marais-Potgieter, A. & Thatcher, A. (2023). Shallow ecological relationships with the biosphere and climate change perceptions: A ecopschoanalytic perspective. In press.

2023: Current Research in Ecological and Social Psychology

- Marais-Potgieter, A. & Thatcher, A. (2023). Exploring the impact of the pandemic on the relationship between individual types and the natural environment: the role of mortality salience. *Current Research in Ecological and Social Psychology*, 4, 100096.

2022: Psychology in Society

- Marais-Potgieter, A. & Faraday, A. (2022). Foregrounding ecojustice: A case study on trans-species accompaniment. *Psychology in Society*, 63, 110-132.
- Marais-Potgieter, A. & Thatcher, A. (2022). The relationship between the COVID-19 pandemic and environmental attitudes and what this means for environmental justice. *Psychology in Society*, 64, 90-108.

2021: International Journal of Qualitative Methods

- Marais-Potgieter, A. & Thatcher, A. (2021). Using a deductive approach to develop a picture elicitation technique to explore the human-nature nexus. *IJQM*, 10.1177/16094069211037492.

2020: Journal of Sustainability

- Marais-Potgieter, A. & Thatcher, A. (2020). Identification of six emergent types based on cognitive and affective constructs that explain individuals' relationships with the biosphere. *Sustainability*, 12(18), 7614; <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12187614>.
- Book about loss and grief: An ecopsychological perspective available on Independent Books.

2020: Credence Institute: Internal white papers

- Marais-Potgieter, A. & Tapscott, C. (2020). *Live exports: An exploratory survey investigating the perceptions of the live sheep export industry in South Africa* [White paper]. Credence Institute. https://4d06137b-d68a-4c1b-a69d-5c6104267224.filesusr.com/ugd/e40e4e_5c9f19afb1d7499daeb0bebc230071bb.pdf
- Marais-Potgieter, A. & Tapscott, C. (2020). *Perceptions about cultured versus plant-based meat in South Africa* [White paper]. Credence Institute. To be published.

2005: South African Journal of Psychology

- Marais, A. & Stuart, A.D. (2005). The role of temperament in the development of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder among journalists. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 35(1), 129-146.

2003: Deadline

- Marais, A. (2003). Journalists and posttraumatic stress disorder. *Deadline*, pp. 2.

CONFERENCES:

2024: The Conservation Social Science conference

- Marais-Potgieter, A. (2024). *A Heuristic Tool for Embracing Plurality in Positive Futures for Conservation*

2024: The 7th International Marine Conservation congress – IMCC7 – abstract accepted

- Marais-Potgieter, A. & Laura, P. (2024). *Desirable marine futures from the perspectives of Indigenous and Local Communities in Benin and Canada*.

2024: Programme on Ecosystem Change and Society (PECS) – abstract accepted

- Marais-Potgieter, A. & Laura, P. (2024). *Trans-species accompaniment in the Nature Futures Framework*

2023: Conservation Symposium

- Marais-Potgieter, A. (2023). *Behind every conservation story is a human one*. Wild Coast, South Africa.

2023: African Conference for Linear Infrastructure & Ecology (hosted by Endangered Wildlife Trust)

- Marais-Potgieter, A. & Faraday, A. (2023). *Trans-species accompaniment during the public participation process for a road planned to be built within endangered Western Leopard Toad habitat and breeding ponds in Cape Town, South Africa*. Kenya, virtual.

2023: University of the Witwatersrand Interfaculty Symposium

- Marais-Potgieter, A. & Thatcher, A. (2023). *The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on environmental issues, attitudes and climate change risk perception*, Wits, Johannesburg.

2019: International Ecopsychology Society Conference, Spain

- Marais-Potgieter, A. (2019). *Relationships: Person and Nature* [Workshop and presentation]. International Ecopsychology Society Conference, Spain.

2018: Animal Conference, CPT

- Marais-Potgieter, A. (2018). *Exploring people's relationship with animals: Is a one size fits all approach to activism effective?* [Presentation]. Animal Conference, Cape Town, UCT.

2017: World Sustainability Conference, CPT

- Attended the Post Graduate Forum as part of the 2017 World Sustainability Conference.

2017: Invited to attend and participate in the Transformation Innovation Policy Consortium (TIPC) conference, PTA

- Attendance to this conference is by invitation only.

2017: International Ecopsychology Society Conference, Uruguay

- Marais-Potgieter, A. (2017). *Exploring people's relationship with the biosphere: a technique* [Presentation]. International Ecopsychology Society Conference, Uruguay.

2016: Cross Currents Conference UCT

- Marais-Potgieter, A. (2016). *Attributes that impact connection to nature in a development world context: Building ecopsychological typologies* [Presentation]. Cross Currents Conference, Cape Town, UCT.

2015: International Conference attendance

- Attended and participated in the European Ecopsychology Society (EES) conference in Crete, Greece

2013: AMS Marketing conference, USA

- Was invited by University of Johannesburg (UJ) Marketing Department to present as a guest speaker at the AMS Marketing conference in California, USA.
- Marais-Potgieter, A. (2013). *The African consumer* [Presentation]. AMS Conference, Monterey, California.

2003 - 2005:

- Marais, A. (2005). *PTSD in journalists* [Presentation]. 9th European Congress of Psychology, Granada, Spain.
- Marais, A. (2005). *PTSD in journalists* [Presentation]. Psyssa Psychology Conference, Cape Town.
- Marais, A. (2003). *The role of certain temperament dimensions in journalists who experience work related trauma: a comparative study* [Presentation]. Psyssa Psychology Conference, Johannesburg.
- Marais, A. (2003). *Journalists and posttraumatic stress disorder: a new era* [Presentation]. No guts no glory community journalism seminar, Johannesburg.

PEER REVIEWING:

2024: Journal of Community and Applied Psychology

2023: Current Research in Ecological and Social Psychology

2022: University of South Africa, PhD thesis: Effects of psychosocial determinants on pro-environmental behaviour: A study conducted in Ethiopia

2021: International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health

2021: Ecology & Society

2015: European Journal of Ecopsychology

2015: UNISA Student Conference paper evaluator

LECTURING:

2024: Global Change Institute

- Lecture about People's relationship with the biosphere and qualitative research methods

2022: Greek School of Ecopsychology & Italian School of Ecopsychology

- Lecture about the multidimensionality of the human-nature nexus

2016: University of Pretoria

- Guest lecturer Post Graduate Diploma in Integrated Reporting students on Ecological Psychology

2008 - 2013: University of Johannesburg

- Guest lecturer Hon Marketing

2013: University of Cape Town

- Guest lecturer Hon Marketing

2009: University of South Africa

- Guest lecturer Hon Marketing

WEBINARS & SEMINARS:

2024: Global Change Institute

- Exploring urban versus indigenous psychological expressions of the human-nature nexus.

2023: Women in Nature Network (Michigan State University)

- Impact of nature on mental health and what that means for biodiversity protection:
<https://msu.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJEofuGuqjsjHdOGdjp03fzTH5A6umVJTRxs>.

2023: Psychological Society of South Africa Climate & Environmental Psychology Interest Group

- Presented research on the Human-Nature nexus, climate change perceptions, and ecopsychology.

2022: Wits Umthombo Webinar

- Presented research on the Human-Nature nexus.

2021: International Ecopsychology Society Webinar

- Panel member for deep conversations about the human-nature nexus.

2020: Italian School of Ecopsychology

- Invited as a guest speaker at an online lecture (Title: People and Nature).

2020: Greek School of Ecopsychology

- Invited as a guest speaker at an online lecture (Title: Typologies, ecopsychology, and the underlying theory of the NNET).

2020: International Ecopsychology Society Webinar

- Presenter at an international webinar (Title: Ecopsychological dimensions of COVID-19).

RECENT PROJECTS:

- **2024: Human-leopard co-existence:** Co-supervising a MA student for Transfrontier Africa and Ingwe Research Program.
- **2024: Indigenous knowledge in exploring the futures of mangrove ecosystems sustainability in West Africa, Benin and Togo:** Co-supervising PhD student at the Global Change Institute.
- **2024: Trans-species accompaniment and Nature Futures Framework:** A project that I am currently finishing in order to publish and present the results.
- **2024: Exploring preferable nature futures for biodiversity and climate governance in the Barotse Cultural Landscape, Zambia:** PhD student at the Global Change Institute where I co-facilitated workshops in Zambia.
- **2024: Solving Food-Climate-Biodiversity in Costa Rica, West Africa, The Netherlands, China, and Canada:** Part of the Nature Futures Framework methods team. The project includes indigenous communities in many of the case study countries.
- **2023: Namaqualand communities and climate change resilience:** A project for Conservation South Africa to capture community stories about climate change resilience on film and in a report to promote conservation efforts. : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yPKYDFKqbO4> & <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KYSzjLfSkQ>.
- **2023: Mental health and our relationship with nature:** Talking about the relationship between humans and nature and what that means for our mental health for Wild Earth TV in Djuma Game Reserve.
- **2023: Banghoek Private Nature Reserve, Biodiversity Management:** Working with a private nature reserve to include community voices in the biodiversity management plan.
- **2023: Urban communities and climate change resilience:** Community project in Noordhoek, Cape Town to look at the role of nature and climate change in the community vision. Part of this work included research and then workshops to get the community to get involved in issues related to water, fire, and biodiversity.
- **2017-2023: Trans-species accompaniment and the endangered Western Leopard Toad:** Challenging the building of a road in the City of Cape Town that will impact breeding ponds and wetland habitat of this remarkable species. I've been accompanying the endangered Western Leopard Toad for the past 6 years through the public participation process and now a high court case acknowledging their right to a healthy habitat, clean ponds, nature spaces, and biological viability.

MEDIA ENGAGEMENT:

- **2024:** Interviewed by Cape Talk live radio on the healing power of the great outdoors: <https://podcasts.apple.com/za/podcast/afternoon-drive-with-john-maytham/id1212305258?i=1000654686256>

- **2024:** Interviewed by International Ecopsychology Society about research in ecopsychology and current projects in futures thinking.
- **2023:** Carte Blanche interview on Ecopsychology: The Power of Nature: <https://iono.fm/e/1387652>.
- **2023:** Interview about trans-species accompaniment of the endangered Western Leopard Toad on Pretoria FM on die trans-species deel van projects: <https://soundcloud.com/user-422783212/kkl-231113-luiperdpadda>.
- **2023:** Interviewed on live TV for WildEarth TV from Djuma nature reserve about the link between nature and mental health (available to view on their App).
- **2023:** Interviewed by the Italian publication Corriere Della Sera for their section on climate and environmental issues.
- **2023:** Podcast interview about the impact of the pandemic on the human-nature nexus.
- **2019:** Interviewed by Radio 702 about the relationship between people, nature, and wellbeing.
- **2019:** Interviewed by Cape TV about threatened wetland and the endangered Western Leopard Toad.
- **2018:** Interviewed by Cape Talk about threatened wetland the endangered Western Leopard Toad.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY:

- **2023-current:** Part of the conservation working group of Banghoek Private Nature Reserve.
- **2017-current:** Part of the NPO Noordhoek Environmental Action Group (NEAG) as a committee member. Focus on fighting for the rights of our local wildlife and wetlands
- **2017-current:** South African Charter for the International Ecopsychology Society (IES)
- **2017-current:** Volunteer at ToadNUTs - a citizen science volunteer group
- **2020-2022:** Ward Committee member to represent the natural environment for the Far South, Cape Town
- **2020:** Pro Bono research for Credence Institute: <https://www.credenceinstitute.org>
- **2019-2021:** Board member of the International Ecopsychology Society (IES)
- **2017:** Volunteer to teach Nature Class at Masiphumelele township NPO Waldorf school – Nature Class
- **2017:** Volunteer assist in the communication strategy for a merger of two NPO township schools
- **2015:** Part of community envisioning process for 2030 in Noordhoek, how to balance development and biodiversity
- **2015:** Online career guidance to youngsters that live in Kayelitsha township, in Cape Town
- **2013 – 2015:** Volunteer in townships to help animals and educate community members on caring for their animals: Valhalla Park Animal Outreach

CONTINUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

- **2022-current:** Member of PSYSSA special interest group for Climate Change

- **2022-current:** Member of the APA Society for Environmental, Population & Conservation Psychology
- **2022:** Restorative justice programme at Pollsmoor prison
- **2021:** Academic support at the University of Witwatersrand Psychology Honours Research Essay Module
- **2020:** Naropa University: The root teachings of Joanna Macy: Intro Workshop and Facilitation Training

MEMBERSHIPS

- 2021-2024: Psychological Association of South Africa (PSYSSA) REG: PSY4452
- 2022-2024: Member of the APA Society for Environmental, Population & Conservation Psychology
- 2020-2021: Registered with Council for Counsellors in South Africa REG: CO20647
- 2017 –2024: Member of the International Ecopsychology Society <http://www.ies.bio>
- 2015 – 2017: Member of The Institute for Critical Animal Studies (ICAS): <http://www.criticalanimalstudies.org/icas-africa/>
- 2008 – 2014: Member of the American Association of Consumer Psychologists
- 2008 – 2014: Member of the South African Market Research Association (SAMRA)
- 2003 – 2013: Member of the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA)

WORK EXPERIENCE

- January 2024 – Dec 2025 **Postdoc at the University of the Witwatersrand, Global Change Institute (50% appointment)**
Working on the Solving the Sustainability Challenges at the Food-Climate-Biodiversity Nexus by focusing on the qualitative futures components of the research across case studies in Canada, China, Costa Rica, West Africa and the Netherlands.
<https://solvingfcb.org>
- January 2021 – Dec 2023 **Postdoc at the University of the Witwatersrand, Department of Psychology, School of Human and Community Development**
Focus of position is on research and peer review publications in accredited journals. Here I expanded my research understanding the human-nature nexus during a mortality salience induction event.
- January 2014 – June 2022 **Qualitative Research Consultant**

Conducted online qualitative research, analysis and reporting for Nudge Research.

- February 2009 to Dec 2014
Owner Plunge Research
Qualitative Consumer Psychologist and researcher, Owner, Business Development, client strategy, research, writing reports, writing proposals, workshops, focus groups, in-depth interviews, managing large teams based across Africa, management of consultants that work for me (Some of Plunge clients: SABMiller, Mondelez, Nissan, Kimberley-Clark, National Brands, PepsiCo, MTN etc.). Conducted research across 17 African countries.
- Jan 2013 to Dec 2014
Shareholder of Nudge Research
(online market research company)
Qualitative Strategy input, Business development
- October 2008 – January 2009
Consumer/Research Psychologist
The Consumer Psychology Lab
Qualitative Researcher
- October 2006 – Sept 2008
Senior Research Executive
Research International
Qualitative Researcher
- October 2004 to Sept 2006
Senior Research Executive
Synovate
Qualitative & Quantitative Researcher
- April 2004 - October 2004
Features Writer
Engineering News and Mining Weekly
www.engineeringnews.co.za
Research, interviews, published numerous articles written
- April 2003 - October 2004
UJ Editor (part time) for doctoral and masters articles
Psychology Department UJ
- January 2003 and 2004
Psychometrist contract work

UJ student services

- January 2003-July 2003

Psychometrist, internship

Institute for Child and Adult Guidance

- March 2003

Researcher, contract work

Literature