

Mersey Gateway Project

THINKING ABOUT BEING AN ECOLOGIST?

WHAT DOES AN ECOLOGIST DO?

Ecologists study the relationship between plants, animals and their environment. The aim of their work could range from balancing the needs of the environment to coming up with ideas for land management. If you are interested in the natural world and the environment, this job could be ideal for you. As an ecologist you would normally specialise in a particular type of environment, for example marine or coastal areas. You could study a specific animal or plant species.

Your duties may include:

- Carrying out fieldwork - surveying and recording information on plants, animals and environmental conditions
- Researching the impact of human activity, like housing and intensive agriculture, on the environment
- Building computer models to predict the effects of development or climate change
- Testing samples to investigate issues like the effects of air pollution on plant growth
- Preparing reports and presenting research findings at conferences
- Organising or supporting school, university and community education programmes
- Restoring areas such as open-cast mines or quarries at the end of their industrial life
- Monitoring pollution incidents, such as chemical spillages in waterways
- Advising on and enforcing legal regulations, for example the laws on protected species
- Acting as an expert witness during public enquiries
- Managing wildlife conservation areas, woodland and meadows.

You may also help to assess planning proposals and make recommendations on sustainable land use for local authorities, government departments and companies. For example, nature reserves or waste management schemes.

WHAT ARE THE WORKING CONDITIONS?

Most ecologists carry out both field-based and office or laboratory-based activities. When working in a laboratory or writing up research you could be based at one site and work between 37 and 40 hours a week, Monday to Friday. Research and fieldwork could involve longer and irregular working hours, including evenings and weekends. You could be working outdoors for long periods of time.

WHAT SALARY COULD I EXPECT TO RECEIVE?

Starting salaries can be between £17,000 and £22,000 a year. With experience, this can rise to between £22,000 and £30,000 a year. Senior ecologists can earn around £30,000 a year or more. Consultant ecologists can earn over £45,000 a year.

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WHAT SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE WILL I NEED?

- An interest in the natural environment
- A methodical approach to work
- The ability to gather and interpret data
- A knowledge of environmental policies and legislation
- An impartial approach
- Good presentation and report writing skills
- Project management skills
- Good IT skills

WHAT QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE WILL I NEED?

- **Relevant Degree:**
 - **Ecology**
 - **Conservation biology**
 - **Ecological science**
 - **Zoology**
 - **Marine biology**
 - **Environmental science**
 - **Ecology and environmental sustainability**
- **Possibly a postgraduate qualification such as a Masters or PhD**
- **Volunteering is a great way of gaining more experience**

FOR FURTHER INFO:

www.tcv.org.uk
www.nationaltrust.org.uk
www.wildlifetrusts.org
www.do-it.org.uk
www.britishecologicalsociety.org/careers
www.cieem.net
www.field-studies-council.org
www.bsbi.org
www.nhm.ac.uk/research-curation