



Discovering
JOBS

Jobs If You Like ANIMALS

Don Nardo



© 2022 ReferencePoint Press, Inc.
Printed in the United States

For more information, contact:

ReferencePoint Press, Inc.
PO Box 27779
San Diego, CA 92198
www.ReferencePointPress.com

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

No part of this work covered by the copyright hereon may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means—graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, web distribution, or information storage retrieval systems—without the written permission of the publisher.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA

Names: Nardo, Don, 1947- author.
Title: Jobs if you like animals / by Don Nardo.
Description: San Diego, CA : ReferencePoint Press, Inc., 2022. | Series:
Discovering jobs | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2021030392 (print) | LCCN 2021030393 (ebook) | ISBN
9781678202248 (library binding) | ISBN 9781678202255 (ebook)
Subjects: LCSH: Animal specialists--Vocational guidance--Juvenile
literature.
Classification: LCC SF80 .N37 2022 (print) | LCC SF80 (ebook) | DDC
636.0023--dc23
LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2021030392>

CONTENTS

Introduction: Lost Jobs and New Opportunities	4
Wildlife Biologist	7
Animal Nutritionist	15
Animal Control Officer	22
Wildlife Rehabilitator	30
Veterinarian	37
Veterinary Technician	45
Source Notes	52
Interview with a Wildlife Rehabilitator	55
Other Jobs If You Like Animals	58
Index	59
Picture Credits	63
About the Author	64

WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST

What Does a Wildlife Biologist Do?

A wildlife biologist is a scientist who examines, studies, and records the behaviors of animals, most often creatures that live in the wild. Wildlife biologists typically observe various natural ecosystems and how one or more animal species exists within those environments. They also determine, when possible, how those species interact with humans.

Frequently, wildlife biologists decide to specialize in specific areas of study based on certain animal species or groups of species. For instance, an ornithologist is a wildlife biologist who specializes in the lives of birds, an entomologist studies insects, paleontologists study prehistoric beasts by examining fossil records, and marine biologists

examine the many species that dwell in the oceans.

Whether or not wildlife biologists have a specialty, they get involved in numerous aspects of the lives of the animals they work with and study. One common activity is to observe and manage a population of creatures inhabiting a given region. In such cases the biologist is expected to determine the approximate number of animals living within that region, what causes the local population to change over time (if it does), and the likely effects of that animal population on humans who live nearby. All such information is used in making decisions about how to manage the animals in question.

A Few Facts

Typical Earnings

Average annual salary of \$60,000

Educational Requirements

Minimum of a bachelor's degree

Personal Qualities

Detail oriented, good problem solver

Work Settings

Office, classroom, outdoors in nature

Countering False Information About Animals

“As a biologist, I work frequently around misunderstood or feared animals. Unfortunately, bats which are highly beneficial to the ecosystem, fall under that umbrella. As biologists, the most prominent misconception we battle is the over exaggeration of the dangers of animals we work with. The media loves ratings and fear sells. Further, pseudo wildlife biologists feed into this fear mongering in an effort to make themselves look tough. As biologists, we actively respond to news stories that perpetuate false information of wildlife through fear-mongering. In most cases animals are nowhere near as dangerous as the general public has been led to believe.”

—Jessie Story, wildlife biologist

Jessie Story, “Real Life Risk of Wildlife Through the Lens of a Wildlife Biologist,” Outbound Collective, 2021. www.theoutbound.com.

In the course of this work, wildlife biologists sometimes humanely trap local animals for study or to tag and relocate them for their own good or the good of nearby human communities. Other typical activities and duties include devising ways to study and save endangered species, examining the spread of disease among the local animals, and coordinating with wildlife rehabilitators and fish and game agents who are helping manage those creatures.

Wildlife biologists approach all of these activities with the intention of ensuring that wild animals and humans in a given region can maintain their respective populations and hopefully live in harmony. Commenting on this key aspect of her job, wildlife biologist Mini Erkenwick Watsa explains that she and others in her profession “are doing the most important job of all—keeping this planet in homeostasis [a balanced state], so that others can continue to live in cities without facing drastic changes to their lives.”⁶

Indian wildlife biologist Yashaswi Rao agrees. “My work,” he says, “is crucial for ensuring a future where humans and wild ani-

mals co-exist. If we let things go unchecked, we would soon get to a point where our societal pressure on natural resources would drive these majestic creatures to extinction.”⁷

A Typical Workday

Workdays for wildlife biologists can vary a great deal, depending on whether the person is working in a university classroom or office or out in the field. When working outdoors, the setting might be a forest, mountain, marshland, desert, or some other natural setting. For Watsa, such settings are often in Peru and other parts of South America. She describes her usual activities in the field, saying:

When I’m in the field, my days are radically different than when I’m at home. While I’m in the forest, I wake each morning either before dawn or with the calls of duetting titi monkeys and I jump right into work. These days involve long hikes, chasing monkeys, and observation of behavior from a variety of vantage points. In the evenings, once the animals are asleep, I spend my day helping to transfer data into electronic files that are backed up in triplicate. By 9 pm, I’m in bed. Sleep is never more important than it is here.⁸

At home, in contrast, like other wildlife biologists, Watsa spends a good deal of time recording in writing the information she gathered firsthand in the field. “Occasionally I teach courses at Washington University in Saint Louis as well,” she says, “and I confess that I spend a great deal of time in front of a computer.” Considering that she enjoys fieldwork the most, Watsa says she is grateful that she is “never more than four months away from my next field adventure.”⁹

Education and Training

To become a wildlife biologist, one needs at least a bachelor’s, or four-year undergraduate, degree. More than that is preferable because an undergraduate degree will give someone seeking

a job as a biologist access to only an entry-level position. That initial degree can be in general biology, zoology, wildlife biology, ecology, or another related field, depending on what program a given university offers. Among the key courses one needs to pass are wildlife management, animal anatomy, statistics, and writing. Writing is essential for creating reports of one's biological fieldwork and composing papers for scientific journals.

To advance beyond entry-level positions, one needs a master's degree, and to obtain the most attractive job opportunities in the profession, getting a PhD is highly recommended. The wildlife biology candidate should also be adept at using computers, especially software programs that involve statistics and geographic information, which are basic to working with animal populations.

Skills and Personality

One of the most important skills wildlife biologists need to succeed is the ability to observe and remember details of the world around them. Typically, the job entails noticing small changes in an ecosystem or an animal's behavior and recording them later in writing. Good writing skills are a plus for this occupation because one needs to communicate with fellow scientists, as well as with students and sometimes the public. Good problem-solving skills are also beneficial because the natural world can be unpredictable. Sometimes, for instance, wildlife biologists need to quickly come up with ways to protect themselves or an animal from possible threats.

In addition, in regard to personality, it is vital that the would-be wildlife biologist have an innate interest in, or better yet love of, nature and the creatures inhabiting it. "I always had an affinity towards nature and wildlife," Rao says. "I always wanted to take the more unconventional path. . . . The biggest factor [in my decision to pursue this profession] was my own drive to pursue a [path] that could help me align my career with my passion for conservation."¹⁰



A wildlife biologist readies a captured great horned owl for relocation away from an airport in St. Louis, Missouri. Moving large birds away from airports protects the birds and the flying public.

Working Conditions

Working conditions can vary considerably for wildlife biologists. Sometimes they work in an office, classroom, library, or some other indoor setting, where reading, writing papers, teaching students, and other similar duties are required. In contrast, other times they work outdoors in the wild—in rain forests, on windswept prairies, and so forth—and often in a wide range of

SOURCE NOTES

Introduction: Lost Jobs and New Opportunities

1. Mark, personal interview with the author, May 22, 2021.
2. Mark, interview.
3. Lindsay M. Monte, "Historical Look at Unemployment, Sectors Shows Magnitude of COVID-19 Impact on Economy," U.S. Census Bureau, March 15, 2021. www.census.gov.
4. Quoted in Revell Horsey, "Pet Care in a Post-pandemic World," *Forbes*, December 28, 2020. www.forbes.com.
5. Mark, interview.

Wildlife Biologist

6. Quoted in Ben Lybarger, "Meet a Field Biologist: Interview with Dr. Mini Erkenwick Watsa," Field Projects International, 2021. <https://fieldprojects.org>.
7. Quoted in Shyam Krishnamurthy, "Wildlife Biologist Interview," Interview Portal, 2020. <https://theinterviewportal.com>.
8. Quoted in Lybarger, "Meet a Field Biologist."
9. Quoted in Lybarger, "Meet a Field Biologist."
10. Quoted in Krishnamurthy, "Wildlife Biologist Interview."
11. Quoted in Lybarger, "Meet a Field Biologist."

Animal Nutritionist

12. Quoted in Iowa Agriculture Literacy Foundation, "A Day in the Life of an Animal Nutritionist," April 7, 2021. <https://iowaagliteracy.wordpress.com>.
13. Quoted in Meagan Meehan, "Nutrition and Healthy Pets: Interview with Gail Czarnecki-Maulden, Ph.D.," Blasting News, November 14, 2017. <https://us.blastingnews.com>.
14. CareerExplorer, "What Does an Animal Nutritionist Do?," 2021. www.careerexplorer.com.
15. Quoted in Meehan, "Nutrition and Healthy Pets."
16. Quoted in Meehan, "Nutrition and Healthy Pets."

INTERVIEW WITH A WILDLIFE REHABILITATOR

Kristin Fletcher is the executive director of the Wildlife Rehabilitators Association of Rhode Island. She has worked as a wildlife rehabilitator for over twenty years. She answered questions about her career by email.

Q: Why did you become a wildlife rehabilitator?

A: Even as a child I had a strong connection to animals and grew up around lots of pets. I became a wildlife rehabilitator following Hurricane Bob (in 1992), when my young daughters brought home an infant squirrel that they found in the road amongst some downed tree branches. At that time, I found it impossible to find help for the little guy and attempted to research proper care. Unfortunately there were very limited resources in our state. Ultimately, I was able to release him back into the wild, but at the time I had a gut feeling that there was so much I probably did improperly.

Q: Can you describe your typical workday?

A: There really is no “typical” workday for wildlife rehabilitators because we are on call from start to finish, for all manner of wildlife emergencies and issues involving animals. The variables can often seem endless! Year round, the day always begins with animal care for those wild patients who I am caring for at home. During our wild baby season (in Rhode Island each year the baby season runs from March into October), the care is constant from dawn to dark. For instance, the youngest baby songbirds require feedings every fifteen minutes, squirrels need to be fed every couple of hours, bunnies require food three times per day, etc. It is a constant merry-go-round of feeding, cleaning, not to mention

OTHER JOBS IF YOU LIKE ANIMALS

animal cruelty investigator
animal rights activist
animal shelter manager
animal shelter technician
animal trainer
aquarist
beekeeper
conservation biologist
conservation officer
dog or cat breeder
dog walker
farrier
fish and game warden
horseback riding instructor
K9 unit trainer
marine biologist
marine mammal trainer

park ranger
pet adoption counselor
pet groomer
pet photographer
pet store associate
seeing-eye dog trainer
snake venom milker
veterinary acupuncturist
veterinary anesthetist
veterinary assistant
veterinary dentist
veterinary pathologist
veterinary sales
representative
veterinary surgeon
wildlife conservationist
zoo veterinarian

Editor's note: The online *Occupational Outlook Handbook* of the US Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics is an excellent source of information on jobs in hundreds of career fields, including many of those listed here. The *Occupational Outlook Handbook* may be accessed online at www.bls.gov/ooh.

INDEX

Note: Boldface page numbers indicate illustrations.

- American Academy of Veterinary Nutrition (AAVN), 20–21
- American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA), 44
- American Society of Animal Science (ASAS), 21
- American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), 43, 50–51
- animal control officer, **26**
 - educational requirements, 22, 24
 - employers of, 27
 - future outlook, 27–28
 - information resources, 28–29
 - role of, 22–23
 - salary/earnings, 22, 27
 - skills/personal qualities, 22, 25–26
 - typical workday, 23–24
 - working conditions, 27
 - work settings, 22
- Animal Control Officers Association of Massachusetts (ACOAM), 28
- animal nutritionist
 - educational requirements, 15, 18
 - employers of, 19
 - future outlook, 20
 - information resources, 20–21
 - role of, 14–15
 - salary/earnings, 15, 19
 - skills/personal qualities, 15, 18–19
 - typical workday, 16–17
 - working conditions, 19
 - work settings, 15
- animals
 - loss of jobs involving, 4–5
 - other jobs related to, 58
- Asaro, Natalie, 20
- Association of Zoo Veterinary Technicians (AZVT), 51