

# 1<sup>st</sup> circular

The **African Arachnological Society (AFRAS)** and the Organizing Committee are delighted to invite members of the arachnological community and accompanying guests to the **15th AFRAS Colloquium**, organized through the **DITSONG: National Museum of Natural History**, Pretoria, South Africa.

*This is a wonderful opportunity for international and local arachnologists to connect and discuss potential collaborative projects on the hugely diverse African arachnid fauna.*

## DATES

10 – 15 January 2027

## VENUE

**Lapalala Wilderness School** (<https://www.lwschool.org/>), about 50 km from the small town of Vaalwater in Limpopo Province, South Africa, and 3.5 hours from Johannesburg.



<https://www.lapalala.com/lapalala-wilderness-school/>

The venue is an award-winning, off-the-grid, eco-built educational facility. Constructed from rammed earth, the state-of-the-art facility harmonizes seamlessly with the bushveld, creating a fully immersive nature experience. **Comfortable accommodation** ranges from private lodge-style ensuite rooms to shared dormitories with a unique one-to-one guest-to-bathroom ratio available to delegates on a first-come basis.

The Lapalala Wilderness School falls within the UNESCO-declared Waterberg Biosphere Reserve. While nested in the southeast corner of the **Big Five Lapalala Wilderness Reserve** (<https://www.lapalala.com/lapalala-wilderness/>), a secure fence separates the two properties to ensure a safe walking environment. The reserve has 73 small and large mammal and 278 bird species recorded. For arthropods, much remain to be discovered in this recognized biodiversity hotspot.

## COSTS

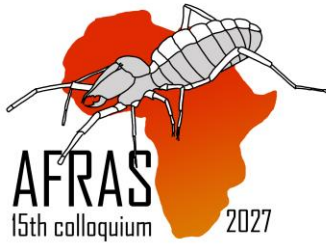
**Registration Fee:** R2,850 (approx. \$175 USD) for delegates based in Africa; R3,500 (approx. \$215 USD) for delegates not based in Africa.

**Accommodation and meals:** Packages\*, incl. 15% VAT, range from R5,060 (approx. \$300 USD) per person sharing up to R10,235 (approx. \$600 USD) for a private room. All private rooms with ensuite bathrooms.

\*All packages include accommodation and meals for five nights PLUS one Big Five safari game drive.

## SPONSORSHIPS

Some part- or full- sponsorships will be available. More detail to follow soon.



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## TRAVEL & TRANSFERS

**Airport Shuttle:** Available upon request from O.R. Tambo International Airport (Johannesburg) at an additional fee.

## COLLECTING

The venue is surrounded by bushveld savanna, situated on the banks of the Palala River, and with an unpolluted night sky. Delegates can roam freely and collect specimens across the secure, fenced 1,170-hectare property.

A Limpopo Province collecting permit will be available to all delegates.

Delegates that want to collect in other provinces, should contact the congress organizers for further detail.

## FACILITIES AND OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Free high-speed WiFi
- Swimming pool
- Bush walks
- Visit to rock art site
- Obstacle course (for those joined by their families, or who themselves feel young at heart)
- Game drives (one inclusive on registration; additional drives at additional cost)
- Hands-on outreach activities at a rural school (additional cost)

## AFRAS

The AFRAS Colloquiums are tri-annual meetings of local and international arachnologists who research African arachnids. We strongly encourage participation by students and fellow arachnologists in Africa. AFRAS is a non-profit organization. Membership is free.

Further details on the 15<sup>th</sup> AFRAS colloquium will be updated on the colloquium website (<https://afras2027.carlamani.com/>). *If the website does not open, refresh the page or open in different browser such as Chrome.* The website can also be reached via the AFRAS website at <http://afras.ufs.ac.za>.

*Or contact Tharina at the following details:*

[tharina@mitsong.org.za](mailto:tharina@mitsong.org.za) | Landline: +27 (0)12 492 2158 | Mobile & WhatsApp: +27 (0)72 317 8814

We are looking forward to seeing you here!

Tharina Bird (AFRAS Chair) and organizing committee.

