

Dear ----,

I am writing to apply to Université Pierre et Marie Curie-UPMC, for the PhD project regarding maternal effects on natural bird populations.

In 2008, I graduated from Università degli Studi di Padova (Italy) with a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology. Following my first degree, I remained at the same university, where I will receive in October a Master of Science degree in Evolutionary Biology.

Through my years of studying, I became fascinated with ecology and environmental issues. After taking my high school diploma, in summer 2004, I worked as a volunteer in Riserva Naturale Isola di Lampedusa to support the local team in protecting sea turtles during reproductive season and educating tourists to respectful and sustainable behaviors. At a camp for applied Eco-Ethnology at Parco Nazionale delle Foreste Casentinesi, I studied the impact of the institution of natural reserves on local populations. Through these activities, I became passionate about preservation of our environment.

I completed my Bachelor's thesis on animal physiology, studying adaptations of a seawater crustacean (*Upogebia pusilla*) to lower oxygen environments. The three month period field work in the lagoon of Chioggia (Venezia, Italy) was really satisfying for me, as I learned to collect animals and create adequate living conditions for them in the marine stations, as well as manipulate them with the right care. During Master's degree, I excelled at animal ethology where I learned how to approach an experimental issue and find the right methodologies to handle it.

In the meantime, I attended a two-year Master Course in Science Communication at ISAS (International School for Advanced Studies), Trieste (Italy). This experience not only provided me the opportunity to practice different forms of scientific communication, but also developed my capacity to interact with the public as well as scientists, journalists, scientific and governmental institutions. Through these studies, I learned how to redact articles, how to conduct inquiries and interviews.

I acquired skills in audio and video editing, as well as guidelines for realizing editorial products. We experience the process of event organizing by Brain Scan, a public meeting dealing with application of brain scanning techniques to consumers for marketing purposes. I got especially involved in the course regarding scientific museums, learning how establish new exhibitions and working as a scientific animator for two years in the Genova Science Festival.

At present, I am in an Erasmus exchange program at the Université Paris-Sud XI, where I am conducting my Master thesis project on populations dynamics of sea

turtles, at Department Ecologie, Biodiversité et Evolution.

This experience made me acquire a deeper appreciation of the different perspectives in ecology, as I learned new ecological modeling approaches. I am working in R software environment on a statistical model describing turtles reproductive patterns, readjusting it by search of new parameters by optimization. Attending extracurricular classes, I learned how to apply the R language on the analysis of biological and ecological data.

Most of all, I had the opportunity to work with students and researchers from all over Europe, who kindled my enthusiasm about prosecuting my research experience with a PhD program. As I realized with great appreciation how this experience has been enriching for me, I chose to search a program in a foreign country.

Not only I appreciate your topic of research for its location, plainly. Moreover, this project puts together some of my favorite topics: ecology, animal physiology and ethology. In addition, the challenging opportunity to work in a prestigious institution like Université Pierre et Marie Curie, far from being a defect, has given me further motivation.

Given my record of solid academic achievement and strong interest in your research program, I am certain that, if given the opportunity, I could excel. In addition to my academic qualifications, I am confident that my interdisciplinary and international background will provide new valuable contribution to your research team.

Thank you for considering my application, and I look forward to your acceptance.

Yours sincerely,