

Before leaving this ungrateful world for ever, at 10.10 p.m. (local time), Shri Rajiv had arrived at a statue of his late Mother, near the venue of the meeting. He garlanded the statue mere minutes before his death; talked to people, and drove to the final destination of meeting to receive garlands and shawls from his numerous admirers. Then the worst-ever blast in local memory devoured the youngest, the most handsome, and surely one of the most globally-admired, of statesmen who above all was the champion of wildlife.

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MSc in Conservation Biology, FitzPatrick Institute, University of Cape Town, South Africa

The Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, Department of Zoology, University of Cape Town, South Africa, is introducing a full-year Master of Science course in Conservation Biology. Its aim is to produce conservation biologists who are able to contribute effectively to the preservation of biotic diversity and to the sustainable utilization of renewable natural resources in an environmentally and politically dynamic continent. The academic entry requirement is a four-years' BSc degree or a three-years' BSc Honours degree, and it is expected that students will range from the newly-qualified to practising, experienced conservation biologists.

The emphasis of the course is to provide students with a sound scientific basis for future decision-making concerning the preservation of biodiversity. Topics to be covered in the course range from the demographic, ecological, biogeographical, and genetic, aspects of theoretical conservation biology, to the effective implementation of active conservation planning and management. Considering that conservation biology is a synthetic discipline which integrates diverse fields, the MSc course has been divided into the following 11 modules:

1. Biodiversity
2. Modelling in nature conservation
3. Demography of wild populations
4. Minimum Viable Populations (MVPs)
5. Genetics of wild species
6. Monitoring and time-series analysis
7. Community-level interactions
8. Invasive alien organisms
9. Disturbance ecology
10. Landscape ecology and the use of Geographic Information Systems (GISs)
11. Decision-making in conservation management.

Each of these modules will be taught by a specialist, and will extend for a period of from one to three weeks. Specialists have been drawn from both the local and

international scientific communities. The international scientists involved in 1992 will include Professor M.E. Gilpin, of the University of California at San Diego (modules 2–4), and Professor C. Wissel, of Philipps-Universität, Marburg, Germany (module 2), and Dr D.T. Parkin, of the University of Nottingham, England (module 5). Each module will be structured into three components: an introduction, formal lectures, and a final synthesis. The introductory component will involve preparatory reading and organized discussion sessions, whereas the formal lecture component will provide time for an in-depth examination of contentious issues. The synthesis component will require essays, seminars, and related assignments to be submitted by students.

In addition to the abovementioned modules, the course involves a mini-research thesis. Research topics will relate to each student's particular field of interest, and will require the application of advanced conservation theory and techniques in that field. A period of two months will be dedicated solely to the research thesis.

The MSc will be offered for the first time in 1992 and will commence on February 3 with the final module finishing at the end of November. Students will complete their research thesis during December 1992 and January 1993. The registration fee will be about R3,200 in 1992 (about US\$1,150).

A handbook describing the course, each module, and possible funding sources, can be obtained from the Director, FitzPatrick Institute, University of Cape Town, Rondebosch 7700, South Africa.

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