

Master Thesis Project

Assemblages of herbivorous insects on Mt. Schrankogel

As a part of ongoing research on climate change effects on alpine biota, an MSc thesis project is available on insects in the alpine and subnival zone. The aim is to characterize insect assemblages, with focus on herbivorous taxa, to understand:

- How do abundance, richness and biomass change with elevation (1800-2800 m)
- Can insect community patterns be related to vegetation characteristics
- How do community patterns match the incidence of herbivory in 58 plant species

Data on vegetation and herbivory already exist. The MSc student is expected to address the animal ecology part.

Tasks to be done:

- Sweep-net sampling across multiple sites (twice per site) in late June to August 2023
- Elaboration of samples (sorting to trophic guilds, species identification in case of herbivores, determination of biomass)
- Statistical data analysis

For field work the MSc student will be based on Amberger Hütte (<https://www.ambergerhuette.at>) at 2100 m. The work requires physical fitness and willingness to spend some weeks in an alpine environment characterized by steep slopes, with often times unpredictable weather. Some basic knowledge of insect diversity is required. Experience with (elementary) statistical methodology is welcome.

The thesis project is suitable for MSc students in ecology, zoology, or conservation biology.

Interested? Please contact Prof. Konrad Fiedler (konrad.fiedler@univie.ac.at) or Prof. Stefan Dullinger (stefan.dullinger@univie.ac.at).

