UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

PhD position in evolutionary ecology

"Individual variation in age-specific reproductive success and survival in wild yellow-bellied marmots"

Understanding the causes and consequences of senescence, defined as declines in reproductive success and survival in old age, is a key but challenging aim in evolutionary ecology. It has recently been realised that the magnitude and relative timing of senescence can vary among individual population members, and that quantifying such individual variation is key to understanding the ecological and evolutionary causes and consequences of senescence.

This project will use 52 years of data from a wild population of yellow bellied marmots, where individuals have been marked, weighed and observed from birth to death, to quantify individual variation in survival and reproduction during late life, and to explore the quantitative genetic basis of and life-history consequences of this variation.

The student will be based within the dynamic Ecology research group at the University of Aberdeen. They will contribute to data collection through 2 summers of fieldwork at the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory, Colorado, USA, and then apply sophisticated statistical analyses to the long-term data. Full training in fieldwork and data analysis will be provided, providing a broad range of necessary skills for ecological research.

The PhD will be supervised by Dr Julien Martin (www.abdn.ac.uk/staffpages/julienmartin), Dr Jane Reid (www.abdn.ac.uk/staffpages/jane.reid) and Dr Daniel Blumstein (www.eeb.ucla.edu/Faculty/Blumstein/).

The PhD will start in October 2013 (but later starting would be considered). It will be funded by a NERC studentship (limited to UK nationals and UK residents) for 3.5 years.

For further enquiries about the project, please email me at julienmartin@abdn.ac.uk

To apply, apply online on the university website (http://www.abdn.ac.uk/postgraduate/apply.php) and send me an email. You should select a Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Marine Biology, to ensure that your application is passed to the correct College for processing.

The closing date for applications is 17 July 2013.

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