



The Leibniz Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research (IZW) in Berlin is Germany's premier wildlife research institute, one of seven research institutes in the Forschungsverbund Berlin e. V., a member of the Leibniz Association and jointly funded by the German federal and state governments. The Leibniz-IZW focuses on the life histories and mechanisms of evolutionary adaptations of mammals and birds, on the limits of these mechanisms in natural and anthropogenically influenced environments, and on conservation strategies that better take these factors into account. The institute operates within the fields of evolutionary ecology, ecological dynamics, evolutionary genetics, wildlife diseases, reproduction biology and reproduction management.

In its Department of Evolutionary Ecology, we offer (beginning on **June 1st, 2023**) a

Doctoral position in Behavioural Ecology

This position is part of an international, collaborative research project on the evolution of despotic societies in mammals ("DESPOT"), co-funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the French Research Agency (ANR). In this project, we aim to understand the evolutionary origins of variation in social relationships and hierarchical structures in group-living mammals.

The selected candidate will characterise social and dominance behaviours at the level of individuals, dyads and groups using a unique long-term, individual-based dataset from a population of free-ranging spotted hyenas (*Crocuta crocuta*) in the Ngorongoro Crater in Tanzania (<https://hyena-project.com>). The candidate will further investigate how these behavioural styles co-vary with individual life history and group parameters such as the kin and demographic composition. The candidate will also develop concepts and a multidimensional metric to generally characterise dominance styles and hierarchical structures in group-living mammals. This component of the project will be undertaken in collaboration with a doctorate candidate who will be doing similar work on primates and who will be based at the Institut des Sciences de l'Évolution de Montpellier (ISEM) in France.

The Ngorongoro spotted hyena population consists of eight social groups ('clans') and has been continuously monitored for 27 years. There has been considerable variation in the socio-demographic and ecological characteristics within clans over time and between clans that can be exploited during this project. The empirical data for the doctorate is already largely available but there is the possibility to collect additional data on the spotted hyenas in Tanzania.

A particularly exciting aspect of the DESPOT project is that it will provide excellent opportunities for networking and professional training. The selected doctorate candidate will be mentored by and closely collaborate with two scientists with strong conceptual and empirical expertise in behavioural and evolutionary ecology and spotted hyena biology: Dr Oliver Höner from the Leibniz-IZW and Dr Eve Davidian from the ISEM. The candidate will also benefit from interacting and collaborating with an extended international network of scientists with complementary expertise, in particular lead primatologists and evolutionary biologists Dr Elise Huchard and Dr Marie Charpentier from the ISEM, and leading expert in comparative studies Dr Dieter Lukas from the Max-Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology (MPI-EVA) in Leipzig, Germany.

The selected candidate will obtain strong conceptual and quantitative skills, in particular in behavioural ecology, evolutionary biology, statistics, and management of large datasets. The candidate will also benefit from a dynamic international research environment at Leibniz-IZW and will join a structured doctoral training programme.

Prerequisites:

- Completed university degree (Master of Science or Diploma) in animal behaviour, behavioural ecology, evolutionary biology;
- Good knowledge of English (ability to work in English, written and spoken),
- Good knowledge of R for data wrangling and analysis;
- A solid background in statistics or willingness to quickly improve skills;
- Good interpersonal and communication skills;
- Strong self-motivation and rigour;
- Experience in monitoring the social behaviour of animals.

Beneficial:

- Experience in conducting field work in remote areas;
- Driver's licence;
- Experience in working with individual-based, longitudinal datasets;
- Experience in R programming.

Recommended reading:

- Vulllioud, Davidian *et al* (2019) [Social support drives female dominance in the spotted hyaena](#). *Nature Ecology & Evolution* 3: 71-76.
- Kappeler, Huchard *et al* (2022) [Sex and dominance: How to assess and interpret intersexual dominance relationships in mammalian societies](#). *Frontiers in Ecology and Evolution* 10: 918773.

We offer state-of-the-art methodology and a stimulating research environment with an interdisciplinary, collaborative approach.

The position is expected to start on **1 June 2023** and is limited to **three years**. Salary and benefits will be according to 65 % TVöD (Bund). Place of work is at the Leibniz-IZW premises in the vibrant city of Berlin, Germany.

As a member of the Leibniz Association, the Leibniz-IZW is an equal opportunity employer, determined to increase the proportion of women in successful scientific careers, and particularly encourages women to apply.

We welcome applications regardless of gender, origin, sexual orientation and religion.

Disabled persons will be given preferential consideration in case of equal suitability. We promote diversity, so please convince us with your quality and competence. The Leibniz Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research is "Total-E-Quality" certified, promotes equality and actively supports a work-life balance.

Enquiries or further questions should be directed to **Dr Oliver Höner** (hoener@izw-berlin.de, +49 (0)30 5168-516).

Applicants should submit 1) a letter of motivation highlighting particular skills for this position, 2) a CV, 3) copies of relevant degrees, 4) a list of publications if applicable and 5) the names and contact details of two referees before or latest on **10th March 2023** via the Leibniz-IZW's online-job-market (button "Apply online").

Interviews will likely take place between **27th and 30th March 2023**, via video call. Finalist candidates will be asked to prepare a short (ca. 10min) presentation of their previous and current research.

We are looking forward to your application!