

PhD position (UNIVERSITÄT WÜRZBURG)

Bewerbungsfrist: 05.10.2018

PhD position in Tropical Agroecology

Biodiversity, pollination and biological pest control in Malawian farmland systems

Background:

Farming practices in sub-Saharan Africa are often linked with high rates of soil erosion, decreasing soil quality, and increasing use of agrochemicals that have negative impacts on humans and the environment. Concomitantly, land use change threatens regional biodiversity and ecosystem services, such as pollination and biocontrol, upon which farmers depend. Ecological intensification combined with farmer-led participatory education can have positive impacts on food security, nutrition, and soil health in Malawian communities. However, little is known about biodiversity and ecosystem services in sub-Saharan Africa. In the BiodivERsA project FARMS4Biodiversity an interdisciplinary team will conduct research in northern Malawi. In a paired design the implementation of local diversification measurements will be studied in 50 farms along a gradient in landscape complexity to explore how agroecological practices and land use impact biodiversity (bees, birds, and natural enemies), pollination, pest control, and crop yields.

Requirements:

We are seeking a highly motivated PhD student with strong interest and expertise in insect ecology, tropical ecology or agroecology. Applicants should have a MSc. or Diploma degree in ecology or related disciplines and skills in several of the following areas: experimental field research (e.g. plant-insect interactions, pollination and/or pest control), practical skills in insect identification, use of GIS and statistical data analysis (preferably in R), and scientific writing in English. A driver license and very good language skills in English are required. The candidate is expected to work both individually and in team and to be able to integrate into an interdisciplinary and international project with field work in Malawi. The PhD position will be located in the Department of Animal Ecology and Tropical Biology (<http://www.zoo3.biozentrum.uni-wuerzburg.de/en/>) at University of Würzburg. For further information please contact:

Prof. Dr. Ingolf Steffan-Dewenter, University of Würzburg (ingolf.steffan@uni-wuerzburg.de) and

Prof. Dr. Katja Poveda, Cornell University (kap235@cornell.edu)

Salary and conditions:

Salary and benefits are according to public service positions in Germany (E13 TV-L, 65%). Start date: 1st December 2018. The planned duration of the project is three years. We offer the membership in an international research team, modern facilities and a structured graduate training program. Würzburg University is an equal opportunities employer and places particular emphasis on fostering career opportunities for women. Qualified women are therefore strongly encouraged to apply. Disabled persons with equivalent aptitude will be favored.

Applications:

Please send your application as one single pdf file per email to ingolf.steffan@uni-wuerzburg.de latest **until 5th October 2018**. Applications should include a cover letter, a short summary of research interests, CV, complete certificates, and the names (with email addresses) of two potential referees. Interviews of invited candidates will be held from 22-25th October 2018.