



Meet the Scientist!



A wildlife biologist studies living organisms such as birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians and their habitats, their life history, population changes, and movement patterns.

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Important Scientist Characteristics

I am good at remembering details such as the names of species, and I have a natural curiosity about how things work. I link one idea to another idea to create a brand new idea. I like to think carefully before I act and I am good at meeting deadlines.

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

How do changes in the environment affect populations of birds and mammals? How vulnerable are birds and mammals to long-term changes in climate? How do birds and mammals respond to the removal of fire fuels and invasive species?

Technology or equipment used in research:

I use mist nets to capture songbirds. A mist net is like a fine volleyball net. Birds get caught in the netting, but are not injured. I measure each bird and put a numbered band on it to keep track of it over time. Then, I open my hands and watch the bird fly away.

Most Exciting Discovery

My favorite science experience was climbing to the top of El Triunfo, a Biosphere Reserve in Mexico, to set up a forest program with Mexican protected areas. I went in search of the resplendent quetzal, a tropical bird with bright green feathers and a long tail.

When did you know you wanted to be a scientist?

I learned I wanted to study science in college when I took an ecology course. I wanted a profession where I could work outdoors and learn more about wild animals and plants. In high school, I also belonged to a science club whose members hiked in the Sierra Nevada, and that experience had an influence on me.