



Master thesis projects in Forest biodiversity research 2024

Biomass decomposition rates in relation to microclimatic stand conditions

You will investigate deadwood and litter decomposition rates above and belowground at 33 study sites in the Lägern forest in relation to microclimatic and soil-specific parameters.

Involves: fieldwork (40%), lab work (30%), data analysis (30%)

Approx. start time: April 2024

Duration: 6 months



Leaf herbivory in relation to vertical forest layer, light availability and nutrient composition

You will study leaf herbivory rates of beech and silver fir branches from the canopy and ground layer at 33 study sites in the Lägern forest in relation to light availability and leaf-nutrient composition.

Involves: fieldwork (10%), lab work (50%), data analysis (40%)

Approx. start time: June 2024

Duration: 6 months

Diversity and abundance of small mammals in relation to forest stand composition and age

You will collect data on the occurrence, diversity, and abundance of small mammals with a non-invasive, camera-based trap system at 33 study sites in the Lägern forest and relate them to stand composition, succession stage and seed availability.

Involves: fieldwork (30%), data analysis (70%)

Approx. start time: March 2024

Duration: 6 months



Project: All three theses are part of a larger project investigating the effects of structural and physiological forest attributes on biodiversity, multi-trophic interactions, and ecosystem functions across vertical forest layers. Link: www.wsl.ch/BEF-Laegern

Prerequisites: Bachelor's degree in biology, ecology, or environmental sciences; strong interest in ecosystem relationships; fluent in German and/or English; good organizational and exact working skills; eager to do field and lab work; driver's license, experience in statistics and R is advantageous and necessary.

Contacts: Kurt Bollmann and Jan Vigués Jorba, Eidg. Forschungsanstalt WSL, RU Biodiversität und Naturschutzbiologie, Zürcherstrasse 111, 8903 Birmensdorf, 044 739 24 11, kurt.bollmann@wsl.ch, jan.vigues@wsl.ch