



Working for the Great Outdoors



WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST

Do you enjoy working outdoors in remote areas? Do you want to be part of a professional team that makes a difference? Do you have a desire to care for and manage our Nation's precious wildlife resources and their habitats? If so, a career as a wildlife biologist in the Forest Service may be of interest to you.

The Work Environment

Forest Service biologists work in all types of environments – office and mountains, deserts and wetlands, forests and prairies – we have it all. As a wildlife biologist, you will work alongside other resource professionals managing over 193 million acres of national forests and grasslands. These lands provide important habitat to more than 3,000 species of wildlife, including deer, songbirds, wolves, and salamanders. More than 80 percent of all elk, bighorn sheep, and mountain goats habitat in the Nation are found on national forests and grasslands, as well as nearly 12 million acres of wetlands and waterfowl habitat and homes for more than 200 threatened and endangered species. You will also work in the most scenic places in the Nation – places set aside and managed not just for their natural resources, but also for their natural splendor.

Operating on the Job

Your main responsibility as a Forest Service wildlife biologist will be wildlife habitat – managing, protecting, rehabilitation, and enhancing it. Working on a team with recreation, range, minerals, rare plants, engineering, and timber management specialists to plan national forest management is an exciting and important part of the position. The duties of individual wildlife biologists are varied and can include such projects as building waterfowl nesting islands, cutting willow for moose browse, prescribed burning for deer and turkey, and more! You will work with sophisticated equipment and technologies. As a wildlife biologist, you will provide the technical expertise to conserve the biological diversity of national forest and grasslands and work to protect and recover endangered species. You will also work with the public and forest users who hunt, fish, bird watch, and vacation on national forests and grasslands.

Forest Service wildlife biologists often work as partners with State Wildlife agencies, conservation organizations, and special interest groups to manage wildlife habitat and populations. Good interpersonal skills and a working knowledge of economics and social and political trends are

desirable. Good technical, biological, quantitative, and communications skills are a must.

Being a wildlife biologist is challenging and the job is not only varied but also stimulating, important, and satisfying. The Forest Service provides its employees with the training and wide variety of job experience they need to do their jobs well.

Career Paths and Requirements

Wildlife biologists are hired at many different grade levels. Recent college graduates may be hired at the GS-5 or GS-7 grade level. They spend up to 2 years in training and development positions, and then may be noncompetitively promoted to the GS-9 grade level. You may also be hired initially for a higher grade level position if you meet higher education and/or experience requirements. Promotion opportunities at GS-11 and above are competitive, and opportunities for advancement to higher grade levels are excellent.

All Forest Service wildlife biologists must have a bachelor's degree with a major in biological science or natural resource management, with an emphasis in biology or ecology. A master's degree will help you be more competitive for some positions. The following minimum course work must also be completed for all positions:

- At least 9 semester hours in wildlife subjects such as mammalogy, ornithology, animal ecology, wildlife management, or research courses in the field of wildlife biology.
- At least 12 semester hours in zoology subjects such as general zoology, invertebrate zoology, vertebrate zoology, comparative anatomy, physiology, parasitology, ecology, cellular biology, entomology, genetics, or research in these fields (extra or additional course work in aquatic subjects may be used to meet the zoology requirements where appropriate).
- At least 8 semester hours in botany or related plant sciences.

OR

- A combination of education and experience. Courses equivalent to a major in biological science (i.e., at least 30 semester hours), with a minimum of 9 semester hours in wildlife subjects and 12 semester hours in zoology, and 9 semester hours in botany

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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