

PhD position (m/f/d) in Animal Ecology

Background: Environmental heterogeneity is a key driver of biodiversity and ecosystem functioning in forests. Understanding how species with different mobility, traits, and life histories respond to habitat heterogeneity across spatial and temporal scales is essential for predicting biodiversity change. Insects regulate crucial ecosystem services including pollination, pest control, decomposition, and seed dispersal, yet their responses to forest structure and succession remain poorly understood.

Within the DFG-funded Research Unit BETA-FOR (<https://www.uni-wuerzburg.de/en/beta-for/>) we will address these questions with a focus on the diversity and trophic interactions of trap-nesting bees and wasps, plant-pollinator interactions, and fitness responses of bumble bee colonies, aiming to promote forest management strategies and biodiversity conservation.

Requirements: We are seeking a highly motivated PhD student with strong interest in community ecology, forest ecology, and insect ecology. 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, pollinator ecology), insect taxonomy, use of GIS and statistical data analysis (preferably in R), and scientific writing in English. A driver license, physical fitness and very good language skills in English are required. The candidate is expected to work within an interdisciplinary and collaborative project. The PhD position will be located at the Department of Animal Ecology and Tropical Biology (<http://www.zoo3.biozentrum.uni-wuerzburg.de/en/>) at University of Würzburg and at the Animal Ecology Group at Bremen University (<https://www.uni-bremen.de/en/animal-ecology>).

Salary and conditions: Salary and benefits are according to public service positions in Germany (TV-L, 65%). Start date: **1st September 2026**. The planned duration of the project is 3.5 years. We offer the membership in a vibrant international research team, modern facilities, and a structured graduate training program. The Universities of Würzburg and Bremen are equal opportunities employers and place 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 michaela.jaeger@uni-wuerzburg.de latest until **21 June 2026**. 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.

For further information please contact: Prof. Dr. Alice Claßen (classen@uni-bremen.de) and Prof. Dr. Ingolf Steffan-Dewenter (ingolf.steffan@uni-wuerzburg.de)