

PhD position Marine Evolution and Conservation (1,0 fte) (Reference number 212075)

Organisation

The PhD position is with the Marine Evolution and Conservation (MarECon) group at the Centre for Ecological and Evolutionary Studies (CEES) which is placed with the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. The research conducted by the members of MarECon is aimed at the evolution and conservation of pelagic marine organisms, in particular marine mammals. We are interested in those processes that partition genetic variation within those species that inhabit this comparatively open environment. Our primary research approach is population genetics and genomics. The research is conducted with a global network of collaborators who collect data and tissue samples in the field.

Job description

The pinnipeds and cetaceans represent some of the most derived mammal groups. The many convergent features in these two groups provide clear evidence of the strong natural selection the mammal "bauplan" is subjected to when transitioning to a marine existence. The combination of strong convergent evolution in different lineages of mammals constitutes an excellent opportunity to gain insights into the genomic underpinnings of the evolution and adaptation in pinnipeds and cetaceans and the subsequent radiations into different distinct marine habitats.

The objective of this PhD project is to utilize genome enabled methods to identify those traits under past and recent selection in pinnipeds and cetaceans. The research will mainly consist of genome wide-scans in select population samples and subsequent bioinformatics and population genomic analyses of those data. The newly fitted laboratory is situated in the new green building Linneausborg on the Zernike Campus with excellent facilities for this kind of work.

The PhD student will be supervised by Dr. Martine Bérubé and Prof. Per Palsbøll.

Qualifications

We are looking for a highly motivated person with a master's degree in biology or equivalent discipline, with a strong background in empirical and theoretical population genetics. The ideal candidate for this position has good quantitative skills and the ability to conduct bioinformatics analyses of the large amounts of short-read sequence data. Programming skills (or the interest and ability to acquire such) is a necessity. The candidate should be able to work and solve problems independently. Some knowledge of marine mammals is beneficial, but not a prerequisite. It should be noted that the opportunities for fieldwork will be few and brief. A good command of English is required. The candidate will be enrolled in Groningen Graduate School of Science, attend graduate courses within the Research School Ecology and Evolution and participate in our teaching program (10% of time).

Conditions of employment

The University of Groningen offers a salary of € 2,042 gross per month in the first year up to a maximum of € 2,612 gross per month in the final year. The employment is initially in a temporary position of 1.5 years with possible extension with another

2.5 years provided satisfactory performance during the first year. The PhD candidate will be evaluated after the first year in order to determine the likelihood of the successful completion of the PhD thesis within the following three years. If a successful completion is deemed unlikely, the employment will not be extended. The main objective of the position is to publish research articles in peer-reviewed scientific journals. These publications will form the basis of the doctoral thesis and obtaining the PhD degree (Dr) at the University of Groningen.

Application

A full complete application in English consists of a letter describing your personal motivation for applying for this position outlining which skills pertinent to the position you have, past experience as well as a brief explanation what you think the main research questions in evolution and conservation are today for marine mammals. Also make sure to add a complete curriculum vitae along with names and addresses, including telephone/fax and e-mail addresses for three referees.

We would like to receive applications until 15 May 2012, 24:00 CET by means of the application form.

Start date before 1 September 2012.

Information

For information you can contact:

Dr. Per Palsboll, p.j.palsboll@rug.nl; palsboll@gmail.com

CEES

Applications should be submitted on-line at

<http://www.rug.nl/corporate/vacatures/vacaturesRUG> (the reference number for this position is 212075) before May 15th 2012.

Apply