

PhD position in Tropical Agroecology

Biodiversity and biological pest control in Malawian farmland systems

Background: Farming practices in sub-Saharan Africa often result in high rates of soil erosion, decreasing soil quality, and increasing use of agrochemicals, with negative impacts on humans and the environment. Concomitantly, land use change threatens regional biodiversity and ecosystem services, such as biological pest control, upon which farmers depend. Alternatively, agroecological farming combined with farmer-led participatory education can have positive impacts on food security, nutrition, and soil health as well as biodiversity and ecosystem services in sub-Saharan Africa. In the BiodivERsA project FARMS4Biodiversity, an interdisciplinary team conducts research in northern Malawi. In a paired design the implementation of local diversification measurements will be studied in farms along a gradient of landscape complexity to explore how agroecological practices and land use impact biodiversity (birds, pest insects and natural enemies), 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, biological pest control), practical skills in insect identification (ideally also bird 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 close collaboration with Malawian and international partners in an interdisciplinary and international project with field work in Northern Malawi. Experience with participatory research approaches is a preferred skill, as well as a general openness to doing participatory research with smallholder farmers. 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:

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Salary and conditions: Salary and benefits are according to public service positions in Germany (TV-L, 65%). Start date: **1st September 2019**. 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 michaela.jaeger@uni-wuerzburg.de latest until **12 July 2019**. 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 on 22 July.