**PhD position Pelagic fish in the Wadden Sea (1.0 FTE)**

**Job description**

Wageningen University & Research is looking for a PhD student in the area of marine ecology.

This project aims to study the value of the Wadden Sea for schooling pelagic fish and how different management strategies influence this value. Pelagic fish contribute substantially to the total fish biomass in the Wadden Sea. Also, they play an important role for fish-eating birds and sea mammals. Despite their importance for the Wadden Sea food web, pelagic fish are currently underrepresented in Wadden Sea research. This project is envisaged to fill this knowledge gap.

In the project you will study the seasonal inflow and outflow of pelagic fish through tidal inlets using several techniques: stationary acoustic devices in the inlets, stow net and zooplankton sampling, and acoustic surveys. These techniques and detailed analyses of fish tissue using microchemistry and diet analyses will provide insight into seasonal use of the Wadden Sea. In addition, the data will allow revealing food web relations and the functioning of the Wadden Sea as spawning and feeding areas for fish.

We will study how sluice management affects pelagic diadromous species and explore management strategies that help diadromous species overcome sluice barriers. Potential benefits of area closures will be evaluated which may feed into management advice on fisheries closures. We will also closely work together with the program ‘Wij en Wadvogels’ (another Waddenfonds program) in which several breeding areas for fish-eating birds are constructed and breeding success will be monitored.

Your research will result in clear recommendations for managers regarding the management and development of Wadden Sea habitats for pelagic fish.

This PhD position is embedded within the “Swimway” project, which is funded by Waddenfonds, the Ministry of LNV, Rijkswaterstaat and the three northern Dutch provinces. The research will be conducted in close collaboration with Rijks Universiteit Groningen, Wageningen Marine Research/Wageningen University, the Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research, the Waddenvereniging and Sportvisserij Nederland. In this project, several PhD students will closely collaborate and address different questions regarding Wadden Sea fish and nature management. Other collaborations will involve a broad range of stakeholders in the Wadden Sea area, including NGO’s and fisheries organisations.

**We ask**

• you hold a MSc degree (or will graduate before appointment date) in Biology, Ecology, or Environmental Science
• you have experience with fieldwork and are not prone to sea sickness
• you have a proactive, inquisitive, enthusiastic, creative and self-reliant mind-set
• you are a team player, willing to work with a diverse group of researchers, technicians, and project stakeholders
• you are motivated to disseminate results to scientific peers and a broad audience
• you have strong quantitative skills
• you have an excellent command of the English language (oral and written)
• you have the ability to work independently in a challenging environment

**We offer**

you a challenging job for a period of 4 years at an international leading organization. The position is available within Wageningen University & Research at Wageningen Marine Research and you will be based in IJmuiden. The research will be carried out in close collaboration with the Aquaculture and Fisheries group at Wageningen University. The organization has good and flexible employment conditions, including good education and training facilities for PhD students.

**Employment basis:**

Appointment for 38 hours per week for a period of 1.5 years with extension of 2.5 years after successful evaluation. The gross salary is in according to the Collective Labour Agreement of Wageningen University and first year salary is € 2.266,-per month rising to € 2.879,- in the fourth year.

**Additional information**

Additional information about the vacancy can be obtained from: Dr Jan Jaap Poos (JanJaap.Poos@wur.nl; +31317487189) or Dr Ingrid Tulp (ingrid.tulp@wur.nl; +31317487112)

 For further information about working at Wageningen University & Research, take a look at http://www.wur.nl/en/Jobs.htm

Closing date for applications: 8 January 2020 24:00pm. Interviews are scheduled for 20 January in IJmuiden.

**The organization**

Wageningen University & Research Aquaculture and Fisheries (WUR-AFI) aims to explore the potential of aquatic animals and aquatic ecosystems for sustainable fish production through academic research and training. (https://www.wur.nl/en/Research-Results/Chair-groups/Animal-Sciences/Aquaculture-and-Fisheries/About-us.htm)

**Wageningen University & Research**

Delivering a substantial contribution to the quality of life. That's our focus – each and every day. Within our domain, healthy food and living environment, we search for answers to issues affecting society – such as sustainable food production, climate change and alternative energy. Of course, we don’t do this alone. Every day, 6,500 people work on ‘the quality of life’, turning ideas into reality, on a global scale.