

PhD position in Animal Behaviour '*The meaning of vocal signals in meerkats*'

A PhD position funded up to 4 years will be available from June 2024 at the Department of Evolutionary Biology and Environmental Studies, University of Zurich, Switzerland (<https://www.ieu.uzh.ch/en/research/behaviour/cognition.html>), to work on 'The meaning of animal signals' with focus on meerkats (*Suricata suricatta*), under the supervision of Prof. Marta Manser. You will conduct research on how meaning is generated and understood without language, within a larger collaboration of primate and human researchers. Our goal is to compare non-primate (meerkat) and primate (sooty mangabey) vocal signals with *non-linguistic* sounds humans produce before and after the onset of language. The focus of this position will be on meerkats with data collection at our habituated field population at the Kalahari Meerkat Project in South Africa (<http://www.kalahari-meerkats.com/kmp>).

The position is funded by the National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) Evolving Language www.evolvinglanguage.ch, a Swiss consortium with the ambitious goal of creating a new discipline, Evolutionary Language Science, that targets the past and future of language. The consortium consists of leading scientists from traditionally separated academic domains, which allows us to harvest the diverse expertise from the humanities, social sciences, computational sciences, natural sciences and medicine towards a broadscale interdisciplinary collaboration.

The successful candidate is expected to:

- hold a Master degree in Animal Behaviour or a relevant discipline
- demonstrate strong interest in animal cognition/vocal communication
- design and implement observational data collection and field experiments
- possess solid background in statistics and data processing
- be committed for up to 24 months of fieldwork
- be fluent in English (oral and written)
- carry out (some) administrative and teaching assistance

The position is open from **1 June 2024** (negotiable) for a maximum duration of **4 years**. Salary is according to the pay scale of the Swiss National Science Foundation. The positions are available until filled; we will start reviewing applications **from 15 March 2024**.

To apply, please compile the following documents into a single PDF labeled 'YourSurname.pdf' and send it to megan.wyman@ieu.uzh.ch

- Cover letter (mentioning previous research and future research motivation)
- Curriculum vitae (including publication list and graduate and undergraduate degree certificates)
- Contact details of two scientific referees

For further information contact marta.manser@ieu.uzh.ch

We take gender balance and diversity seriously in hiring decisions.