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UNIVERSITÄT  
BERN**

The Division of Conservation Biology at the Institute of Ecology and Evolution, University of Bern, Switzerland, offers:

# 2 PhD positions

in conservation biology/restoration ecology

within our research programme:

## Restoring grassland biodiversity: from degraded, species-poor to integral stable-state ecosystems

The research programme was launched in 2018 with the objective to develop and evaluate the effects of current and novel grassland restoration methods for converting existing species-poor grasslands into biodiversity-rich, stable-state ecosystems. It comprises two modules: 1) a [lowland module](#) that experimentally tests pro-active restoration methods for hay meadows; and 2) a [mountain module](#) where passive restoration methods are investigated for enhancing the biodiversity of intensified grasslands.

The successful PhD candidates will work either in the lowland or in the mountain module. Both experiments include a proper control, are carried out at the field-scale, i.e. with a given restoration treatment being randomly attributed to a whole field, and benefit from baseline data. Candidates will collect field data in order to monitor biotic and abiotic environmental responses to the experimental manipulations using a series of metrics for biodiversity (plant and invertebrate species richness, diversity indices, functional traits, community analyses, etc.), as well as hay productivity and quality. This multiple taxonomic group approach is necessary to embrace the whole ecosystem complexity, unveil underlying mechanisms and recognise possible antagonistic responses. Ultimately, the goal is to deliver evidence-based optimal grassland restoration policy guidelines.

Candidate must hold a MSc degree, show a strong interest in agro-ecology and conservation, and master modern analytical techniques. Knowledge of grassland indicator taxa would be advantageous though not prerequisite. English literacy is important, while knowledge of German and French would represent a real asset, notably for dealing with farmers and authorities. Start: 1 May 2023 (or as soon as possible). Duration: 3–4 years. Salary according to [SNSF rules](#). The PhD student will have to contribute to teaching and will be in charge of some minor administrative duties.

Email a letter of motivation with CV, list of publications, summary of MSc thesis, as well as two references (name, institutional address, email and phone number) to [jean-yves.humbert@unibe.ch](mailto:jean-yves.humbert@unibe.ch).

**Application deadline: 6 March 2023. Interviews in Bern foreseen on 3 April 2023.**

Note that the offer is pending on positive decision from the Swiss National Science Foundation.