



A wildlife biologist studies wild animals and their habitats to provide the knowledge needed to conserve or manage wildlife species.

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Important Scientist Characteristics:

Curiosity and critical thinking are very important traits for me as a scientist. These traits combined with a passion to contribute to conservation of life on Earth motivates me to work hard at my science.

Example of a simple research question I have tried to answer: What factors are contributing to a decline in the abundance of many migratory birds? What factors limit the survival of migratory bird species? For example, what factors (if any) of the breeding ground affect the bird's reproduction?

Technology or equipment used in research:

My research is dependent on using remotely sensed data collected by satellites and planes and powerful computers to process these data. The computers enable me to generate maps of habitat types and analyze patterns in the landscape and how the patterns affect wildlife.

Most Exciting Discovery

I worked with a team that discovered that migratory songbirds have poor nesting success in landscapes where their habitats are fragmented by urban and agricultural land uses. I then went on to discover how different predators, such as snakes, raccoons, and hawks, are responsible for these patterns in poor nesting success.

When did you know you wanted to be a scientist? I always liked to play outside in the woods as a kid. In junior high school and high school, I became keenly interested in science, especially biology and environmental conservation. By my junior year, I knew I wanted to combine these interests in a career in wildlife conservation.

<http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/people/Thompson>