

The Faculty of Sciences, Department Biology-Ethology of the University of Antwerp and the Terrestrial Ecology Unit of the University of Ghent are seeking to fill the following vacancy (m/f):

**Ph.D. student** in Behavioural Ecology Job description: Raising offspring requires a substantial amount of parental care and it may be necessary that both parents contribute. While parents both benefit from the overall level of parental care, they only pay a cost for their own contribution. As such, sexual conflict arises because of different fitness optima for a given behaviour. Consequently, parents will negotiate how much to invest, which will depend on how well they are informed about offspring need and about the contribution of their partner. In the proposed project we will make use of novel GPS tracking devices to investigate parental decision rules, along with their consequences for offspring development in great detail. We will apply sophisticated cross-fostering experiments in a wild population of individually marked Lesser black-backed gulls, a long-lived migratory species breeding in a heterogeneous environment. We combine large scale behavioral observations, physiological measures and state-of-the-art tracking approaches. The latter will also enable us to track carry-over effects of the rate of parental care throughout the annual cycle. Profile and requirements: \* you have a Master degree in Biology or an equivalent degree in life sciences. \* you are an enthusiastic and motivated student with a strong interest in Behavioral and Evolutionary Ecology, who likes working in the field under at times harsh conditions. Preferentially you have already experience in fieldwork, but this is not essential. \* you have good organizational, writing and presentation skills and should be able to work well both independently and in a team environment. We offer: \* a Ph.D. scholarship for one year, and extension for another three years after positive evaluation. \* the project will be carried out in close collaboration with Ghent University (joint FWO funded project). \* during fieldwork, you will form part of a small research team (1-2 PhD students, 2 field assistants) studying different aspects of gull ecology. \* based at the University of Antwerp, the successful applicant will join a young, dynamic and stimulating group of researchers working on all 4 major aspects of animal behaviour (causation, development, function, evolution), with particular emphasis on bird family life (maternal effects, phenotypic plasticity, parent-offspring conflict & co-adaptation) (see <https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/staff/wendt-mueller/> and <http://www.ecology.ugent.be/terec/>)

) \* the preferred starting date is 1 January 2015 Interested? \* Please send all application material including 1) your curriculum vitae 2) a brief (250 words) summary of your reasons for applying and 3) contact information of max. 2 referees) as single PDF-file to:

[Wendt.Mueller@uantwerpen.be](mailto:Wendt.Mueller@uantwerpen.be)

**Review of the applications will start on**

**31 October 2014**

and continue until the position is filled, interviews of short-listed candidates will be held early November. \* For more information, contact Prof. Wendt Müller (

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) or Prof. Luc Lens (

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