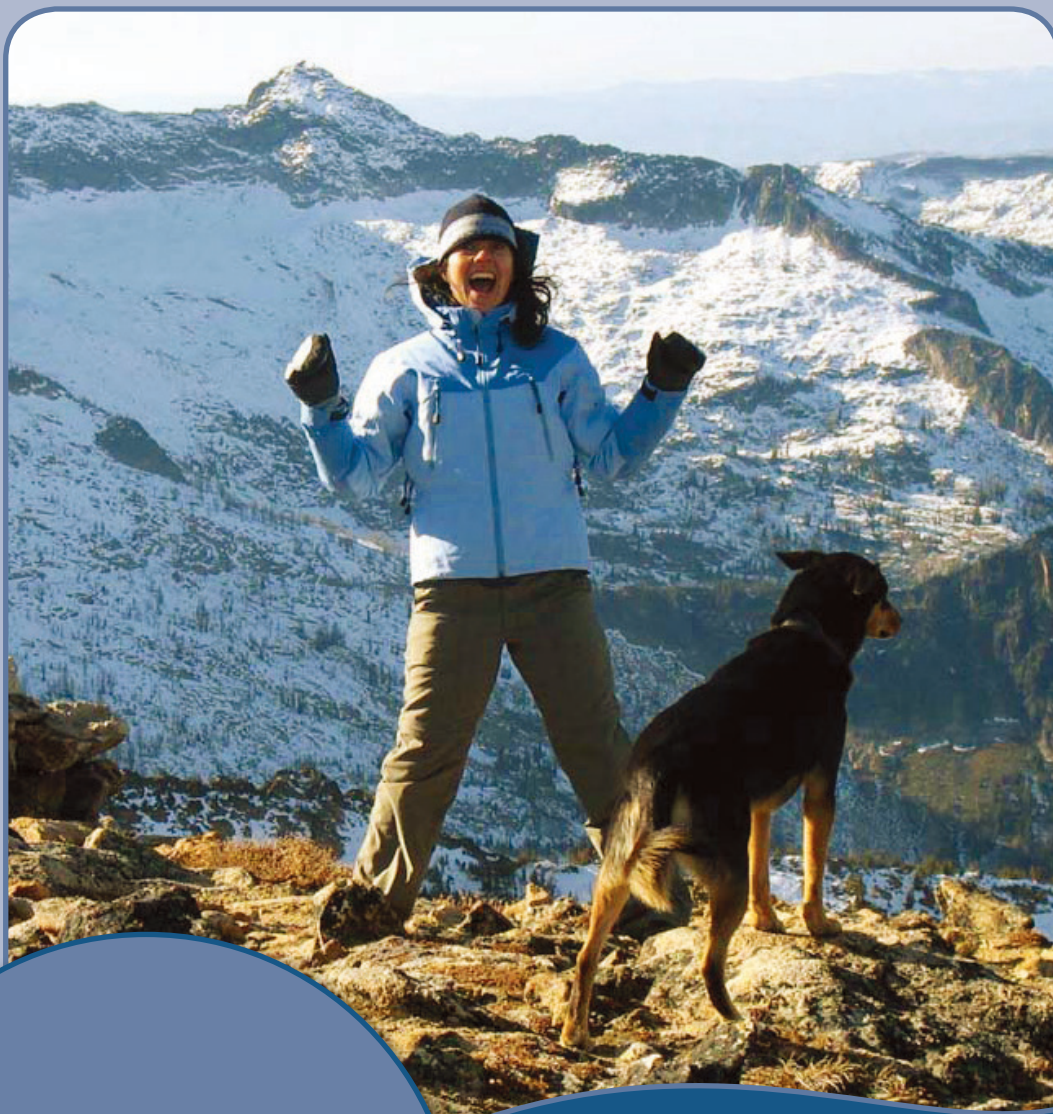




Meet the Scientist!



An ecologist studies how plants, animals, and nature's forces interact.

Yvette Ortega

Ecologist
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USDA Forest Service scientist



<http://www.naturalinquirer.org>

Important Scientist Characteristics

I am analytical, which is another way of saying that I like solving puzzles.

Example of a simple research question I have tried to answer:

Plants from far away invade and take over our natural areas. How does the invasion of one plant impact songbirds and the food sources that they depend on?

Technology or equipment used in research:

Mist nets look something like volleyball nets except they are made of a soft material that's difficult to see. We catch birds in these nets so that we can mark them with colored bands that look like ankle bracelets that allow us to keep track of each individual. The mist nets do not harm the birds.

Most Exciting Discovery

We found that by listening to the birds in an area, we can learn whether the area is a good place for birds (full of food), or a not-so-good place for birds (sparse amounts of food). Bird song can tell us a lot about habitat quality.

When did you know you wanted to be a scientist?

When I was a kid, I wanted to be a medical doctor. In college, while studying to be a doctor, I took a class about birds. I loved the class so much that I decided to change my focus to the natural world.

<http://www.rmrs.nau.edu/wildlife/invasives/>