



The Geography Department at Humboldt-University Berlin
seeks highly qualified and motivated candidates for a

PhD Position on the Conservation Biogeography of Reptiles and Amphibians in South America dry forests

One PhD position (TV-L HU E13, 67%) for 3.5 years.

Starting date: from 1st July 2023.

Reference number: DR/024/23

The successful applicant will study how **reptiles and amphibians are affected by land-use change in tropical dry forests in South America**, with a regional focus on the Gran Chaco and Chiquitania. Both ecoregions are global hotspots of deforestation and defaunation but the impacts on the herpetofauna remain weakly understood. In this context, the successful candidate will assess the distributions and diversity patterns of amphibians and reptiles, how recent land-use change impacts these taxa, and where priority areas for their conservation are located. The candidate will consolidate existing biogeographical data and, if needed, collect additional data (e.g., using audiorecorders) and use them in biogeographical models, threat assessments, and for conservation planning applications. The candidate will join the research team working on the project *SystemShift* (<https://hu.berlin/SystemShift>), funded by the *European Research Council* (ERC). *SystemShift* brings together an interdisciplinary group of researchers to develop and test new conservation approaches, by integrating Land System Science and Conservation Science. The project focusses on tropical dry forests and savannas globally, with case studies in the Gran Chaco and Chiquitania. The applicant will work closely with local partners in academia and conservation organizations in Argentina and Bolivia.

The candidate will join the Conservation Biogeography Lab (<https://hu.berlin/biogeo>) in the Geography Department. The group seeks to carry out cutting-edge research to understand where and why land use is changing, how these changes impact biodiversity, and which strategies can effectively balance conservation goals with land use. Our research approach brings together concepts and methodologies from geography, spatial ecology, social science, conservation planning, econometrics, and remote sensing. We collaborate intensively with researchers and research institutions worldwide, and we are active contributors to a range of international science networks such as *FutureEarth's* Global Land Programme or different IUCN initiatives. We strive to collaborate closely with local conservation organizations and stakeholders. We do this in the hope of producing a scientific basis that can inform policy making, conservation planning, and action to help navigate land systems towards sustainable futures. The working language of the group is English.

We seek a candidate with an above-average MSc (or equivalent degree) in ecology, biogeography, conservation, or related fields. We expect a passion for research and a strong interest in biodiversity conservation, land use and sustainability. A sound background in biogeography, ecology, and

herpetology, very good skills in spatial data handling and statistical models (using GIS and R), as well as Spanish language skills are required. We expect excellent command of the English language, good communication skills, and readiness to work in an international research team. Desired skills include field experience in herpetological assessments, regional experience, knowledge of scripting languages (e.g., GDAL, Python) and experience in translating science to conservation practice.

We offer a position in an international, young, and dynamic team with an excellent scientific track record. Payment will be according to a PhD position (TV-L HU E13 67%), with an annual gross salary of about 36,000-39,000 EUR, depending on prior experience. Employment at HU Berlin offers a wide range of benefits, including health insurance. Funding for field work, skills training, and participation in scientific conferences is available. HU Berlin is one of Germany's top-ranking universities and host a nationally and internationally leading Geography Department, with research foci on Land Use Change, Climate Change, Sustainability Science, and Urban Studies. The department contributes to the *Integrated Research Institute for Transformations in Human-Environment Systems (IRI THESys)* and is closely linked to research institutions in the Berlin-Brandenburg area, including to the *Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK)*, the *Leibniz Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research (IZW)*, the *Leibniz Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries (IGB)*, the *Museum of Natural History (MfN)*, the *Mercator Research Institute on Global Commons and Climate Change (MCC)*, and the *German Research Centre for Geosciences (GFZ)*. Berlin is Germany's largest city with an inspiring metropolitan flair, a vibrant cultural scene, large green spaces, and a family-friendly environment. We seek to increase the proportion of women in academia and specifically encourage qualified female scholars to apply. Likewise, non-German Citizens are specifically encouraged to apply. Applicants with disabilities will be given preferential consideration given equivalent qualification.

Applicants should include (1) a letter of motivation (max. 2 pages), (2) a full CV, (3) a writing sample (e.g., publication, part of a thesis), and (4) contact details for two references. Please send the application electronically in a single PDF file to Ms. Camille Dammann (camille.dammann@hu-berlin.de). Please provide the reference number to this position in the content line of your email.

Application deadline: 12 of April 2023

For further information please contact Prof. Tobias Kuemmerle (tobias.kuemmerle@hu-berlin.de) or Dr. Alfredo Romero Muñoz (alfredo.romero@hu-berlin.de)

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