

Ecologist

Ecologists help to protect and restore the natural environment by providing important information about how human activity affects individual species and ecosystems.

As an ecologist, you'll be concerned with ecosystems - the abundance and distribution of organisms (people, plants, animals), and the relationships between organisms and their environment. In this role, you'll usually specialise in a particular area, such as freshwater, marine, terrestrial, fauna or flora, and carry out a range of tasks relating to that area.



Skills:

You'll need to show:

- enthusiasm and fascination for animals and plants
- expertise in one or more groups of living organisms
- capacity to identify different species as appropriate to the role
- experience in/enthusiasm for undertaking fieldwork in sometimes harsh conditions
- competence in understanding and using statistics and other ecological data
- the ability to use computer software for recording, analysing and presenting data and reports

Qualifications:

University

You'll need a degree or postgraduate qualification in a subject like: ecology/ecology and environmental sustainability/conservation/marine or plant biology/environmental science/zoology. Entry requirements you'll usually need: 2 to 3 A levels, or equivalent, for a degree/a degree in a relevant subject for postgraduate study.

Apprenticeship

You might be able to start by applying for an Ecologist Level 7 Degree Apprenticeship. This usually takes around 3 years to complete. Entry requirements you'll usually need: a degree in a relevant subject.

Volunteering

Volunteering is a great way to get practical experience and skills, meet new people and develop useful contacts. This might improve your chances of finding work. You can find volunteering opportunities with: The Conservation Volunteers/National Trust/The Wildlife Trusts/The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS).

Working hours:

Working hours and conditions vary according to the type of role and your level of seniority. More senior positions tend to mean more office-based management work. Hours can be dictated by the species you're working with, such as bat surveys which need to be conducted at night. Environmental consultancy working hours vary depending on impending deadlines, which create busier periods.

Salary:

- An assistant ecologist role is usually in the region of £18,000 to £22,000, depending on experience.
- With a few years' experience you could earn between £22,000 and £30,000.
- As a senior/principal ecologist, you can expect to earn in the range of £30,000 to £45,000.

