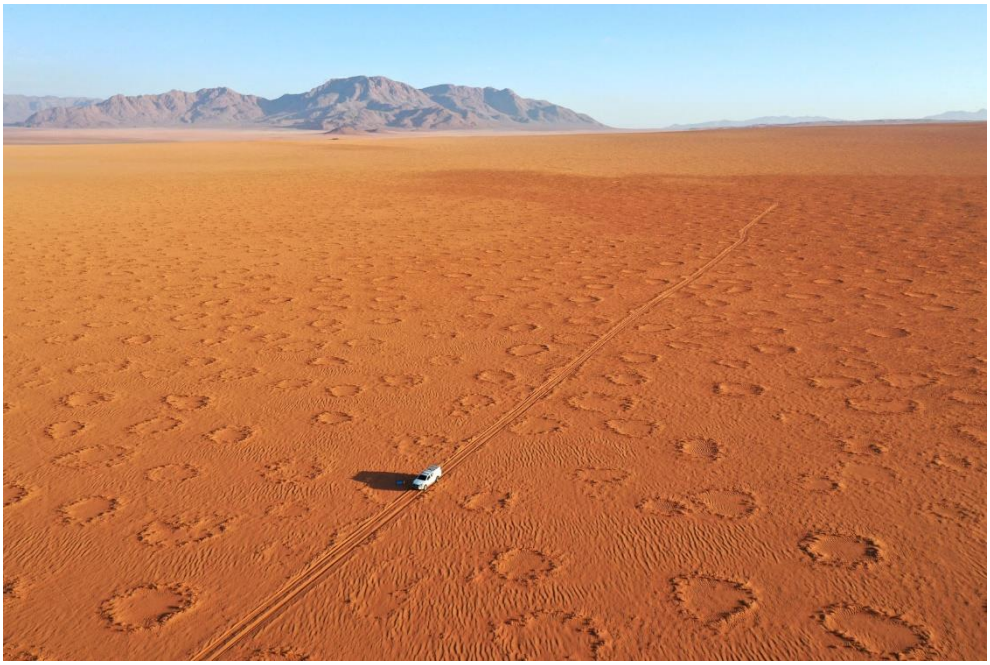
Opportunity for Master's or Bachelor's thesis at the University of Göttingen

Topic: *Spatial patterns and growth dynamics of fairy circles in Namibia*



Above is a dry-season example of fairy circles from the NamibRand Nature Reserve, photographed with a drone.

In current times of climate change, understanding the biological drivers of vegetation patterns in water-stressed environments is of increasing interest in ecological science. The mysterious fairy circles of Namibia are a prime example to study such self-organized patterns and how vegetation responds to aridity and rainfall pulses along the Namib Desert.

As part of a research project on the Namibian fairy circles, **fieldwork is planned from around mid-February to mid-April 2021**. The fieldwork involves the mapping of fairy circles throughout Namibia, using a drone and also using ground-based measurements such as on soil moisture and the structural properties of the grasses. Students interested in such a research topic will have the **opportunity to work in spectacular landscapes of western Namibia** where grasslands meet the desert margins.

This opportunity is not supported financially but costs to participate are relatively low. Only the flight needs to be paid, own meals, and accommodation which is mostly cheap camping or overnighting in research facilities. A 4 x 4 car and fuel are paid by the project. Assistance in applying for funds to cover incidental expenses is also offered.

The practical fieldwork can be used to **complete a Master's or Bachelor's thesis in subjects like spatial ecology or biology**. It is not required to stay for the entire two months in Namibia but at least four weeks of fieldwork would be adequate.

The thesis will be supervised by Dr. Stephan Getzin at the Department of Ecosystem Modelling in Göttingen. However, there is no need to be based in Göttingen. For more information, please don't hesitate to contact me directly via email: **stephan.getzin@uni-goettingen.de**

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