

Wildlife Biologist

Count, track and manage wild animal populations so decisions about land and hunting are based on evidence instead of guesses.

TYPICAL PAY

\$76,780

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$49k to \$126k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

4 to 6 years

after high school

DEMAND

Limited

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

State and federal wildlife agencies, universities, consulting firms, field...

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
 Biology, chemistry and statistics. Volunteering at a refuge, a rehabilitation center or a banding station counts for more than you would think.
- 2 Bachelor's degree** 4 years
 Wildlife biology, ecology or a related science. Check that the coursework matches the certification requirements while you still have room in your schedule.
- 3 Seasonal field technician jobs** 1 to 3 years
 Three to six months at a time, often in another state, usually with shared housing. This is the real gate into the profession.
- 4 Master's degree** 2 to 3 years
 Most permanent agency and consulting jobs list it. It is normally funded by an assistantship tied to a research project.
- 5 Permanent biologist** After the above
 A state wildlife agency, a federal agency, a tribe, a nonprofit or an environmental consulting firm.

Pros and cons

- + Field work in places most people never get to stand in
- + Public agency jobs with pensions and loan forgiveness
- + Work that changes what happens to real land and real animals
- Several years of low-paid seasonal jobs before anything permanent
- Far more people want these jobs than there are jobs
- The survey expects slower than average growth in the field

Good to know

The credential renews on continuing education

Certified Wildlife Biologist status costs \$200 to apply for, renews every five years for \$35, and requires 80 hours of continuing education in that window. It is voluntary, which means it signals that...

One agency, more than 70 careers

The Fish and Wildlife Service lists over 70 different careers, from biologists and refuge managers to law enforcement officers, engineers and communications staff. A wildlife degree is not the only door into...

Optional boosts

GIS (geographic information systems). Statistics and coding. Capture and handling. Remote sensing tools.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Zoologists and Wildlife Biologists (19-1023.00)
 The Wildlife Society: certification requirements and fees
 Fish and Wildlife Service: careers
 Warner College of Natural Resources, Colorado State University

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/wildlife-biologist>



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