

Ms Wendy Collinson gives a public lecture at the University of Venda

Ms Wendy Collinson of the [Endangered Wildlife Trust](#) (EWT) gave a talk at the [University of Venda](#) (Univen) on 'Protecting the protected through assessing driver behaviour in protected areas of South Africa' on 28 May 2019.

Ms Collinson started her career as a physical education teacher in the United Kingdom, came to South Africa on an EWT volunteership that was supposed to be for three months, but she has been staying on ever since. She started her career in South Africa as a research assistant at EWT, without receiving a salary. Because she needed to make a living, she enrolled for an MSc degree at [Rhodes University/Tshwane University of Technology](#) and is currently registered for a PhD degree at the [University of Mpumalanga/The University of Melbourne](#).

Ms Collinson asked the audience: "Who has ridden over an animal or has been in a car that rode over an animal?" Noticing that a few people didn't raise their hands, she asked: "Are you telling me that you have never ridden over an ant?" This really caught their attention.

In conducting her research, she wanted to know what the causes were of animals being killed on the roads (roadkill). She noticed that speed was not always the cause. In the quest to find the cause, on her way back from the field to the research camp, frustrated, Ms Collinson saw a car driving over a snake in a park because the driver's attention was on the animals they were watching. This was an epiphany moment for her. She realised that driver behaviour is a major cause of roadkill.

Ms Collinson also demonstrated the power of social media in her work. Though there are a lot of social media trolls who deliberately provoke others about the causes of roadkill, there is also some valuable information sharing. She has based part of her research on what she found on social media.

Another talk was scheduled to take place at [Uwani Science Resource Centre](#) on 29 May. However, due to last minute exam rescheduling by the school, the talk was cancelled.

[Read more](#) about Wendy Collinson and her work in a Mail & Guardian special feature on NSTF-South32 Award winners.



Wendy Collinson of the Endangered Wildlife Trust addressing students at the University of Venda on her work.



Prof Irene Barnhoorn of Univen, Wendy Collinson, Prof Peter Taylor of Univen, and Fulufhelo Gelebe of the NSTF.

Students representing Prof Mmantsae Diale act as role models in Tembisa

Mr Sizwe Sibiyi and Mr Sandile Thubane from the [University of Pretoria](#), who are studying towards their Master's degrees in physics under Prof Mmantsae Diale's supervision, represented her at Phomolong Secondary School in Tembisa. They inspired 81 learners to follow their example to study in the sciences. This event, which took place on 14 May 2019, was hosted in collaboration with [Moipone Academy Science Centre](#).

Mr Sibiyi spoke about his journey into science, whereas Mr Thubane's focus was on the research that they do.

Mr Sibiyi used the burning of coal in mines as example to explain his research, saying that the gas (carbon dioxide) that is released from burning coal in the process of generating electricity was destroying the atmosphere. To reduce the damage, he is developing a device that absorbs radiation from sunlight, which in turn generates electricity. This will reduce our reliance on power from coal.

Mr Sibiyi grew up on a farm in Mpumalanga and dreamed of becoming a doctor. When he didn't get selected for medicine, he started studying physics by default. He said: "Life does not always give you what you want. What you are planning to become now is perhaps not what you will become." He now loves physics and finds it a fascinating subject.

Because his teacher saw potential in him, he gave him the responsibility to teach his classmates in matric, and that year his school obtained a 100% matric pass-rate. Mr Sibiyi says that the teaching experience sparked his passion for motivational speaking and interaction with young people.

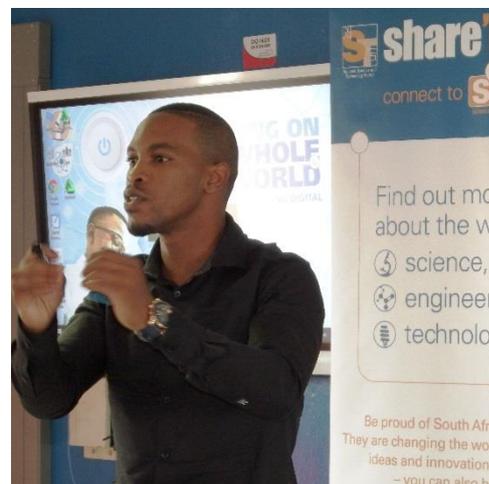
Mr Thubane explained his research, saying that they use algae in the device that Mr Sibiyi mentioned. The algae absorb sunlight and the absorbed heat generates electricity. "Whatever you do, be the best at it," he said.

The NSTF's Share 'n Dare Programmme is sponsored by the Carl and Emily Fuchs Foundation.

Right: Sandile Thubane of the University of Pretoria explaining his research project to learners in Tembisa.



Far right: Sizwe Sibiyi of the University of Pretoria telling learners of Phomolong Secondary School about his life and career path.



Learners of Phomolong Secondary School in Tembisa listening attentively to the Master's degree students from the University of Pretoria.