



Phd student - How do ungulates affect the biodiversity in Swedish forest ecosystems?

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Department of wildlife, fish & environmental studies

The Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, SLU, seeks knowledge and finds solutions for a sustainable future through critical thought and transdisciplinary approaches, using state of the art technologies. The Department of wildlife, fish and environmental studies (VFM) contributes towards SLU:s ambition to be world leading in Life Sciences through education, research and environmental monitoring in collaboration with society. Our activities cover plants, animals and people across the world, often focusing on how land use affects ecosystems and interactions which influence the deliverance of ecosystem services. Today, SLU is among the top ranked universities in the world in forestry and agriculture; we want you to be a part of our vision for a sustainable future.

Description:

Until the early 20th century, Swedish forest ecosystems were grazed and browsed by several million cattle, horses, sheep and goats during the summer months. At the time, the combined ungulate populations numbered less than 50 000 individuals. Since then, keeping livestock in the forests has been abandoned and the ungulate populations have increased to roughly one million individuals, who seek forage in the forests year around. Furthermore, the composition of the ungulate communities are changing, as red deer, fallow deer and wild boar expand their ranges into areas previously dominated by moose and roe deer. In parallel, forestry and agriculture are adapting to climate change by changing their practices.

This project combines observational data at the landscape level with data from experimental exclosures to study how ungulate browsing affects the biodiversity in changing Swedish forest ecosystems. To what degree are the ungulates filling the ecological niche previously occupied by livestock? How does the ungulate community composition affect the grazing and browsing pressure? Are dense ungulate populations threatening biodiversity, or maintaining positive effects previously exerted by livestock?

Through our ongoing research and environmental monitoring, we gather data on forage availability, ungulate densities and browsing pressures across Sweden, using monitoring methods at the landscape level and experimental exclosures. Now, we want to combine this data with new data on biodiversity, including both plants and animals.

We are looking for a Ph. D. student who can combine and analyse existing and new data from our study areas, to investigate the relationships between browsing, grazing and biodiversity. You will collect data in the field and co-ordinate data collection by our staff

within the project. The goal is to increase our ecological understanding of the effects of different browsing patterns and pressures, and to generate advice for the multispecies management of ungulates and co-management of ungulates and forest ecosystems. We are looking for a candidate who wants to combine basic and applied research.

Qualifications:

Applicants should hold an MSc degree in conservation biology, ecology or related disciplines. You should have a genuine interest in research and in learning to do research. We place great emphasis on personal qualities such as curiosity, responsibility, and ability to work in a team as well as independently.

A strong interest in biodiversity and taxonomic knowledge of relevant taxa will be considered a merit, and experience from analyses using biodiversity indices is advantageous. We are looking for someone who is enthusiastic, creative and who possesses great communication skills in English (required) and preferably Swedish or another Scandinavian language (merit).

Place of work:

Umeå

Forms for funding or employment:

Employment 4 years

Starting date:

Expected start date 2022-03-15 or according to agreement.

Application:

Click the "Apply" button to submit your application. The deadline is 2022-01-30.

To qualify for third-cycle (Doctoral) courses and study programmes, you must have a second-cycle (Master's) qualification. Alternatively, you must have conducted a minimum of four years of full-time study, of which a minimum of one year at second-cycle level.

Applicants will be selected based on their written application and CV, degree project, copies of their degree certificate and transcript of records from previous first and second-cycle studies at a university or higher education institution, two personal references, and knowledge of English. More information about the English language requirements can be found here: www.slu.se/en/education/programmes-courses/doctoral-studies/new-doctoral-students/english-language-requirements/

Please note that applicants invited to interview must submit attested copies of their degree certificate, a transcript of records from previous first and second-cycle studies at a university or higher education institution. Applicants who are not Swedish citizens need to submit an attested copy of their passport's information page containing their photograph and personal details.

Read about the PhD education at SLU at www.slu.se/en/education/programmes-courses/doctoral-studies/

Academic union representatives:

<https://internt.slu.se/en/my-employment/employee-associations/kontaktpersoner-vid-rekrytering/>

The Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) is a world-class international university with research, education and environmental assessment within the sciences for sustainable life. Its principal sites are in Alnarp, Umeå and Uppsala, but activities are also conducted at research stations, experimental parks and educational establishments throughout Sweden. We bring together people who have different perspectives, but they all have one and the same goal: to create the best conditions for a sustainable, thriving and better world.

SLU has just over 3,000 employees, 5,000 students and a turnover of SEK 3 billion. The university has invested heavily in a modern, attractive environment on its campuses.

www.slu.se

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