

Temporal and spatial variation in macro-invertebrate diversity in Kruger national Park rivers.

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Aquatic scientists throughout Africa require a clear understanding of freshwater ecosystems to advise on management strategies. This is limited by poor understanding of freshwater invertebrate fauna, an essential functional component of riverine systems. The most basic requirement is an ability to identify organisms present. A new detailed series of surveys of the freshwater macro-invertebrate fauna of selected rivers within the Kruger National Park is planned. We aim to compare results from these new surveys (species richness and distribution) with historical records, and look at what external factors are impacting the populations in sections of rivers where there is a notable reduction in diversity and water quality. The results will be integrated with observations from simultaneous fish surveys (Collaboration with fish experts), to give an integrated faunistic assessment of the ecological state of the rivers. Projects like this are essential as the first steps needed towards establishing a clear understanding of freshwater systems in order to advise on management strategies that are of greatest benefit to human communities and the natural ecosystems on which they depend.