

Ecologist

Study how living things and their habitats fit together, then tell governments and builders what a project will do to them.

TYPICAL PAY

\$83,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$53k to \$139k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

4 to 6 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Consulting firms, government agencies, conservation groups, fie...

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
Biology, chemistry and math. Get outside: volunteer bird counts, stream monitoring, park clean-ups.
- 2 Bachelor's degree** 4 years
Ecology, biology, environmental science, forestry or wildlife biology. Take statistics and mapping courses, they are what employers screen for.
- 3 Field seasons** Every summer
Summer jobs and co-op terms doing plant surveys, fish sampling and bird point counts. This is what gets you hired.
- 4 Master's degree (optional but common)** 2 years
Two years of research. It moves you past the seasonal-contract stage faster than anything else.
- 5 Register and specialize** 2 to 4 years of work
Join a provincial body or earn an Environmental Professional designation, then build a niche: wetlands, species at risk, restoration.

Pros and cons

- + Real outdoor work in places most people never see
- + Your reports change what actually gets built
- + Clear ladder from junior to senior in about 8 years
- Seasonal contracts at the start, with gaps between them
- Bugs, heat, cold, ticks and long drives
- Lots of report writing, more than fieldwork after a few years

Good to know

Canada has a public list of species in trouble

The Species at Risk Public Registry run by Environment and Climate Change Canada lists every species assessed as endangered, threatened or of special concern, along with its recovery plan. Ecolog...

British Columbia licenses biologists

The College of Applied Biologists is the only body of its kind in Canada with a legal mandate to register applied biologists and biology technologists. Certain work in the province has to be done or signed...

Optional boosts

Environmental Professional designation. Provincial biologist registration. Species-at-risk survey permits. GIS (geographic information systems) certificate.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Ecologist in Canada, wages (updated Nov 2025)
ECO Canada: Environmental Professional certification
College of Applied Biologists of British Columbia
Canadian Society for Ecology and Evolution

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/ecologist>



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