

## **PHD SCHOLARSHIP**

We are recruiting a PhD students to join our project “Unraveling the structure of hummingbird communities and their interactions in urban environments“, to start in November 2023. The student will enroll in the joint Doctorate program of "Management of Natural Resources" at Universidad de Cuenca and Universidad del Azuay, in Cuenca, Ecuador. This project will develop knowledge on hummingbird communities, pollination interactions, animal and plant ecology for understanding how biodiversity is maintained in urban environments and is funded by University of Azuay.

### **Overview of the project**

Urban areas in the world are expanding, and there is a critical need to understand the patterns and processes that maintain biodiversity in cities. Pollination interactions in cities have an important role in biodiversity, and in this study, we aim to unravel how hummingbird communities and their pollination interactions are structured in urban areas of the tropical Andes. We plan to use observations, experiments, and large-scale citizen science data to: 1) determine changes in the composition and structure of plant–hummingbird interactions in urban and native forest environments, 2) compare the behavior of hummingbirds in urban and native environments, and 3) explore how urban areas filter our particular hummingbird species and reduce overall hummingbird diversity in cities of the northern Andes. The results obtain in this study are critical for supporting the conservation of biodiversity in tropical Andean cities.

### **Profile of the student**

Master degree in Ecology or related field. Research experience in community ecology/network analysis/ornithology will be highly valuable. English prophecy required.

### **What are we offering?**

- All the expenses for the research will be funded.
- Tuition fees
- Monthly stipend of \$1200 for four years

- One research stay at the Swiss Federal Research Institute (WSL), located in Zurich, Switzerland.
- Opportunity to join an international research team that includes principal investigators, PhD students, Master students, and undergraduates.

### **Evaluation of candidates**

The merits of the different candidates will be evaluated by a committee determined by University of Azuay

### **Interview process**

Selected students will be called for an interview in the presence of a committee determined by University of Azuay. The interview will evaluate:

- Motivation and aptitudes of the candidate
- Research experience and knowledge in the specific scientific field related to the research project.
- Personal interest in the specific field of study

### **Agreement related to the scholarship**

The selected student will sign a scholarship agreement with the University of Azuay, which will be renewed every year pending a favorable report from the Director of the thesis project.

Before signing the agreement, the student will have to show an enrollment letter from the PdH program in Renewable Natural Resources (<https://www.ucuenca.edu.ec/doctorado-rnr/>)

### **Other Useful Information**

- This study will be conducted mainly in Cuenca city and surroundings, Azuay province, in montane ecosystems
- The student will be based at Universidad del Azuay, and will be supervised by Boris Tinoco PhD (Research Gate: profile: <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Boris-Tinoco>).

- There will be two main collaborators in this project: 1) Catherine Graham PhD from the Swiss Federal Research Institute (<https://www.wsl.ch/de/mitarbeitende/graham.html>). 2) Ximena Palomeque from University of Cuenca

### **Application process and requirements:**

Interested students, please fill your application at the web page hosted by the graduate department at UDA:

- Masters diploma.
- Evidence of English proficiency (B2 or equivalent).
- Motivation letter indicating motivation, research interests in relation to the project and PhD program, and experiences that can contribute to reaching study and research goals.
- CV highlighting research experience and qualifications, including publications, participation in research projects, participation in scientific conferences, and others considered relevant for the application.
- Reference letter from a professor working at a University, indicating the skills of the student that will make him an excellent PhD student.
- Copy of the diploma and qualifications of the master's program.

### **Important dates**

Online postulation: August 4 to September 4 2023

Review of documentation: September 20<sup>th</sup>

Interviews: Until September 29

Selection of student: October 6th

Start of project: November 2023

More information about the Doctorate program in Natural Resource Management can be found here: <https://www.ucuenca.edu.ec/doctorado-rnr/>

For more inquiries about the project write to Boris Tinoco at [btinoco@uazuay.edu.ec](mailto:btinoco@uazuay.edu.ec)