

Wildlife Biologist

Count, track and manage wild animals so governments and companies can decide what happens to their habitat.

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

Provincial and federal agencies, consulting firms, First Nations, co...

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Biology, chemistry and math. Get a driver's licence as early as you can, because field jobs assume it.
- 2 Biology, wildlife or natural resources degree** 4 years
Four years. Guelph, Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Lakehead, the University of Northern British Columbia and Acadia all run relevant programs. A college fish and wildlife diploma is a cheaper technician route.
- 3 Field seasons** 2 to 3 summers
Bird banding, ungulate surveys, camera traps, vegetation plots. Apply in January for the coming summer, every year, everywhere.
- 4 Master's degree** 2 years
The usual step up from technician to biologist. Funded, and built around a real management question.
- 5 Professional registration, in the west** After 2 to 4 years of work
In British Columbia and Alberta you register after a degree plus supervised experience so you can sign off on assessments.

Pros and cons

- + Real field work with real animals, not a simulation
- + Your surveys shape hunting quotas and protected areas
- + Work outside major cities, often in the north
- Early years are seasonal contracts with gaps in between
- Most of the year is data and report writing
- Camp work means weeks away from home, bugs and bad weather

Optional boosts

Species identification by sight and sound. Mapping software. Statistics and the R programming language. Animal handling and telemetry.

Good to know

Canada tracks caribou with collars and satellites

Woodland caribou herds are monitored with satellite collars because the animals move across huge, roadless ranges. A single herd's data set can cover tens of thousands of square kilometres.

Bird banding runs on volunteers and students

Canadian migration monitoring stations band hundreds of thousands of birds a year, and most of the hands doing it are seasonal staff and volunteers. It is the classic first line on a wildlife resume.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Wildlife Biologist in Canada, wages (updated November 2025)
College of Applied Biologists, British Columbia
Alberta Society of Professional Biologists
Environment and Climate Change Canada

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/wildlife-biologist>



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