

Wildlife Biologist Certification and Career Advice



Wildlife Society Certification Program

- Professional certification program designed to evaluate education and professional experience of wildlife biologists
- **Certified Wildlife Biologist (CWB)**—Persons who have completed acceptable educational and experience requirements.
- **Associate Wildlife Biologist (AWB)**—Preliminary step designed for persons who have completed educational requirements, but not experience requirements.
- Certification Review Board
- http://joomla.wildlife.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=29&Itemid=234

Biological Sciences

- **Thirty-six (36)** semester hours in biological sciences are required and must include courses in the following subcategories (Note: the sum of hours required in biology subcategories 33; the remaining 3 hours may be in any of these five subject areas)

Wildlife Management (6 hours)

- Courses emphasizing the principles and practices of wildlife management
- Should demonstrate training in understanding and manipulating habitat relationships and population dynamics in context of objectives and influences established by human concerns and activities
- **Conservation biology** courses count if they contain a specific focus on management and decision making

Wildlife Biology (6 hours)

- Courses in the biology and behavior of birds, mammals, reptiles, or amphibians.
- Courses should demonstrate training in understanding the biology of wildlife species and their habitat relationships as the basis for management and must include at least one course dealing solely with the science of mammalogy, ornithology, or herpetology.
- Ichthyology, microbiology, entomology, or related courses will not count in this category, but will qualify in the Zoology category.

Ecology (3 hours)

- Courses in general plant or animal ecology

Zoology (9 hours)

- Courses in taxonomy, biology, behavior, physiology, anatomy, and natural history of vertebrates and invertebrates.
- Courses in genetics, nutrition, physiology, disease, and other biology or general zoology courses are accepted. Ichthyology or fisheries biology courses are accepted

Botany (9 hours)

- Courses in general botany, plant genetics, plant morphology, plant physiology, or plant taxonomy.
- At least one course must deal with plant taxonomy or identification.

Physical Sciences (9 hours)

- Courses such as chemistry, physics, geology, or soils, with at least two disciplines represented.

Quantitative Sciences (9 hours)

- Basic Statistics: A course in basic statistics (3 hours).
- Quantitative Sciences: Courses in calculus, biometry, advanced algebra, systems analysis, mathematical modeling, sampling, computer science, or other quantitative science.
- Introductory GIS courses and introductory personal computing courses do not count in this category.

Humanities and Social Sciences (9 hours)

- Courses such as:
 - Economics
 - Sociology
 - Psychology
 - Political science
 - Government
 - History
 - Literature
 - Foreign language.

Communications (12 hours)

- Courses designed to improve communication skills such as:
 - English composition
 - Technical writing
 - Journalism
 - Public speaking
 - Mass communications
- A maximum of three (3) semester hours each will be allowed for a completed Master's thesis and Ph.D. dissertation.
- Courses in literature interpretation, foreign languages, classes requiring a term paper, class projects, and seminars in non-communication courses will not count

Policy, Administration, and Law (6 hours)

- Courses that demonstrate significant content or focus on natural resource policy and/or administration, wildlife or environmental law, or natural resource/land use planning will apply; as will courses that document contributions to the understanding of social, political and ethical decisions for wildlife or natural resource management.
- Up to three (3) semester hours in classes dealing with human dimension issues may count in this category depending on course content
- Conservation Biology courses that effectively integrate legal and policy aspects of conservation planning will count toward this category
- Courses that are tools supporting professional practice, e.g., photogrammetry, Land-Sat mapping, GIS techniques, or more general courses such as environmental science, resource management, law enforcement, criminology, political science, and introductory survey courses in conservation will not apply.

Experience

- Minimum of five (5) years of professional experience gained within the ten (10) years prior to applying for certification.
- Experience prior to B.S. doesn't count
- Receive maximum of one (1) year's credit for a Master's degree, two (2) year's credit for Ph.D., three (3) year's credit for both combined.

Fee Structure

	Member	Nonmember
Certified Wildlife Biologist	\$155	\$525
Associate Wildlife Biologist	\$115	\$325
Associate Wildlife Biologist (reduced rate within 6 months of graduation)	\$95	\$275

Federal Requirements

GS-486: Wildlife Biology Series

- Degree: biological science that includes:
 - 9 hours in such wildlife subjects as:
 - mammalogy, ornithology, animal ecology, wildlife management, or research courses in the field of wildlife biology
 - 12 hours in zoology in such subjects as general zoology, invertebrate zoology, vertebrate zoology, comparative anatomy, physiology, genetics, ecology, cellular biology, parasitology, entomology, or research courses in such subjects (Excess courses in wildlife biology may be used to meet the zoology requirements where appropriate.)
 - 9 hours in botany

Or

- Combination of education and experience--equivalent to a major in biological science (i.e., at least 30 semester hours), with at least 9 semester hours in wildlife subjects, 12 semester hours in zoology, and 9 semester hours in botany or related plant science, as shown in A above, plus appropriate experience or additional education.

Finding a Job

- Heavy competition for limited jobs
- Education
 - Consider doing a master's
 - Diversify your background
- Experience
 - Consider doing a summer internship
 - <http://www.thesca.org>
 - <http://www.ngrrrec.org>



Job Lists

- Join Biolist: send e-mail to majordomo@siue.edu with message in text “Subscribe Biolist2”
- Like Biological Sciences and Wildlife and Conservation Biology Club Facebook pages
 - <https://www.facebook.com/pages/SIUE-Biological-Sciences/303941963141257?ref=bookmarks>
 - <https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Wildlife-and-Conservation-Biology-Club-at-SIUe/201119563247471>
- Professional Society Job Boards
 - Wildlife Society <http://joomla.wildlife.org/jobs/>
 - Society for Conservation Biology <http://www.conbio.org/jobs/>
 - Ecological Society of America/ECOLOG-L Listserv http://www.esa.org/careers_certification/employment.php
 - American Society of Mammalogists <http://www.mammalogy.org/whatsnew/employment.html>
 - American Ornithologists’ Union <http://www.osnabirds.org/on/ornjobs.htm>
 - Society for the Study of Amphibians & Reptiles
 - American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists <http://www.asih.org/jobs>

Job Lists

- Other Job Boards
 - Texas A&M <http://wfscjobs.tamu.edu/job-board/>
 - Cyber Sierra <http://www.cyber-sierra.com/nrjobs/science.html>
 - EcoJobs <http://www.ecojobs.com/>
 - University of Montana <http://www.cfc.umt.edu/students/jobs/>
- State & Federal Jobs—visit agency websites <http://www.illinois.gov> & <http://www.usajobs.gov>, <http://www.americorps.gov>
- NGOs—visit organizational websites
 - e.g. Ducks Unlimited, WWF, National Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy, National Wildlife Federation, etc.
- Job Databases
 - <http://www.indeed.com/q-Wildlife-Biologist-jobs.html>

Pathways

Internship Program

The Internship Program replaces the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) and Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP). This Program is designed to provide students enrolled in a wide variety of educational institutions, from high school to graduate level, with opportunities to work in agencies and explore Federal careers while still in school and while getting paid for the work performed. Students who successfully complete the program may be eligible for conversion to a permanent job in the civil service. Additional information about the Internship Program can be found at <https://www.usajobs.gov/studentsandgrads/> . Here are some key provisions of the Internship Program.

Eligibility

Current students in an accredited high school, college (including 4-year colleges/universities, community colleges, and junior colleges); professional, technical, vocational, and trade school; advanced degree programs; or other qualifying educational institution pursuing a qualifying degree or certificate.

Recent Graduates Program

The Recent Graduates Program affords developmental experiences in the Federal Government intended to promote possible careers in the civil service to individuals who have recently graduated from qualifying educational institutions or programs. To be eligible, applicants must apply within two years of degree or certificate completion (except for veterans precluded from doing so due to their military service obligation, who will have up to six years after degree completion to apply). Successful applicants are placed in a dynamic, developmental program with the potential to lead to a civil service career in the Federal Government. The program lasts for 1 year (unless the training requirements of the position warrant a longer and more structured training program). Here are some key provisions of the Recent Graduates Program.

Eligibility

Recent graduates who have completed, within the previous two years, a qualifying associates, bachelors, masters, professional, doctorate, vocational or technical degree or certificate from a qualifying educational institution.

Veterans unable to apply within two years of receiving their degree, due to military service obligation, have as much as six years after degree completion to apply.

Presidential Management Fellows Program

[The Presidential Management Fellows \(PMF\) Program \(external link\)](#) is a flagship leadership development program at the entry-level for advanced degree candidates. Created more than three decades ago, the Program attracts and selects from among the best candidates and is designed to develop a cadre of potential Federal Government leaders. Here are some key provisions of the PMF Program.

Eligibility

Individuals who have completed within the past two years, a qualifying advanced degree (e.g., masters or professional degree).

An individual may apply for the PMF Program more than once as long as he or she meets the eligibility criteria. However, if an individual becomes a Finalist and subsequently applies for the PMF Program during the next open announcement, the individual will forfeit his or her status as a Finalist.