



Wild Cat Conservation and Research at
Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, Germany

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Program A mentoring program in wild cat conservation and research for students at M.Sc and PhD level

Where [Workgroup on Endangered Species](#)

J.F. Blumenbach Institute of Zoology and Anthropology
Georg-August-Universität Göttingen
Bürgerstrasse 50, Göttingen 37073
Germany

Degree options Master of Science/Master of International Nature Conservation (M.Sc./M.I.N.C.) which is a double degree program between University of Göttingen and Lincoln University in New Zealand (visit <http://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/74269.html>). PhD Biodiversity, Ecology and Evolution (visit <http://www.uni-goettingen.de/en/phd-program/138545.html>). The MSc program requires two years. The PhD program requires three years. All classes are taught in English

Contacts

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Cost There is no tuition cost for Georg-August-Universität Göttingen. The average accommodation at a dorm or a private house in Göttingen is EU 200-400/month. Food costs is EU 300-400/month. There is no need for private transportation so you do not need a car. EU 250 per semester pays for cultural fees and public transportation (within the city and also regional trains in the Lower Saxony Province). Money for travelling for leisure and entertainment is not considered here and should be estimated by the applicant separately. Multiplying these costs by 1.3 converts EU to US\$. We estimate total monthly costs to be approximately EU 900-1000/month. Remember you must live, eat, and travel no matter where you are. Medical and

incident insurance (EU 50-100/month) is essential in Germany. Many scholarships, but not all, pay insurance to students so this payment must be considered in advance.

Scholarships The scholarships offered by the university are limited, therefore searching for donors in Germany, EU, students' home countries and international programs is highly encouraged. An extensive database of German foundations giving scholarships can be found [here](#). The most common PhD scholarships for international students in Germany are DAAD and Erasmus Mundus. DAAD provides EU 1000/month and Erasmus Mundus EU 1500/month. These scholarship programs are all inclusive. MSc scholarships provide less, about EU 800/month. DAAD and Erasmus Mundus scholarships are quite generous considering the above costs. Other scholarships are also available.

Note that the policy of the university is that an applicant first prepares a proposal that must satisfy co-supervisors Dr. Waltert and Dr. Khorozyan. A letter is then written that gives the applicant the right to apply for a scholarship. When the scholarship is secured, the applicant registers with the university under Dr. Waltert or Dr. Khorozyan's supervision. Scholarships are not for field research, conservation, or outreach projects. Additional funding should be arranged separately after the applicant is admitted to the university for a MSc or PhD program.

Expectations Students attracted to this support program are expected to excel in classes in Göttingen and are encouraged to complete their field work in their home country. We believe that research is necessary but not sufficient to save wild cats. Research for purely academic interests or to satisfy one's curiosity is discouraged. We believe conservation actions motivate interesting and valuable research questions that when answered enable more effective conservation. Research should focus on resolving conservation issues and be of practical value.

How to apply As for PhD programmes, students can be officially enrolled at Georg-August-Universität only if they have secured financial support like a scholarship or a fellowship. Personal money cannot be used for enrollment. Prospective students should prepare and send to Dr. Waltert and Dr. Khorozyan from the Workgroup on Endangered Species a proposal for their MSc or PhD project. This is usually an iterative process of continual proposal improvement. There is no accept/reject of a proposal. Most likely, every proposal needs improvement. No standard form is required, but the proposal must include the following parts: background, goals and objectives, methods, anticipated results and output, team, timetable, planned budget, fundraising activities, and references. Prospective students must have sufficient knowledge, skills, and capacities to accomplish the project aims in the time available. The proposal should be around 10 pages. A curriculum vitae should be included. For the checklist of steps please see [below](#).

Upon approval of the proposal a support letter is issued. This letter enables the student to apply for a scholarship or fellowship. When the scholarship is received, the student comes to Göttingen and starts working on fundraising for the field project. Most scholarship/fellowship support only living expenses, travel to/from Göttingen and other everyday expenses, but not the project itself. For wild cat studies well-known sources for funding include Panthera (<http://www.panthera.org>), National Geographic Big Cat Initiative, and Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund (<http://www.speciesconservation.org>). Prospective applicants should try the Terra Viva Grants Directory (<http://www.terravivagrants.org/>) to find suitable grants for their projects. Students that work closely with Dr. Sanderson are eligible for [Wildlife Conservation Network](#) scholarship programs.

When to apply Applications for the winter semester that begins in October should be submitted in early May. Check above university websites for application deadlines. It implies that the envisaged MSc or PhD project is approved by the supervisors and the scholarship or fellowship is obtained before May.

Associated programs The co-chairs of the IUCN Cat Specialist Group working in Switzerland offer a one-month all expenses paid field program in Switzerland each summer. Participants will gain field and classroom experience in camera trapping, capturing and fitting transmitters on Eurasian lynx, wolves, and bears roaming the greater Swiss landscape.

We are also actively seeking a site to establish a permanent long-term conservation and research program involving several species of wild cats and local communities interacting with these cats. Students will learn field techniques such as camera trapping, telemetry, and how to carry out conservation actions with communities to minimize threats to wild cats. All students will have the opportunity to participate and contribute to this long-term program.

Faculty and interests A list of current projects can be found at <http://www.uni-goettingen.de/en/108763.html>, on pages Team and Research

Dr. Igor Khorozyan (igor.khorozyan@biologie.uni-goettingen.de), Post Doc and point of contact. His long-lasting research interests include everything that would be helpful for preservation of wild cats, other carnivores and their prey. These fields include non-invasive field research techniques, human-carnivore conflicts, co-existence between local people and wildlife, development and application of research-based conservation solutions. His current projects are dedicated to the descriptive and predictive modeling of conflicts between humans and seven species of big cats and the use of livestock collars to mitigate leopard predation in rural environments of Iran. He is also active in postgraduate teaching and co-supervision of MSc and PhD students. See more information on Igor's personal webpage (<http://www.uni-goettingen.de/483588.html>).

PD Dr. Matthias Waltert (mwalter@uni-goettingen.de), teaches Conservation Biology, International Nature Conservation and Wildlife Assessment. His past research focuses mainly on the Old World Tropics (Africa, Asia). As 'senior lecturer' and 'researcher' he wishes to promote students who are willing to work on the interface between science and management, by pushing informed decision making and involving stakeholders at regional levels. He especially appreciates committed young conservationists to engage in existing or initiate new governmental and non-governmental conservation programmes.

Dr. Jim Sanderson (gato_andino@yahoo.com), Guest lecturer, adjunct, field program advisor. Jim is the founder and director of the [Small Wild Cat Conservation Foundation](#). He is interested in the conservation of all wildlife, especially small wild cats. He works with students and colleagues working on the conservation of small wild cats around the world. He is a member of the IUCN Cat Specialist Group, a Fellow of the [Wildlife Conservation Network](#), on the review team of the [Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund](#), and the Feline Conservation Federation.

Application checklist for enrollment in the PhD study program Biodiversity and Ecology at the Georg-August University, Göttingen

- 1) The applicant's formal application for enrollment in the PhD program. "...herewith I apply for enrollment...". Please indicate the time, when you want to enroll (summer or winter term). The application must be signed.
- 2) Complete CV (given in table form), including all school and academic education steps (date of start and end). Also include professional and/or scientific activities in the field of biodiversity and ecology. The CV must be signed.
- 3) Academic transcripts showing an applicant has successfully completed the BSc program and MSc program for PhD applicants must be submitted.
- 4) A signed statement indicating the applicant has not enrolled in another PhD program, or, for those applicants already previously enrolled in a PhD program, reasons why the applicant decided to change programs, or abandoned the program.
- 5) Statement of the supervisor of the intended dissertation research program regarding the acceptance of the applicant as a PhD student, about the availability of resources regarding work place, equipment, and financial support during the 3-year-period of the PhD study program. This statement must be signed by the supervisor.
- 6) Applicant's letter of motivation: i.e., please write a statement about your motivation for enrollment in the PhD program *Biodiversity and Ecology* at the University of Göttingen. The statement must be signed.
- 7) English language certificate or equivalent documents that prove the applicant's capability of sufficient English knowledge, which enables her/him to follow the study courses without difficulties, and to be able to write the dissertation thesis in English language (e.g., online TOEFL of at least 83 points or equivalent certificates). Please indicate all your English language capability: list in table form and add documents.
- 8) Please indicate financing of your subsistence during your stay in Germany.

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