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Career Perspectives

with a PhD in Natural & Life Sciences



Dr. Vanessa Marzetz

Doctorate:

Biology (Aquatic Ecology), University of Greifswald, 2024

Current Position:

Biologist, Department of Environmental Health Protection -
Bathing Water Hygiene;
State Office for Health and Social Affairs Berlin

What does your professional life look like?

It changes depending if it is the official “bathing season” or not: During season it is mostly replying to emails from the public that have questions or concerns about the lake/ river water quality, evaluating the bi-weekly lab data, sending the data to the district health administrations, and making sure the data and evaluation are publicly available on our website. Sometimes unplanned events happen and need to be accounted for: storm events, algae blooms etc. Off season the general information needs to be evaluated and updated. The data has to be reported to the EU, and we communicate and work with different interest groups and research institutions at national levels.

What motivates you about your job?

Feeling that my work does have a direct impact on people, so that they are and feel safe going swimming at the official bathing sites at the lakes and rivers of Berlin. Additionally, by reviewing and identifying potential risks to the bathing water quality the whole environment will be protected (e.g. making sure toilets are available). Afterall, I am an ecologist.

What role do skills gained in your PhD studies play in your job?

Some of the factual knowledge gained during my PhD is needed for understanding the connection between different factors influencing the natural water quality for swimming. This then has to be communicated to the public, so science communication is another part. And finally, being able to work project based and sometimes stick to deadlines.

What skills do you need now that you did not learn during your PhD studies?

Basically, everything regarding public administration and the strict rules/ workflow. During my PhD of course there were rules, and there was a workflow to my experiments, but these were less externally driven and more flexible. In this job I had to get used to accounting for the division of labour, vacation planning, and seasonality. But this is also good, because I know that when I am gone for vacation or if I am sick, the most important work will still be done by my colleagues.

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