

## PRESS RELEASE

### **A master's degree in biodiversity conservation at the University of Neuchâtel**

**Neuchâtel, 28 February 2023. As of autumn 2023, the University of Neuchâtel proposes a unique new curriculum with the creation of an interfaculty Master in Biodiversity Conservation. Offered jointly by the Faculty of Sciences and the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, this programme will provide students with the tools to apprehend and analyse the protection of species and ecosystems from an interdisciplinary perspective, in order better to contribute to resolving this major environmental issue. Registration deadline: 30 April 2023.**

The scale of the crisis caused by the loss of biodiversity is alarming. At the global level, a quarter of all plant and animal species are threatened with extinction. Most ecosystems have been heavily modified and degraded, and the services they provide to societies are declining. The causes of this crisis are largely due to human activities: habitat destruction and degradation, overexploitation of resources, climate change, pollution and the introduction of invasive alien species.

A detailed analysis of the threats to biodiversity, as well as the realistic development of conservation strategies, must therefore be based on an approach that takes into account both the functioning of large human institutions - companies, administrations, charitable foundations, etc. - and that of organisms, species and ecosystems. The biological sciences must imperatively be backed up by knowledge in the human and social sciences in order to assess the problems in their globality and complexity.

Neuchâtel's new Master in Biodiversity Conservation will be taught in English. It is designed to train students in interdisciplinary inquiry, through a balanced curriculum that examines conservation from both biological (animals, plants and other organisms, as well as ecosystems) and socio-institutional (anthropology, economics, law, psychology) points of view.

In-class coursework will be accompanied by fieldwork as well as practical training in transversal scientific skills (scientific communication, quantitative and spatiotemporal data analysis) as they apply to biodiversity conservation. The master's thesis will focus on the analysis of actual conservation problems, from both research and professional perspectives.

Through coursework in the natural sciences, graduates will be trained to apprehend the diversity of living organisms (animals, plants, and other groups) and the ecosystems of which they are a part, and thus grasp the mechanisms behind changes in space and time. Their studies in the social sciences will prepare them to analyse existing conservation policies and programmes and to propose strategies for improved impact. The contacts established during their internships and master's thesis will make them directly employable in governmental agencies, NGOs and private companies active in environmental policymaking and project conception and management. In addition, the master's degree will qualify them for continued studies at the doctoral level if they wish to continue in fundamental or applied research.

The Master in Biodiversity Conservation is open to students with a Bachelor of Science (BSc) in biology, the natural/environmental sciences or biology-ethnology or with a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in the social sciences (anthropology, sociology, social psychology, human geography). Students who have followed another course of study must have basic training in biology and the social sciences, as well as a mastery of the basics of quantitative and statistical methods. Students without this preparation can follow a remedial course of study before or during the first year of the master's programme.

Due to the interfaculty nature of the training, students have the choice between a final degree entitled "Master of Science (MSc) in Biodiversity Conservation" or "Master of Arts (MA) in Biodiversity Conservation", depending on their choice of specialisation during coursework and for the master's thesis.

For more information:

Master in Biodiversity Conservation: <https://bit.ly/3Y5dUSE>

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