

The [Department of Conservation Biology](#) at the University of Göttingen seeks highly qualified and motivated candidates (m/f/d) for a

## PhD position

on ecosystem effects of large herbivores on the Eurasian steppes

with 65% of a full position. Regular working hours are currently 25.87 hours per week. This position should be filled by 01 May 2026 and is initially available for three years. Salary: Pay grade E13 TV-L

The successful candidate will contribute substantially to the project "Reconciling pastoralism, ecosystem functioning and biodiversity on the Kazakh steppe" (RePasKa), funded by the German Ministry of Research, Technology and Space (BMFTR) [final funding confirmation expected in February 2026] and the University of Göttingen. This project is implemented by a consortium of several partners, including close collaboration with the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan ([ACBK](#)).

The PhD position will be co-supervised by international experts in the thematic area, Dr. [Erick Lundgren](#) (University of Alberta, Canada) and [Jonas Trepel](#) (University of Aarhus, Denmark).

The **goals** of the project are to i) disentangle the impact of wild, (re)introduced and native herbivores on biodiversity and ecosystem functioning, ii) to link foraging behaviour of different wild and domestic ungulates to biodiversity and ecosystem functioning, iii) predict ecosystem responses to changing grazing systems on the steppe of Kazakhstan in a period of intense human-wildlife interactions.

Your **tasks** include:

- To conduct a structured meta-analysis of published evidence;
- To support the set-up of livestock and Saiga antelope exclosures in the steppes and semi-deserts of Kazakhstan;
- To coordinate the sampling of biodiversity (incl. dung beetles, Orthoptera and plants) and ecosystem properties (biomass, carbon stocks) in Kazakhstan;
- To synthesize and analyse the collected datasets and publish peer-review papers;
- To coordinate field tandem teams of German and Kazakhstani undergraduates.

**We are looking** for a highly motivated, open-minded person with the following background and qualifications:

- MSc in Landscape Ecology, Environmental Sciences, Biology, Zoology, Geography, or similarly relevant fields of study;
- Strong quantitative background, advanced skills in R or similar languages;
- Strong theoretical and applied background in ecology or global change biology;
- Experience with the analysis of larger datasets;
- Species knowledge, ecological knowledge and sampling/surveying experience of invertebrates;
- Excellent communication skills, very good English language skills in written and spoken form, confident public appearance;
- Awareness of the importance of participation, diversity, and equal opportunities.

In addition, the following skills and experiences are **advantages**:

- Previous experience with meta-analysis;
- Knowledge of grazing ecology in arid landscapes and/or human-wildlife conflict;
- Kazakh or Russian language skills;
- Previous fieldwork in remote areas and off-road driving skills.

We offer close integration into the young and international teams of project partners and supervisors. Göttingen is a medium-sized university town with a high quality of life. The renowned University of Göttingen offers excellent networking opportunities in the three "green" faculties of Biology, Agricultural Sciences, and Forestry.

The University of Göttingen is an equal opportunities employer and places particular emphasis on fostering career opportunities for women. Qualified women are therefore strongly encouraged to apply in fields in which they are underrepresented. The university has committed itself to being a family-friendly institution and supports their employees in balancing work and family life. The university is particularly committed to the professional participation of severely disabled employees and therefore welcomes applications from severely disabled people. In the case of equal qualifications, applications from people with severe disabilities will be given preference. A disability or equality is to be included in the application in order to protect the interests of the applicant.

Please send your application as a combined pdf file to Ms. Andrea Lambertz ([alamber@gwdg.de](mailto:alamber@gwdg.de)) by the **application deadline** on **28th February 2026**, consisting of:

- Copies of academic certificates;
- A motivation letter including relevant experiences;
- CV, incl. a publication list, if applicable;
- A short writing example, e.g. a part of a MSc thesis;
- Contact details of two persons willing to provide a reference.

For inquiries about the job posting, please contact Prof. Johannes Kamp ([johannes.kamp@uni-goettingen.de](mailto:johannes.kamp@uni-goettingen.de)).