



Working for the Great Outdoors

FISH BIOLOGIST



Do you enjoy working outdoors? Do you have good communication skills? Would you like being part of a team that makes a difference? If so, you may be interested in a job as a fish biologist in the Forest Service. The Forest Service employs hundreds of fisheries professionals.

The Work Environment

Forest Service fish biologists work in all types of environment -- offices and mountains, lakes and laboratories, forests and seashores -- we have it all. As a fish biologist, you will work alongside other resource professionals protecting and improving conditions on 128,000 miles of streams and rivers: more than 2.2 million acres of fishable lakes, ponds, and reservoirs, and 16,500 miles of coast and shoreline that support diverse aquatic resources. All of these are found on the 193 million acres of National Forest System land. You will work in some of the most scenic places in the Nation, places set aside and protected not just for their natural resources, but for their natural beauty as well.

Operating on the Job

A principal responsibility of a fish biologist is to support the wise use of natural resources. You will advise resource specialists in the agency about necessary protection and restoration of aquatic resources. Forest Service fish biologists work on teams with recreation, range, minerals, wildlife, and watershed, engineering, and timber management professionals. You will develop and implement fish habitat management programs on national forests, helping to meet the growing demand for fishing and aquatic education on public land.

Forest Service fish biologists often work as partners with conservation organizations: State, Federal, and tribal fish management agencies; and special interest groups to evaluate, improve, and monitor aquatic habitat and fish populations. You will be a professional working with other professionals in an interdisciplinary team effort for all projects.

Being a fish biologist in the Forest Service is challenging, varied,

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stimulating, important, and satisfying. The Forest Service works hard to provide fish biologists with the up-to-date training and experience they need to be successful in their jobs.

Career Paths And Requirements

Fish biologists are hired at many different grade levels. College graduates may be hired at the GS-5 or GS-7 grade level. They spend up to 2 years in training and developmental positions, and then may be noncompetitive, promoted to the GS-9 grade level. You may also be hired initially for higher grade level positions if you meet higher education and/or experience requirements. Promotion opportunities at GS-11 and above are competitive, and are opportunities are good at grades above that level. A master's degree will increase your marketability and competitiveness for some positions. A Ph.D. is not a prerequisite for a Forest Service job, but is considered necessary for a long-term career as a researcher with Forest Service.

The basic minimum qualification for a fish biologist in the Forest Service is a bachelor's degree with a major in biological science. The following course work also must have been completed:

- At least 6 semester hours in aquatic subjects such as limnology, ichthyology, fisheries biology, aquatic botany, aquatic fauna, oceanography, fish culture, or similar courses of equivalent basic value in the field of fisheries biology.
- At least 12 semester hours in zoology in subjects such as general zoology, vertebrate zoology, comparative anatomy, physiology, entomology, parasitology, ecology, cellular biology, genetics, or research in these fields (extra or additional course work in aquatic subjects may be used to meet this requirement when appropriate).
- A combination of education and experience. Courses equivalent to a major in biological science (that is, at least 30 semester hours), with a minimum of 6 semester hours in aquatic subjects and 12 semester hours in zoology, as shown above, plus related experience or additional related education.



These qualification requirements have been summarized for convenience. Full details are available at www.USAJobs.gov or the www.opm.gov subject index under "Qualifications."

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