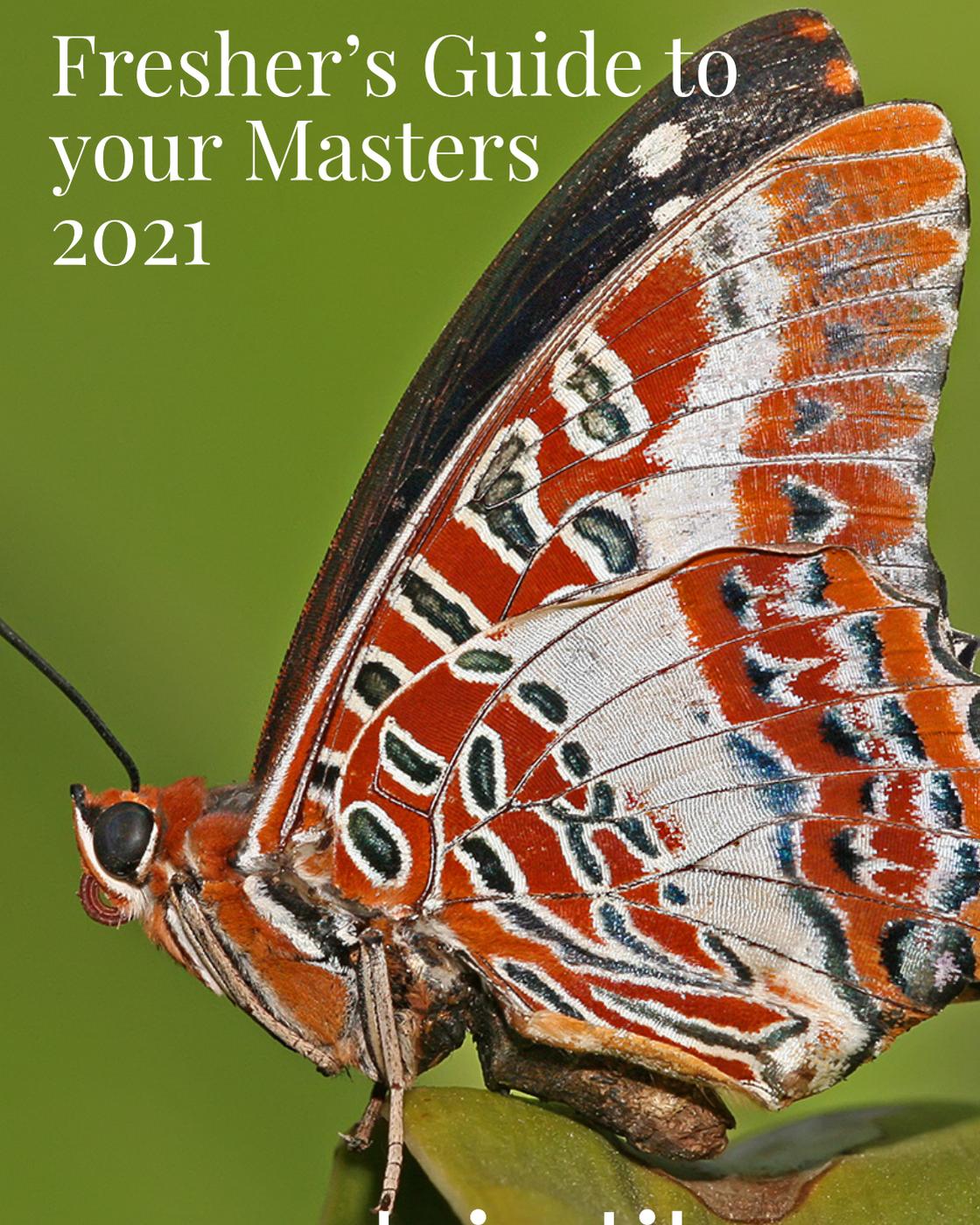


Fresher's Guide to your Masters 2021



biotikum

Hello and welcome!

We are happy to welcome you as a new Biology MSc. student to ETH Zürich. Soon you will be starting the next chapter of your studies at a new university and maybe even in a new city or country. To help you navigate these changes, and start your Masters as seamlessly as possible, the VeBiS (biology student association at ETH Zurich) has for the first time published this guide for Biology MSc. students, where you can find loads of information about ETH and our association. Below you can, among other things, learn where to find ETH canteens, shops and sports facilities, what events are happening where, and which apps and websites may help you out with your studies and your free time.



The change from BSc. to MSc. studies, from one university to another and even a country to another can be stressful in the beginning. But finding people to connect with and getting into a new groove will happen faster than you think. In case you need help or just want some people to chat with, the VeBiS is here to help. After all, this new life experience should also be enjoyable ;) We wish you the best of luck with your studies, and also a lot of perseverance,

Léa Le Bars and Paula Düllmann, editors in chief of the Biotikum

P.S. Our little mascot donkey Hewette would also like to extend a warm welcome to you. She would also like to remind you that even if your studies require a lot of work, it is now more than ever important to take a break from time to time. Too much stress isn't useful for anyone. Instead do a little sport, read the Biotikum (our student association newspaper) or go give a hug to your favourite donkey plushie.



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What is the VeBiS?

The VeBiS is the biology student association at ETH Zurich (in German: Verein der Biologiestudierenden). It provides a link between the biology students, the VSETH (the ETH student association), the D-BIOL (department of biology) and the ETH rectorate. Furthermore, the VeBiS is a place to meet new people, take part in cool events, and get involved in, outside of your studies. In this guide, you can learn more about the people involved in the VeBiS, their roles and responsibilities, and how you can participate.

The VeBiS Board

The VeBiS board is elected by VeBiS members during the VeBiS general assembly (MV, Mitglieder Versammlung) at the beginning of each semester. The board currently consists of 12 members, each with specific responsibilities. Below you can find what the different departments do and who currently holds which position (some of this will change at the beginning of the next semester).



President – Carina Fluri

As the head of the student association, the VeBiS president has many different responsibilities. For one, they coordinate the other members of the board and make sure that everything is on the right track. They prepare the board meetings and take part in meetings of the VSETH and ETH as well as in a few councils and exterior events. In addition to this, they are in close contact with the biology department, some of the professors and lecturers, the bio-alumni and the rectorate. They are responsible for a large number of events and keep an overview of what is going on at the VeBiS. Should you have any questions, they are one of the first people to contact.



Vice President - Viviana Preianò

The vice president assists the president and organises the general assembly (MV). Should the president for some reason not be available, the vice president takes over all current responsibilities of the president. Thus the vice president is a sort of rescue president in emergencies and a helping hand for the rest of the board.



Party – Viviana Preianò

The party commission organizes multiple parties each semester. Many of these are a collaboration with the student organizations of other departments, as well as the VSETH. For example the halloween party, end of winter/summer semester party (WiNaFe/SoNaFe) and fresher's party (ESF, Erstifest). If you would like to help organise these and other parties, feel free to contact the head of the party department. In the party department you can let your imagination run wild. The next party will hopefully be the fresher's party (the biggest party in German-speaking Switzerland). We hope to see you on the dance floor or at the APV-VeBiS bar!

Treasury - Julia Beckmann

The most important duties of the treasurer are administrative tasks. They keep an overview of all VeBiS finances, pay bills, and make sure that the rest of the board members don't exceed their budget - and raps their knuckles if they do.



Events - Bastian Ksinsik



As soon as you see a large number of biology students doing something together, the events commission are most likely to be the ones responsible. One such event is the Semesterapéro, organised once per semester, where students of the VeBiS as well as all biology professors are invited. It is the perfect place to have a chat with a professor outside of classes.

Another event organized by the Kulturis, as we call the members of the events commission, is the Stamm on every first Wednesday of the month. It takes place at the Loch-Ness (student bar on the Höggerberg) and is an evening to play boardgames with and get to know other biology students. Other activities and outings where the VeBiS takes part, are nearly always co-organised by the Kulturis. The winter bar, gaming events and many more are organised by the head and members of the events commission.

Student Administration - Christopher Weingarten

The student administration department of the VeBiS takes care of all events and opportunities relevant to your studies. They are not only a person to contact in case of questions about the studies, they also frequently interact with the student representatives and lecturers, to defend the wishes and interests of the students. With events such as the fresher's day and the Göttiabend, this department tries to make the beginning of your studies at ETH easier for you. Additionally this department supplies goodies during the semester.



IT – Elina Jansone

The IT manager is responsible for running the VeBiS website and making sure that all additional learning material, as well as old issues of the Biotikum (our student magazine), are available. On our website, you can also find job and internship opportunities (under News and Offers), as well as infos about upcoming VeBiS events.



University Politics (HoPo) – Teresa Horak, Klaus Gröbner and Joel Egger

The heads of the university politics department spend their time representing biology students at the department and teaching conferences of the D-BIOL as well as representing the VeBiS at different VSETH councils, such as the study association council (FR) or the members' council (MR). They represent the opinion of biology students in university politics matters, in order to impact studies at ETH and encourage interdisciplinary exchange. They are assisted by the members of the university politics commission. Should you want to have a look at the inner workings of ETH, be that at the D-BIOL or ETH wide level, this commission is the perfect place to start.



Communication – Celine Kalberer



Internal but especially external communication of the VeBiS should run smoothly. All the info about our events and decisions in academic policy needs to somehow reach those who are interested. The head of communication takes care of this, among other things, by regularly sending out the VeBiS newsletter with the most important events and decisions from the VeBiS headquarter. They manage the VeBiS social media accounts such as Facebook (VeBiS) and Instagram (@instavebis and @vebis_hewette), write the protocols for the board meetings and order the VeBiS goodies.

Biotikum – Léa Le Bars and Paula Düllmann

The Biotikum is the VeBiS magazine. It contains many interesting articles about biological and non-biological topics, information about VeBiS events, memes, quizzes and much more. The editor(s) in chief coordinate the work of the editorial department, from finding topics to the writing and correction process as well as the distribution of the finished issue. Furthermore they are responsible for writing the Freshers Guide.

The Biotikum is currently written mostly in German, due to this being the first language of most of the authors, but we welcome any contributions in English. Please contact us if you are interested :)



VeBiS commissions

Some responsibilities in the VeBiS are too broad for one or two members of the board to manage. For this reason we have different commissions, the members of which assist the head(s) of the respective departments. Being a member of a commission is an excellent opportunity to take an active role in the student organisation and a good point of entry, should you want to be head of your own commission within the VeBiS one day.

To become a member of a commission, please email the commission head:

- University politics commission – hopo@vebis.ch
- Events commission – kultur@vebis.ch
- Party commission – party@vebis.ch
- Biotikum editorial department – redaktion@vebis.ch

You can also get in touch during the general assembly (MV) at the start of the semester.

What else does the VeBiS do?

Teaching Commission of the D-BIOL (UK, Unterrichtskommission)

The UK concerns teaching in the D-BIOL and serves as quality control for the different courses. The members include lecturers, D-BIOL staff and student representatives.

Departmental Conference of the D-BIOL (DK, Departementskommission)

The departmental conference is the highest governing body of the biology department and is held twice per Semester. During the DK student representatives are elected, study program regulations adopted and teaching assignments issued.

Council of Members of the VSETH (MR, Mitgliederrat)

The council of members is the highest governing body of the VSETH and consists of delegates from the student organisations and VSETH departments. The council meets three times a year to sign off on budgets and invoices and to elect the VSETH board members, their substitutes and heads of VSETH departments.

ETH campuses

Your classes at ETH will mostly take place at one of two locations: the Zentrum (at the city centre) and the Hönggerberg (abbreviated Höngg). Below you will find all kinds of information about the two campuses.

At both locations

ETH Store – The ETH Store (at Hönggerberg or in the main building in the Zentrum) is one of the easiest and cheapest ways to get new books for your classes, as well as a wide selection of stationery. For the most part the items are cheaper than what you would find elsewhere. If you are however looking to buy books secondhand we also recommend the VSETH book market (<https://bb.vseth.ethz.ch>, please note that this website is in German but you can still find English books).

ATMs and Post Office – At the Zentrum you can find both opposite the cafeteria below the Polyterasse. At the Hönggerberg campus both are in the HIL building.

Parties – Both at the Zentrum and Hönggerberg, student parties are frequently hosted. At the Zentrum they are held in the CAB building (StuZ² bar, and Papperlappub) and at the Hönggerberg in the HXE building (LochNess Pub). Such parties are usually great fun and an excellent way to get to know people from other study programs. The three largest parties each year are the fresher's party, the WiNaFe and the SoNaFe. Therefore, party hard!

Cinema – Every Tuesday evening, the VSETH and VSUZH (student organisation of University of Zürich) organise a free film viewing in the CAB (Zentrum). Each semester there is an overall theme. The movies shown are often arthouse or indie films. Furthermore, for 2-3 days at the end of the spring semester, there is an open-air cinema on the piazza in front of the HCI building (Hönggerberg) with a bar, barbecue and popcorn, organised by the FLiK (Freiluftlichtbildschau-Kommission). This year, the event had to be postponed and will now happen at the beginning of the autumn semester instead.

ETH Link – The ETH Link is the free bus service between the Zentrum and Hönggerberg campus. It usually leaves at X:14, X:34 and X:54 from Zentrum to Höngg and vice versa and takes about 15 min. The first and last bus of the day leave from/arrive at Zürich main station. Please consider that at certain times the busses can be very full and it may be more comfortable to take public transport via Milchbuck (even if this takes a bit longer).

Welcome letter from ETH coaching and counselling

Dear Students,

Welcome to ETH Zurich and welcome to your Master's degree programme! You are about to enter an academic system that is probably different from the one you are used to. This is exciting, but can also be challenging. Should you occasionally struggle with matters of daily student life or personal issues, Counselling & Coaching [1] of ETH Student Services is here for you.

We support you in your onboarding process [2] at ETH as well as during your studies. We offer confidential one-to-one counselling and coaching sessions, events and workshops, tools for self-reflection, possibilities of tutoring and more.

Professional support can help you to deal with and overcome problems. Visit our website [3]. We are here to accompany you through the different stages of your studies and wish you every success!



[1]: <https://ethz.ch/students/en/advice/beratung-coaching.html>

[2]: www.ethz.ch/master-checkin

[3]: www.ethz.ch/counselling-coaching

Important dates this semester:

20th of September: Fresher's day and start of the semester: classes only start on the following day

3rd of October: final date for course enrollment

24th of December: last day of classes

24th of January to 18th of February: exam session

VeBiS-events:

Every semester the VeBiS organises many events, sometimes together with other student organisations. Because of the pandemic we do not yet know to what extent we can hold these events, which is why the following only lists a small portion of all planned events. Please be aware that details may still change:

General assembly (MV) - 5th of October

At the MV all biology students confirm the budget of the VeBiS for the following semester and elect new board members, as well as new members for the VeBiS department's commissions.

Master Götti-evening - 11th of October

Meet biology master students at the Loch Ness (HXE building), ask questions and have a drink. Everyone who wants to can meet a Götti (Swiss-German for godparent) with whom they can stay in contact with during the semester for tips and additional questions.

Stamm events

Come and enjoy an evening of board games, snacks and drinks. Stamm events are usually held on the first Wednesday of the week at the Loch Ness (HXE building).

Useful websites

ETH-intern

adressen.ethz.ch – entry to ETH buildings with your ETH card
Your ETH card gives you access to ETH buildings (such as the HCI) outside official opening hours. In order to do this you need to activate your ETH card on the website above and decide on a PIN which you will then need to enter at the terminal next to the door after holding your card to it.

biol.ethz.ch – Department of Biology

gastro.ethz.ch – Canteen website

idesnx.ethz.ch – Download computer programs for academic use
ETH offers certain computer programs with academic uses (such as MS Office, Matlab and many more) for free.

mail.ethz.ch – ETH-Mail-Login
The Outlook based ETH e-mail platform. Here you can check all emails for your academic mail address ([NETHZ-Accountname]@student.ethz.ch).

mystudies.ethz.ch – enroll in the next semester and classes, and other administrative stuff for your studies
Here you can enroll in classes, change your learning agreement, download your timetable, check exam results, etc...

passwort.ethz.ch – ETH account management
To change the password of your NETHZ-Login and manage your study mail.

personen.ethz.ch – personnel and email search

rauminfo.ethz.ch – room map

sslvpn.ethz.ch – VPN to get access to the ETH network from anywhere
With the software on this website you can access the ETH intranet from anywhere. This also gives you free access to many fee-based scientific journals (Nature, Science, etc.) and databases.

vvz.ethz.ch – ETH course catalogue
Here you can find all official information about ETH classes: when, where (exercise units included), links to video recordings of the lectures and information about the exam (e.g. what tools are allowed during the exam).

webprint.ethz.ch – printing at ETH
Each semester you get a free credit of 18 CHF to print lecture material from the printers in many (not all!) ETH buildings, using your ETH card. Should this not be enough, you can recharge your card at <https://idn.ethz.ch>. For this it is very important that you are either using ETH wifi or the VPN whilst opening the webpage.

VSETH/websites for students

vseth.ch – organisation of ETH students

vebis.ch – our Homepage
Here, we share infos and registration for upcoming events, course summaries, old exams, etc.. Make yourself a free account to be up to date :)

asvz.ch – university sports organisation

projektneptun.ch – discounts for students for electronic devices (i.e computers, monitors...) at the start of the semester

Others

seven25-travelcard.ch – railcard with which all trains in Switzerland (incl. public transport) are free from 7 pm to 5 am for people under the age of 25

online.fahrplan.zvv.ch – Zürich public transport

swissbib.ch – to borrow books

usgang.ch – parties in Zürich

Useful Apps

EduApp



Edu

Some lecturers use the ETH EduApp during classes for polls (“Clicker-questions”). Semesterfeedback for some lectures are also conducted via this app. It’s also very useful to see your timetable, the ETH link timetable, a list of workplaces for students as well as a campus map with a search function. Should something happen, all ETH emergency numbers can quickly be called via the app.

ETH Zürich

This app has a few useful features. Most important for students are the interactive map (similar to the EduApp), as well as the list of all ETH canteens/cafés and their menus that day. Under «My Meals» you can create a personalised list, for instance to only see the student prices or only vegetarian menus.



ASVZ



As an ETH student, you have access to an enormous variety of sports classes and equipment. This app lists the schedule of all upcoming classes and can be used to enroll in sports classes or book time slots at the gym. The time table can be personalized to show only certain venues, times and of course only your favourite sports. This filter is especially useful for the venues, as you are otherwise shown classes taking place in Wädenswil or Winterthur (which are about 20 km outside of Zürich).

Polybox

ETH offers every student 50 GB cloud space (comparable to Dropbox), the contents of which can easily be shared with other ETH members. You can access this via the app or via www.polybox.ethz.ch.24



TooGoodToGo



For this app, restaurants and food shops work together and make food which would otherwise have to be thrown away available for take away at a cheaper price. If you have no idea what to cook or don’t feel like cooking, this is a nice alternative.

Todoist



The first few weeks at a new university or maybe even in a new country can be challenging on both an academic and organisational level. Todoist is an app which helps you organise your to-do list and free space in your head for more important things (i.e. coursework). Once you get used to it, this app helps you avoid spending time being annoyed about forgotten deadlines or trying to remember that other thing you still needed to do.

Twint

More and more (Swiss) banks offer Twint as a payment possibility. Similarly to a credit card you enter a PIN code, and then you can wire money to any other Twint user. For students this is useful to settle debts quickly when no one has any cash on them. Twint is also a payment option in most shops in Zurich.



Leo, DeepL etc...



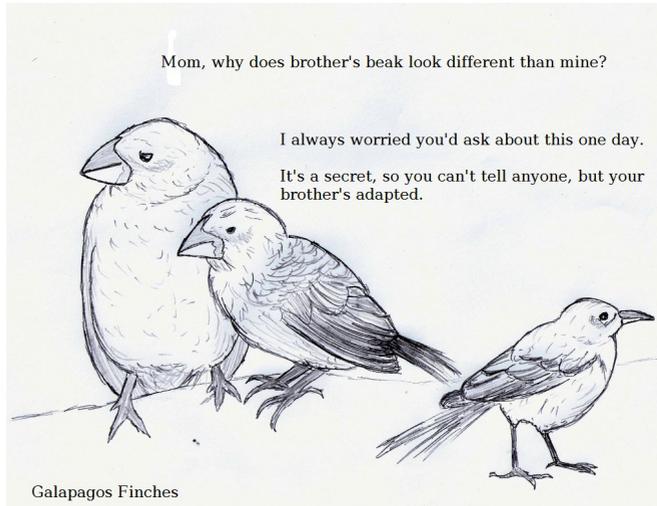
If you are not a native German speaker, translation apps such as these can be a lifesaver in situations where information only exists in German.

SwissCovid & Covid Certificate app

SwissCovid is the official contact tracing app for COVID-19, issued by the Swiss government. Covid Cert lets you carry your Swiss covid certificate (or recognized foreign equivalent) as a digital QR code. You will need it to enter events with large numbers of people.



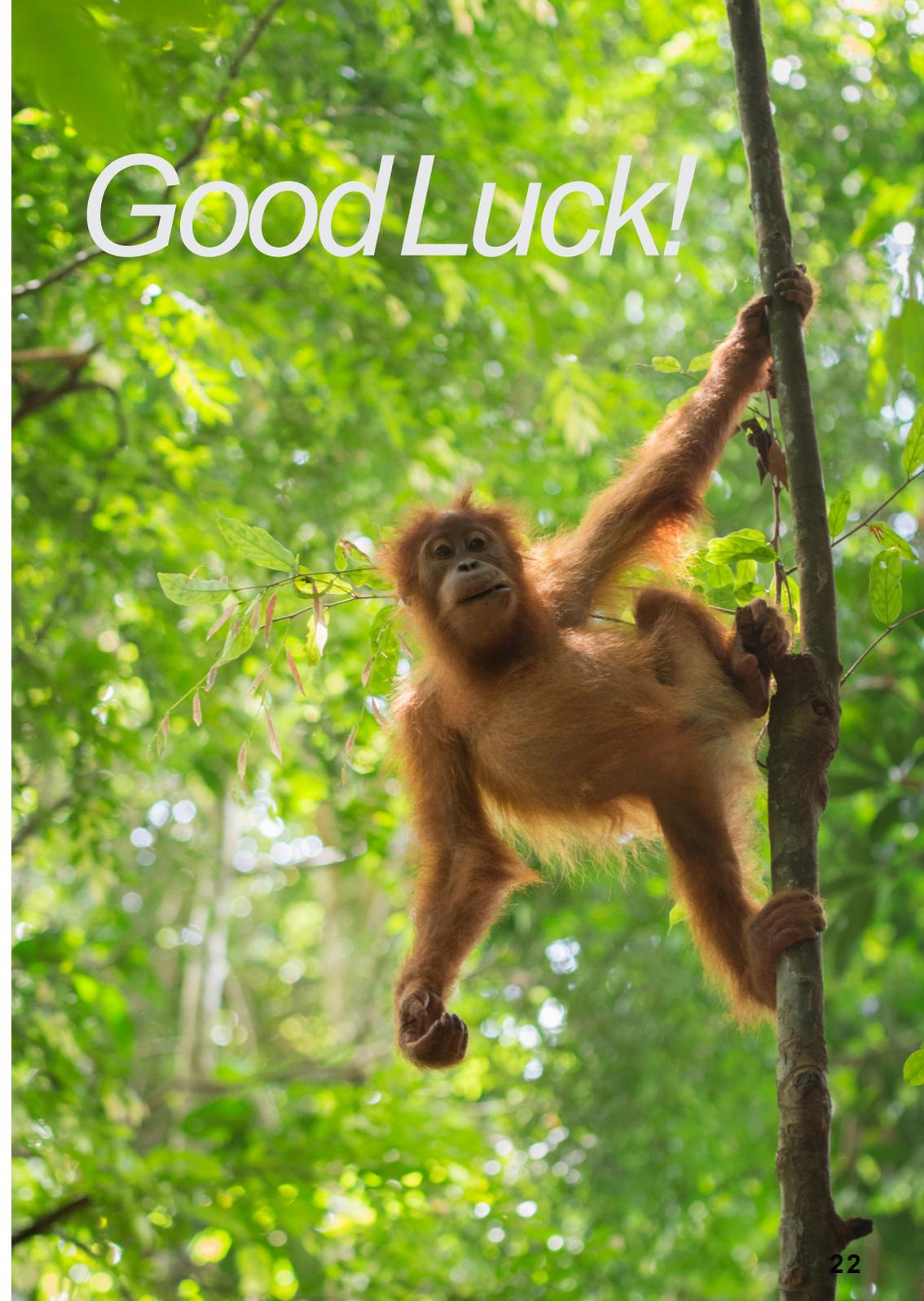
Puns and Funs-Preview

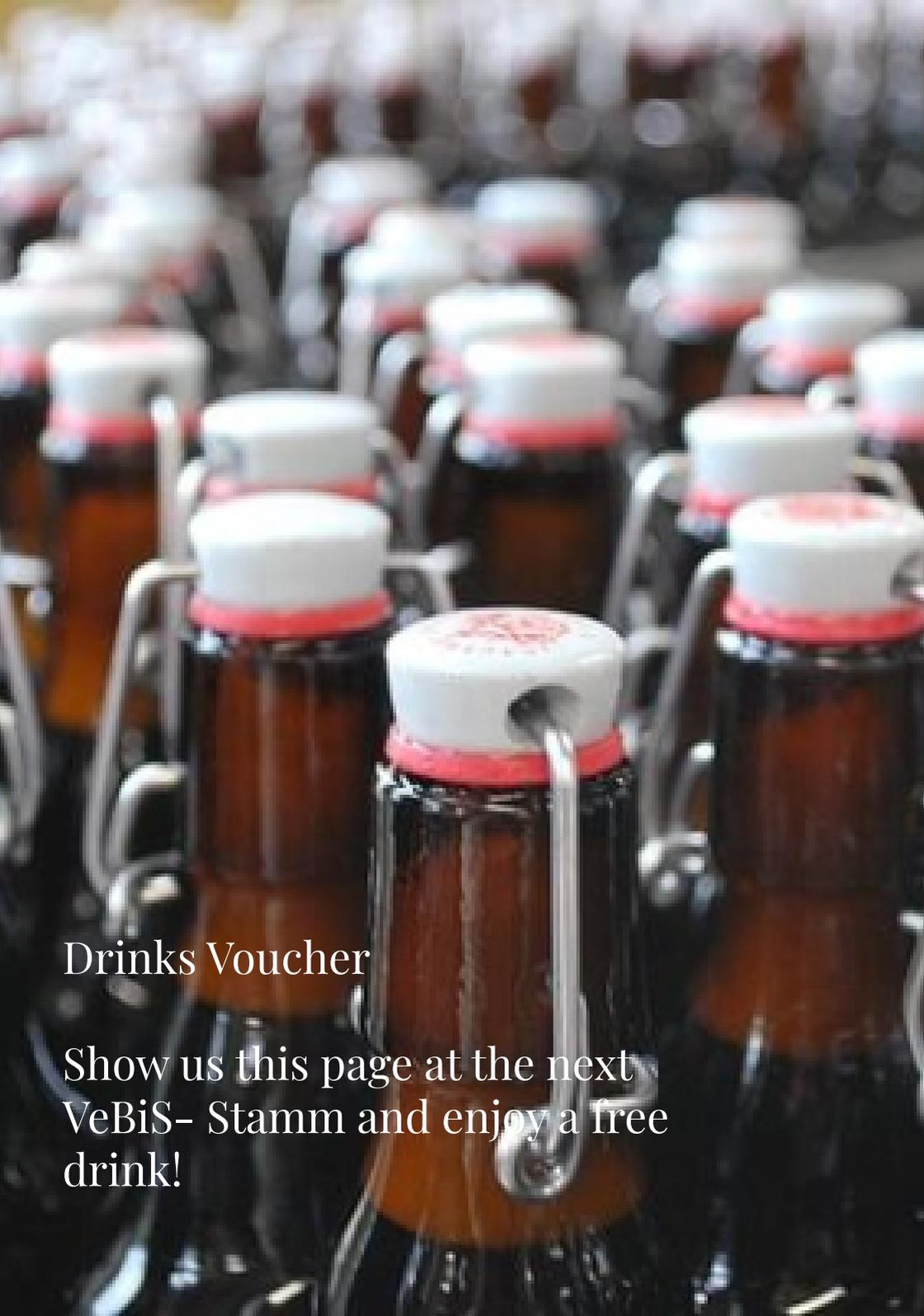


(Fig 1)

When you come across a vortex in the lab

When you meet another microbiologist:





Drinks Voucher

Show us this page at the next
VeBiS- Stamm and enjoy a free
drink!

Last but not least

Writers wanted!

Do you like to write? Are you interested in journalism? Would you like to share your writing talent and knowledge with others? Or just satisfy your desire to write?

If you answered yes to all or even just one of these questions, then contact redaktion@vebis.ch and assist our committee with regular Biotikum issues!

We wish you a great start!

Image sources

Cover: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Heliconius_hecale_qtl1.jpg

Good-Luck-Bild: <https://unsplash.com/photos/jAOiGV9r0KI>

PSE: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:Periodensystem_newdraft.svg

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