Hi, my name is Pachi Cervantes and I am a postdoc working on the BIRDIE project, a data pipeline that is being developed by SANBI, in collaboration with several other organizations, including SEEC from UCT, the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, and the Sol Plaatjie University.

The BIRDIE project is still under development, we are about half way and it is about monitoring the state of wetlands and waterbird populations in South Africa, although we are already thinking about expanding to other parts of Southern Africa.

Freshwater ecosystems are amongst the most productive, biodiverse and effective at capturing and storing carbon. Yet they are also amongst the most impacted by human activity, and with the scarcity of freshwater on Earth, things can get even worse. Therefore, we need to get a good grasp of what is the ecological condition of these ecosystems and do so in a timely manner.

These systems are extremely complex and monitoring all the different components in a systematic and detailed way is quite a challenge. In BIRDIE, for now, we focus on understanding what happens with waterbirds populations and how these relate to the state of their supporting wetlands. In the future, we would like to incorporate information about other taxonomic groups.

**Timely information uptake**

The idea is to create a data pipeline that takes on waterbird data and automatically takes them through a series of processing steps whereby it gets cleaned, vetted, and analysed to produce meaningful indicators that can be used for reporting and decision making.