

## It's a Beetle ID Parade at Workshop

World aquatic beetle specialist Prof Olof Bistrom took time out from his one-month visit to the Albany Museum in Grahamstown in November to present a workshop on the identification of aquatic beetles. Prof Bistrom's work focuses on the aquatic beetle family *Dystiscidae*. As Volume 10 of the *Guides to the Freshwater Invertebrates of Southern Africa* had recently been published this also

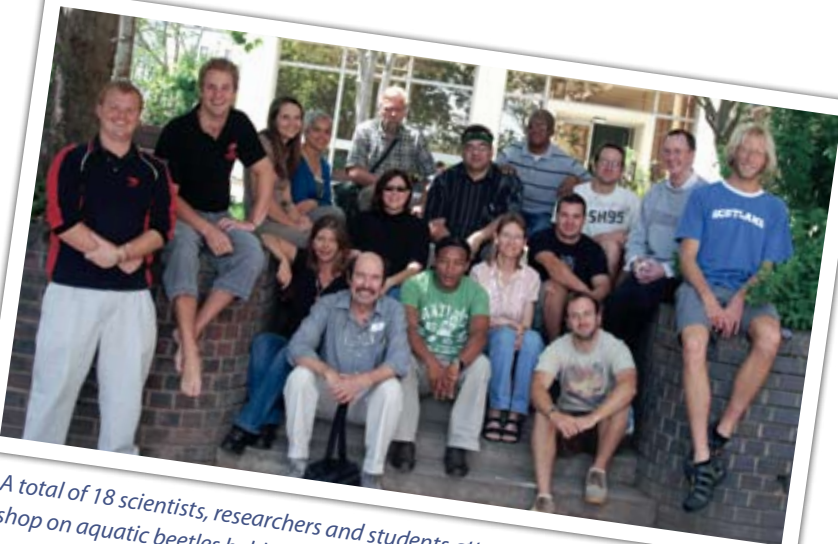
presented an ideal opportunity to test the accuracy and ease of use of such a guide by non-specialist researchers and students of aquatic invertebrates, reports Dr Ferdy de Moor of the Albany Museum. Prof Bistrom and Riaan Stals (scientific editor of this guide) were invited to run the workshop together with Prof Marin Villet from Rhodes University and Dr de Moor. Identification guides

generally make use of 'keys' or a number of discernable characters to enable users to identify species. According to Dr de Moor, the importance of good identification lies in looking at a number of features in a systematic way thereby discovering where there are consistent differences (between species), often in characters not even used for the key that was constructed, and based on the species known at the time.

All photographs courtesy Ferdy de Moor



Prof Olof Bistrom collecting specimens for the workshop, which focused mainly on the two large aquatic beetle families *Dystiscidae* and *Hydrophilidae*.



A total of 18 scientists, researchers and students attended the workshop on aquatic beetles held at Rhodes University in November.



The workshop was presented by (standing) Riaan Stals of the Agricultural Research Council; Prof Olof Bistrom, Director of the Zoological Museum of Helsinki, Finland; Prof Martin Villet of Rhodes University and (seated) Dr Ferdy de Moor of the Albany Museum.



Participants identifying beetles using the latest invertebrate guide. Beetles from the Albany Museum, Transvaal Museum and ARC's collections were provided while delegates also brought in large numbers of beetles they had collected during research projects.