



Opening of application for:

1 PhD & 1 Post-doc position at the Mammal Research Institute, Białowieża, Poland

Within the project funded by the National Science Centre, Poland
(OPUS grant nr. 2021/41/B/NZ8/00015):

Are wolves losing their fear of humans? Changes in wolf behaviour and their consequences for prey species in human-dominated landscapes

Project description

The expansion of wolves into human-dominated landscapes in Europe (Chapron et al. 2014) creates a new conservation challenge of how to protect this species and manage emerging human-wolf conflicts (Kuijper et al. 2019). Attraction of wolves to anthropogenic food in these landscapes in combination with a mild human response to such wolves (ban on wolf hunting in most European countries) could lead to selection for less fearful, 'tamer', wolves (Newsome et al. 2017). This is in line with the increasing frequency of wolves observed close to humans or settlements in Europe, which raises conflicts and concerns on public safety. When wolves are losing their fear of humans it will also change the wolves' ecological impacts (Kuijper et al. 2016). As we currently have little understanding to what extent wolves change their behaviour and whether wolves are increasing their tolerance towards humans, we need a coherent framework for predicting the ecological impacts of wolves and large carnivores in general, in these human-dominated landscapes. In this project we set the following research goals: 1) Determine to what extent wolves are losing their fear of humans in Europe, 2) Assess the consequences of changes in wolf behaviour for their ecological impact on prey species behaviour. By means of playback experiments, field experiments to unravel wolf-dog interactions, camera trapping of wolves and prey species we aim to answer our research questions. Within this framework there is space to develop also your own research questions.



We offer a PhD & Post-doc position:

The **PhD** will be a 4-years fully funded position (incl. research budget, travel costs). Monthly gross salary 5.000 PLN (c. 1.089 euro; the highest National Science Centre allows for PhD students), ensuring pretty good life standard in Poland.

The **Post-doc** will be a 3-years fully funded position (research budget, travel costs) with a gross monthly salary 8.377 PLN (c. 1.825 euro). Keep in mind that living in Poland is much cheaper than in W-Europe!

Requirements:

1. Motivated good ecologists.
2. M.Sc. degree in Biology, Ecology or other relevant subject.
3. Practical experience with ecological field studies.
4. Good knowledge of statistical methods in ecology to analyse highly-variable field data sets.
5. Good knowledge of statistical software packages (especially R).
6. Being author (preferably first) of a scientific article in the field of ecology in a peer-reviewed international scientific journal is a big plus for the PhD candidate. whereas a good publication record is required for the Post-doc candidate.
7. Experience with camera trapping & play-back experiments is a big plus.
8. Fluent skills in English both in speaking and writing.
9. Independent worker and good team player.
10. Valid driving licence.
11. Handle life in the small & remote Białowieża village.

When?

Deadline for application:

14 March 2022 (for PhD) and **20 April** (for Post-doc).

Planned dates for interview (via Zoom):

15-18 March (for PhD) and **last week of April** (for Post-doc).

Final result will be announced:

before 22 March (for PhD) & **before 30 April** (for Post-doc).

Start of PhD position: **spring 2022** (for PhD), **summer-autumn** (for Post-doc).

How to apply?

Please send the following documents to the project leader Dries Kuijper:

dkuijper@ibs.bialowieza.pl:

- Certified copy of diploma or certificate of completion of studies (for the PhD obliged to provide them before the Doctoral School program begins).
- CV with detailed information on your education, scientific career, list of publications.
- Certificates or other documents confirming knowledge of English (if available).
- Motivation letter in which you also include (max. 3-5 sentences):
 - your own idea for a potential topic to work on in the framework of the project.
- Include at least two reference persons (e.g., prior research supervisors) familiar with your qualifications, together with e mail addresses.
- Signed declaration of consent for processing of personal data (links for PhD & Post-doc separate provided below).

Assessment of candidates:

Candidates' applications will be assessed in accordance with NCN regulations

(http://ncn.gov.pl/sites/default/files/pliki/uchwaly-rady/2019/uchwala25_2019-zal1_ang.pdf).

The selection will be based on the qualifications of the candidates including scientific achievements, experience, awards, internships, skills and competences. Recruitment is a two-stage process and includes: 1) evaluation of candidates' documentation and 2) an interview with selected candidates (you will be asked to present your MSc thesis in a few slides).

Postgraduate studies:

The selected candidate will be asked to apply to the Bioplanet Doctoral School of the Polish

Academy of Sciences (<https://szkoladoktorska-bioplanet.pl/en/home/>) and participate in the entrance examination (24-28 March via Zoom/Skype). The school does not charge tuition fees and provides compulsory and optional courses (conducted in English) for doctoral students. PhD candidate will still join the academic year 2021/2022.

Working environment and research group:

The Mammal Research Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences (MRIPAS) founded in 1952, conducts research in the field of ecology, ethology, morphology, population genetics as well as population management and conservation of mammals and other terrestrial vertebrates. The mission of the Institute is to acquire, advance, and disseminate knowledge of natural patterns and processes in order to improve the scientific basis for effective nature conservation activities and sustainable development. We focus mainly on Białowieża Primeval Forest (UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and World Heritage Site) as a study area, but also on other regions of Poland and Europe. The Institute employs 60 people, including researchers, PhD students, and qualified technical and office staff. The institute is based in the village of Białowieża in the middle of Białowieża Forest, Poland. This is a remote place (ca. 1500 inhabitants) close to the Polish- Belarus border, ca 20 km from a nearest city. You will be part of a small, friendly research team including: 2 Post-doc's on fixed positions & 1 PhD in Białowieża, 1 PhD at Warsaw University, 2 PhD abroad (in Netherlands), under supervision of associate professor Dries Kuijper (<https://ibs.bialowieza.pl/en/staff/dries-kuijper/>).

What additionally can we offer to you?

- A project with international collaborators (Canada & Netherlands).
- Much freedom to develop your own research ideas within the framework of the project
- Help with accommodation; we have relatively inexpensive flats in Białowieża, situated close to the institute that can be rent by PhD/Post-doc (with family when required).
- Possibility to develop your own ideas and to apply for your own projects.
- Possibility to attend courses, workshops and conferences organized by MRIPAS and BIOPLANET doctoral school.
- Unique chance to work and live in a nice place: a small village (i.e., Białowieża) located in the middle of Białowieża Primeval Forest one of the most important biodiversity hotspot in Europe. MRIPAS is located 1.2 km from strict reserve of Białowieża National Park.
- A friendly and supportive working environment.
- Some bison in your back garden ☺

Contact person

Dries Kuijper (dkuijper@ibs.bialowieza.pl) is the principal investigator of the project and will be the main supervisor of PhD student and Post-doc. If you want to learn details concerning the project, necessary qualifications or any other information, I will be very happy to informally meet and talk to potential candidates (e. via Zoom), so do not hesitate to contact me.

References

- Chapron G. et al., 2014. Recovery of large carnivores in Europe's modern human-dominated landscapes. *Science* 346, 1517–1519.
- Kuijper DPJ, Churski M, Trouwborst A, Heurich M, Smit C, Kerley GIH, Cromsigt JPGM. 2019. Keep the wolf from the door: how to conserve wolves in Europe's human-dominated landscapes? *Biol. Conserv.* 235: 102–111.
- Kuijper DPJ, Sahlén E, Elmhagen B, Chamaillé-Jammes S, Sand H, Lone K, Cromsigt JPGM. 2016. Paws without claws? Ecological effects of large carnivores in anthropogenic landscapes. *Proc. Roy. Soc. B*: 283: 20161625.
- Newsome TM, Fleming PJ, Dickman CR, Doherty TS, Ripple WJ, Ritchie EG, Wirsing AJ. 2017a. Making a new Dog? *BioScience* 67, 374–381.

Please sign and add the declaration of consent for processing of personal data to your application (there are different declarations for PhD & Post-doc):

<https://bip.ibs.bialowieza.pl/konkursy-na-stanowiska/oferty-pracy-w-2022-roku/wilki-traca-strach-przed-ludzmi/>