

2-year postdoc in large-herbivore ecology, trophic rewilding, and novel ecosystems

The Department of Biology, Aarhus University invites applications for a 2-year postdoc position in **large-herbivore ecology, trophic rewilding and novel ecosystems**, with a specific focus on **alien and feral ungulates**.

The position is part of the Center for Ecological Dynamics in a Novel Biosphere (ECONOVO), a Danish National Research Foundation Center of Excellence. ECONOVO studies how global change is reshaping biodiversity and ecosystem functioning, and how emerging novel ecosystems can be steered towards better outcomes for biodiversity and people.

Novel ecosystems arise when species composition, ecological dynamics or abiotic conditions differ from recent historical baselines, for example due to climate change, biological invasions, land-use change and trophic downgrading. Alien and feral ungulates are important components of many such systems. They may act as ecosystem engineers through grazing, browsing, trampling, dispersal and nutrient redistribution, but their effects are often context-dependent and socially controversial.

This postdoc will contribute to ECONOVO Research Theme 2: **Complexity Restoration**, which tests whether restoration of ecological complexity can enhance biodiversity in novel ecosystems. The project will ask when and where alien and feral ungulates enhance or reduce vegetation heterogeneity, ecosystem complexity and biodiversity.

Expected start date and duration of employment

This is a 2-year position from 1 December 2026 or as soon possible.

Job description

The postdoc will investigate ecological effects of alien and feral ungulates in novel ecosystems. The project will focus on effects on vegetation structure, open-closed habitat mosaics, woody vegetation dynamics, disturbance patches, dispersal processes, and multi-taxon biodiversity.

The work will integrate synthesis and field studies, integrating existing biodiversity and restoration datasets, ungulate trait and occurrence data, camera-trap data, GIS, and remote-sensing indicators of vegetation structure, biomass, phenology, and landscape heterogeneity. A key focus will be assessing when alien or feral ungulates function as biodiversity-enhancing ecosystem engineers versus when they contribute to degradation or biotic homogenization.

The geographic focus will be determined in collaboration with the appointed candidate. Relevant systems may include European restoration and rewilding landscapes and comparative systems in the Global South, for example in East Africa, South Asia, South America or southern Africa.

The postdoc is expected to co-develop and lead the project and sub-projects in dialogue with, and supported by, the senior scientist in the team and collaborators. Moreover, the postdoc is expected to contribute to collaborative ECONOVO research activities and take part in relevant outreach and knowledge exchange. The main focus of the position is research.

Your profile

Applicants should have a PhD in ecology, biodiversity science, conservation biology, macroecology, restoration ecology, invasion ecology, remote-sensing ecology, or a related field, or have submitted their PhD thesis for assessment before the application deadline.

Applicants should demonstrate advanced quantitative ecological abilities and a sincere interest in large-herbivore ecology, alien and feral ungulates, trophic rewilding, and how biodiversity responds to changing ecosystems. Relevant experience may include the following areas:

- large-herbivore or ungulate ecology
- trophic, rewilding, restoration, invasion or novel ecosystem ecology
- vegetation ecology, plant community ecology or multi-taxon biodiversity analyses
- analysis of field, camera-trap, trait, citizen-science, spatial or remote-sensing data
- GIS, spatial modelling, remote sensing, drone data or LiDAR

Application Deadline:
28 June 2026

Institute/Faculty:
Department of Biology

Faculty:
Faculty of Natural Sciences

Academic contact person:
Jens-Christian Svenning
Professor, Centerleder
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+4528992304

Vacant positions:
1

Number of months:
24

Hours per week:
37

Expected date of accession:
01/12/2026

- macroecological, meta-analytical or synthesis approaches
- fieldwork in restoration landscapes, protected areas, pastoral systems, savannas, woodlands, grasslands or other human-modified ecosystems

Experience with ungulates, other large herbivores, and vegetation ecology, and experience working in or a keen interest in ecosystems of the Global South is welcomed. The chosen candidate should demonstrate effective teamwork abilities, a publication record appropriate for their career stage, and clear written and verbal English communication.

Application materials

The application must be in English and include:

- motivation letter, including a brief outline of the applicant's ideas for developing the postdoc project within the framework described above
- CV
- full publication list
- educational documentation, including copies of Master's and PhD degree diplomas, in English or Danish
- contact information for 2–3 academic references

Who we are

Project PIs and collaborators

Professor Jens-Christian Svenning is the main PI for this specific project within ECONOVO, with Associate Professor Robert Buitenwerf and Assistant Professor Ninad Mungi as co-PIs. The postdoc will join ECONOVO and the Section for Ecoinformatics & Biodiversity at the Department of Biology, Aarhus University.

ECONOVO and the Section for Ecoinformatics & Biodiversity provide a highly international and interdisciplinary research environment with deep knowledge in macroecology, rewilding, megafauna ecology, vegetation dynamics, ecological novelty, biodiversity theory, remote sensing and global change biology. The senior scientist team offers complementary strengths in trophic rewilding and megafauna ecology, remote sensing and vegetation dynamics, and large-herbivore–vegetation interactions in novel and human-modified ecosystems, including Global South contexts.

The postdoc will have opportunities to collaborate with ECONOVO researchers, international associates, and external partners working on restoration, rewilding, invasive species, large herbivores, and biodiversity in Europe and the Global South.

What we offer

The selected candidate will have access to:

- an engaging and friendly research environment, encouraging open dialogue within and between assorted research disciplines
- close collaboration with researchers working on ecological novelty, biodiversity, rewilding, vegetation dynamics, large herbivores and remote sensing
- a working environment with close working relations, network activities among early career scientists and social activities
- opportunities to develop an independent research profile within a major international research center
- relevant research infrastructure, data, networks and field-study opportunities
- a professional, international workplace emphasizing collaboration, equality, and work–life balance

Place of work and area of employment

The place of employment and work is the Center for Ecological Dynamics in a Novel Biosphere (ECONOVO) and the Section for Ecoinformatics & Biodiversity, Department of Biology, Aarhus University, Ny Munkegade 116, DK-8000 Aarhus C, Denmark.

About the Department

The Department of Biology hosts research programs and teaching curricula that cover all major biological sub-disciplines. The Department provides a supportive and informal research environment with a long history of international collaboration.

The working language is English, and we welcome applications from all genders and all backgrounds. Aarhus University offers relocation support and services for international researchers and accompanying families. The campus is located close to the city center of Aarhus, Denmark.

Contact information

Applicants seeking further information are invited to contact Professor Jens-Christian Svenning, phone +45 28992304, e-mail: svenning@bio.au.dk.

Deadline

Applications must be received no later than 28 June 2026.

Application procedure

Shortlisting is used. This means that after the deadline for applications – and with the assistance from the assessment committee chairman, and the appointment committee if necessary, – the head of department selects the candidates to be evaluated. All applicants will be notified whether or not their applications have been sent to an expert assessment committee for evaluation. The selected applicants will be informed about the composition of the committee, and each applicant is given the opportunity to comment on the part of the assessment that concerns him/her self.

Letter of reference

If you want a referee to upload a letter of reference on your behalf, please state the referee's contact information when you submit your application. We strongly recommend that you make an agreement with the person in question before you enter the referee's contact information, and that you ensure that the referee has enough time to write the letter of reference before the application deadline. Unfortunately, it is not possible to ensure that letters of reference received after the application deadline will be taken into consideration.

If you wish to add a referee **after** you have submitted your application, you must send this person's details (name, job title, place of work, and email address) as well as the name of the position you have applied for to: HR.Nattech@au.dk

Formalities and salary range

Natural Sciences refers to the [Ministerial Order on the Appointment of Academic Staff at Danish Universities under the Danish Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation](#).

The application must be in English and include a curriculum vitae, degree certificate, a complete list of publications, a statement of future research plans and information about research activities, teaching portfolio and verified information on previous teaching experience (if any). Guidelines for applicants can be found [here](#).

Appointment shall be in accordance with the collective labour agreement between the Danish Ministry of Taxation and the Danish Confederation of Professional Associations. Further information on qualification requirements and job content may be found in the [Memorandum on Job Structure for Academic Staff at Danish Universities](#).

Salary depends on seniority as agreed between the Danish Ministry of Taxation and the Confederation of Professional Associations.

Aarhus University's ambition is to be an attractive and inspiring workplace for all and to foster a culture in which each individual has opportunities to thrive, achieve and develop. We view equality and diversity as assets, and we welcome all applicants.

Research activities will be evaluated in relation to actual research time. Thus, we encourage applicants to specify periods of leave without research activities, in order to be able to subtract these periods from the span of the scientific career during the evaluation of scientific productivity.

Aarhus University offers a broad variety of services for international researchers and accompanying families, including relocation service and career counselling to expat partners. Read more [here](#). Please find more information about entering and working in Denmark [here](#).

Aarhus University also offers a Junior Researcher Development Programme targeted at career development for postdocs at AU. You can read more about it [here](#).

At the Faculty of Natural Science at Aarhus University, we strive to support our scientific staff in their career development. We focus on competency development and career clarification and want to make your opportunities transparent. On [our website](#), you can find information on all types of scientific positions, as well as the entry criteria we use when assessing candidates. You can also read more about how we can assist you in your career planning and development.

The application must be submitted via Aarhus University's recruitment system, which can be accessed under the job advertisement on Aarhus University's website.

Aarhus University

Aarhus University is an academically diverse and research-intensive university with a strong commitment to high-quality research and education and the development of society nationally and globally. The university offers an inspiring research and teaching environment to its 37,000 students (FTEs) and 8.700 employees and has an annual revenue of EUR 1.106 billion. Learn more at www.international.au.dk/