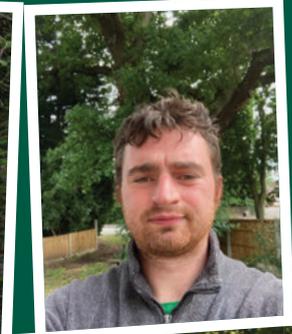


# Shropshire Wildlife Trust



# A Career in the Environment



Matthew Roberts

Alex Mustard / 2020VISION

# What does a career in the environmental sector look like?

This booklet aims to provide a stimulating resource for young people looking for a meaningful career that will make a positive difference to the environment. A wide array of jobs is available, extending far beyond the classic roles once associated with it.

You'll find nine case studies of individuals' real life experiences across a broad range of roles within the environment sector. They include a botanist, country park ranger, volunteer co-ordinator and youth engagement officer.

The booklet also gives insight into other, less well-known roles within the sector, some of which have only recently become an option, due to advances in science and technology.

The final page suggests some organisations to approach if you want to find out more about gaining experience in the sector.

**This booklet has been produced by Shropshire Wildlife Trust with funds from the National Lottery Community Fund through the 'Our Bright Future' Programme.**

## Contents

<b>CASE STUDIES</b>	<b>Page</b>
Laura Bacon, People and Nature Officer	3
Mark Duffell, Botanist at Arvensis Ecology and university lecturer	4
Katie Divey-Matthews, Country Park Ranger	5
Ben Rees, Youth Engagement Officer	6
Kate Jones, Conservation Officer	7
Tom Aplin, Volunteer Co-ordinator	8
Gabrielle Graham, Managing Director, SWT Ecology Services	9
Joe Phillips, Conservation Officer	10
Eleanor Healey, Development Officer	11
<b>OTHER ROLE DESCRIPTIONS</b>	
Agricultural Adviser	12
Rights of Way Officer	13
Species Monitoring Officer	14
Waste Management Officer	15
Ecologist	16
Environment Drone Operator	17
Wildlife Photographer/ Film-maker	18
Reserves Officer	19



# Laura Bacon

## People and Nature Officer

### What was your starting point for a career in the environmental sector?

At the age of 15 I knew, through growing up with parents who loved walking and bird watching, that nature was my calling and I decided to try my hand by volunteering at my local country park. I loved it and was so inspired by a female head ranger that I went on to study Wildlife and Practical Conservation at university. It was a four-year course with a placement year, which I spent in Australia.

### What challenges did you face to get to where you are?

I found it extremely difficult to begin with, deciding the right path into environmental conservation. After university the sector is flooded with graduates and it was difficult to find a job, so I had to go in at the lowest level and work my way up to gain experience. It was quite a male-dominated area so sometimes felt overwhelming. It's much better now and there are lots of mentors around to inspire up-and-coming conservationists.

### What are you doing now?

I'm a People and Nature Officer for Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust. My work is all about inspiring and engaging the community on the health and well-being benefits of being in nature. I work to connect people with local green spaces.



## Key Tips

### What key tips would you give to younger people who want to get into this sector?

I recommend getting as much volunteer experience as possible from as early as possible. Meeting people in this sector, making contacts looking into specialisms. There are so many specialist groups you can join to gain valuable experience and find out what area you might like to go into.

### I would say never be put off by challenges or changes to what you had hoped.

These lead in directions and areas that are surprising and can often find something that you never thought you would love - but do. I had always hoped to work in marine conservation as a child but found my calling in connecting people with nature and I love it.

# Mark Duffell

**Director and botanist for Arvensis Ecology,  
lecturer with Manchester Metropolitan University**



## What was your starting point for a career in the environmental sector?

As a child I was fascinated with nature and known as 'nature boy' at school. I always wanted to work in the environmental sector and was initially drawn to aquaculture (I kept and bred tanks of tropical freshwater fish).

At school, marine biology seemed the only option, though I was more interested in freshwater biology. But I was never totally comfortable with this as I would have been (and still am!) too squeamish for much of the animal dissection work involved with biology degrees. Eventually I realised I enjoyed working with plants and developed my knowledge in this area.

The challenge of chasing down an identification is still addictive, something I regularly do in my day job and outside of work, when volunteering. This led me to find out about courses that specialised in teaching practical identification skills. Despite not having a first degree I was able to apply by an alternative route and gained an MSc in Biological Recording. This gave me the knowledge and further practical skills to accurately identify plants and their habitats, as well as write management plans for sites. I initially wanted to work overseas studying more exotic flora but realised that there are more than enough botanical challenges in this country to keep me busy.

## What challenges did you face to get to where you are?

The biggest challenge I faced and still face is my health. During my early teens I became ill with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/ME which meant that I completed two GCSEs via home tuition, but then had a big gap in my education. However, this difficulty gave me a chance to focus on my interests far more than a typical educational route would have done. During those long nights when I could not sleep, I would read and re-read, absorbing information and facts.

What I might lack in a more rounded education was more than compensated for by a depth of knowledge of plants that would be hard to gain at a later stage. A typical university education would almost certainly have taken me on a different route.

## What are you doing now?

I have two jobs, one as a director and botanist for Arvensis Ecology, the other as a part-time lecturer with Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU). At Arvensis we specialise in botanical surveying work, as well as providing training in botanical identification and surveying to a variety of individuals and organisations, such as Natural England. At MMU I teach on the MSc in Biological Recording and Ecological Monitoring.

## Key Tips

Follow your passion! In my case I could find no job that fitted the role I wanted or the skills I had, so I established *Arvensis Ecology* to fill that niche.

### Gain skills

Start trying to establish the skills that your dream job requires, look at the job specifications and see what they require. Skills can be very specific such as learning how to identify trees and shrubs in winter, or more generic such as report writing. Learn presentation skills by giving talks to local groups on a subject that interests you, even if it is only a 5- or 10-minute slot after another event.

### Immerse yourself

Volunteering is a great way to get experience. Join local and national societies and read their publications. Some offer small pots of funding for short courses e.g. the BSBI and the British Bryological Society offer training grants.

### Network

All my jobs have come my way as a result of networking and placing myself in the right area to find opportunities.

### Be flexible, be persistent

An alternative route is to keep your passions for out-of-work hours - one of the best botanists I know works as a milkman, then spends the rest of his time botanising.

# Kate Divey-Matthews

## Country Park Ranger

### What was your starting point for a career in the environmental sector?

About five years ago I was waitressing and was not sure what kind of career I wanted until a trip to the zoo made me realise that wildlife was what I was passionate about. I applied for conservation courses and picked a two-year foundation degree at Nottingham Trent University.

### What challenges did you face to get to where you are?

I didn't have the funds to do more than a two-year course but made up for it by gaining a range of practical and office experience by volunteering with Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust as well as a paid placement with Nottingham Trent's environment team.

### What are you doing now?

I am now a ranger at a country park which is pretty close to my dream job. It includes organising events for the public, managing volunteers, looking after a nature reserve and maintaining park infrastructure such as fences and signage.

## Key Tips

### What key tips would you give to younger people who want to get into this sector?

I recommend volunteering wherever you can to gain a mixture of experience and to make connections in the field you're interested in. I was lucky because my volunteer leader recommended me for a job she had done previously, which helped me to get an interview with my current employer. I think it's worth exploring a job or voluntary opportunity even if you aren't sure it's your cup of tea because knowing what you don't want to do helps you to decide what you do want to do, so try as many things as you can! Also, find adverts for jobs you would like to do and see if the employers value experience or qualifications more to help you with deciding your next steps.



# Ben Rees

## Youth Engagement Officer

### What was your starting point for a career in the environmental sector?

When I was younger, I wanted to be a wizard or failing that a Jedi Knight, but soon realised this was unlikely so I would need an alternative career path. I loved animals so thought it would be cool to be a vet. However, after nearly two years of volunteering at a local veterinary centre I decided that working with domesticated and farm animals was not for me.



I really enjoyed school, particularly biology, and loved David Attenborough's nature documentaries, so after A-levels, I studied zoology at university. On graduation I applied for scores of jobs but was unable to get employment in the conservation sector as I did not have enough relevant experience (or a driving licence).

### What challenges did you face to get to where you are?

I took part-time work at WH Smith while volunteering with as many local conservation and wildlife organisations as I could to gain experience, doing everything from practical work to surveys and people engagement. These organisations included my local Wildlife Trust, Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, the local mammal and dormouse groups, the Canal and Rivers Trust and the local National Park upland path repair volunteers. Additionally, I approached an ecological consultancy who took me on as a paid, casual field assistant, undertaking dawn and dusk bat surveys. It was tricky balancing and financing all this volunteering with my job but it was worth it - I loved volunteering and meeting like-minded people.

I also learned to drive and managed to scrape enough money together to buy my own car. I left my job at Smiths' to undertake a 6-week placement as an ecologist with the local National Park, which was a bit risky. Once this finished I had to sign on at the job centre, but continued to volunteer while looking for another job.

All my experience, plus a full driving license, meant that when a job came up as graduate ecological consultant I was able to apply with confidence - and was successful. The skills, knowledge and transferable skills I learned while shadowing the experienced ecologists were invaluable. However, after nearly two years, I started to feel that ecological consultancy was not quite right for me. Once again, I was without work, so in order to bring in some money while continuing to volunteer and apply for relevant jobs, I worked as a labourer, digging ditches for a hydroelectric scheme in the Black Mountains in Wales. After a few months I was presented with the opportunity to undertake a year-long traineeship with Shropshire Wildlife Trust as a People and Wildlife Officer and I jumped at the chance.

### What are you doing now?

I obtained a City and Guilds qualification and accumulated valuable experience, which led me to my current position at Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, where I work with young people to build their skills and confidence and inspire a genuine interest in wildlife conservation that I hope may lead some of them into courses or careers in the sector.

## Key Tips

- Learn to drive! Almost all jobs in the conservation sector will require you to be able to drive, both in your own vehicle and in the organisation's vehicles.
- Get as much and as varied volunteering experience as possible, including experience volunteering with people. It does not all have to be strictly wildlife or conservation-related and many opportunities will give you valuable transferable skills.
- Keep an eye on job websites and on social media and see what employers are looking for so that you can ensure you tailor your volunteering to make sure you have the right experience and skills.

# Kate Jones

## Conservation Officer

### What was your starting point for a career in the environmental sector?

I was working in a job I didn't like at all. I knew I wanted to get into the conservation sector but didn't know what area, so I started volunteering with local organisations and realised that reserve management and surveying was what I enjoyed most. I then enrolled on an MSc in Wildlife Management and Conservation at the age of 26 to retrain. I had a wonderful study year and then went on to volunteer full-time with the National Trust to acquire the skills to become a ranger.

### What challenges did you face to get to where you are?

The main challenge has been financial – I volunteered a lot to get experience, skills and knowledge. It meant I had to work long shifts on the side of my volunteering to pay for food and travel. The job market is competitive, so you have to put in the time to build your skills, and it was disheartening when I didn't get anywhere with an application, but I persevered and found I was writing better applications and the interview offers started to come in.

### What are you doing now?

After moving around a lot I have found a fantastic job in my home county. I work as a conservation officer for Buglife, running a year-long project that aims to connect up wildflower-rich habitats in Shropshire to provide a beautiful landscape that wildlife can move through freely.

## Key Tips

### What key tips would you give to younger people who want to get into this sector?

Volunteer! It will help you figure out what area of conservation you would like to work in, build your knowledge and skills and give you the chance to network with people working in conservation in your area. It also shows you are dedicated and it's good fun, endlessly fascinating and a good way to make friends.



# Tom Aplin

## Volunteer Co-ordinator

### What was your starting point for a career in the environmental sector?

The very bottom! I studied Film Theory at university without having a clear idea as to how my career was going to develop. Then in 2016 after finishing my degree and being unemployed, I read an article about the decline of nature in the UK and its significance to our wider environmental future.

I decided to start volunteering for Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, to support wildlife in my local area. I volunteered for the education team as well as the practical conservation group for my local nature reserve, and began to learn more about the decline of nature.

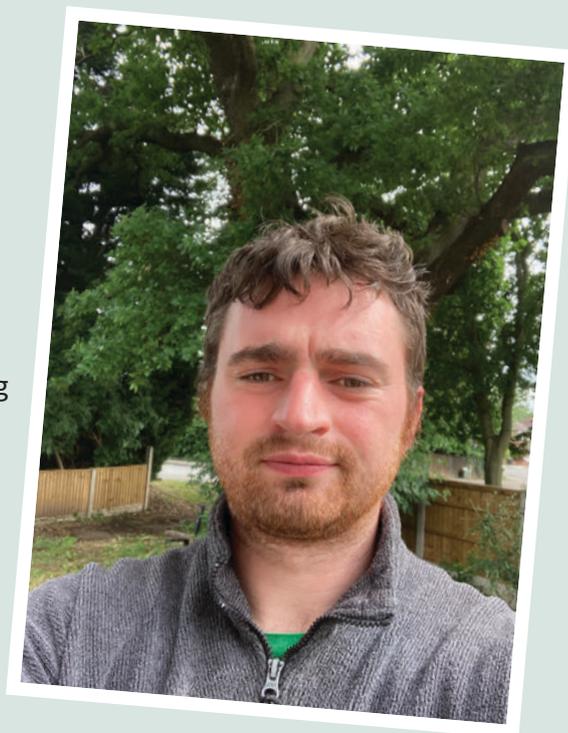
I also started exploring the idea of communities, and how I could support my local area. I discovered the charity Sustrans, which works to create a UK-wide network of traffic-free paths for everyone. I began volunteering for them as a photographer, taking pictures at events they ran. Once a job became available in 2018, I had enough experience through volunteering and knowing the people at the charity to apply and be successful.

### What challenges did you face to get to where you are?

With very little background knowledge and experience in environmental issues and topics, I've been constantly learning to get where I am now. Most knowledge for my current role requires management logistics to deliver: email management, communication skills, meeting management skills and small project co-ordination. These I picked up as the role went on, and from previous administration work I was doing in preparation to my transition to work for a charity. The specific knowledge comes as a bonus and secondary objective to supporting my role.

### What are you doing now?

I'm a volunteer co-ordinator for a UK-wide charity (Sustrans), managing over 200 volunteers in nine counties across the East and West Midlands. I co-ordinate their activities and support their ambitions.



## Key Tips

Volunteer! I've gained everything I know, from knowledge on birds, bicycles and botany from volunteering. I wouldn't be in my role today without volunteering. It opens up connections with groups and people that's not possible otherwise. It's usually only a few hours a week and it can make a big difference to your mental and physical health.

I'd also say be willing to take a risk. The role in the charity I applied for was supposed to last for four months, and the job I was in at the time was a permanent contract, so it was a huge risk to move for me not knowing if I'd be working after this time. Fortunately, my contract was extended and a new permanent role became available, which I was successful in getting, so there was a big reward.

# Gabrielle Graham

## Managing Director, SWT Ecology Services

### What was your starting point for a career in the environmental sector?

Wildlife was always my passion and I was offered two choices in careers advice: vet or zoologist. I didn't have the qualifications for being a vet, so I went for zoologist. On completing my degree, I did some volunteer work for a couple of years, supported by casual work. The voluntary experience was mainly in research institutions as I found social insects fascinating and wanted to pursue a career in research. I found a PhD opportunity but just before being accepted on the programme I realised that actually, I didn't want to spend my career researching small creatures.

### What challenges did you face to get to where you are?

The main difficulty was finding my path. The two years I spent volunteering were key to resolving this. I also selected my masters' dissertation topic specifically to gain skills required for ecological consultancy, and this decision really paid off as I was able to secure my first job on completing my course.

### What are you doing now?

I am currently the Managing Director of SWT Ecology Services, an ecological consultancy owned by Surrey Wildlife Trust.



## Key Tips

### What key tips would you give to younger people who want to get into this sector?

If you're interested in being in ecological consultancy you need passion! It's an amazing sector and can be very challenging at times. As a consultant you need to balance the needs of your client (sometimes a property developer) with the needs of the environment. I love how I can shape projects to ensure wildlife is protected. The sector has come a long way since the start of my career and my clients really understand the need to develop sustainably. I work closely with them to design new housing developments to integrate wildlife into the scheme and hopefully help people interact with nature.

Try to find volunteering opportunities with your local Wildlife Trust or wildlife group. In addition to field-based skills, you also need to be able to write reports, communicate with a range of audiences using different methods of communication (email, face-to-face, phone-calls) and analyse data. I'd recommend you become a member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management so you can follow how the industry is evolving. There are lots of free training opportunities out there, so try to get on board with these, and make a record of what you've attended, and, most importantly, what you've learned.

## Joe Phillips

### Conservation Officer – Data and Evidence

#### What was your starting point for a career in the environmental sector?

My interest in conservation soared as I completed my Zoology undergraduate degree. This led me to a conservation-specific master's degree. During these years I volunteered with organisations within the environment sector, including the zoo and aquarium world, conservation projects abroad and with two Wildlife Trusts.

#### What challenges did you face to get to where you are?

Dealing with the heartache of knockbacks. I spent hours and hours trawling job websites and writing cover letters. I applied for jobs I thought I was well-suited for and yet didn't receive an invitation to interview. I received the most frustrating feedback at interviews stating how well I did and how excellent my application was, but someone else was just that little better. It got me down. I nearly gave up on my dream.

#### What are you doing now?

I am a member of the conservation team at Shropshire Wildlife Trust. I collect, collate, analyse, interpret, and disseminate data, providing people with evidence to inform decision making. The technical side of my job revolves around using GIS software to display data, and results, in a map format. The biggest project I am involved in is the Nature Recovery Network. The aim is to produce a map of opportunity areas to restore and/or create habitat to the benefit of wildlife and people. I collaborate with various stakeholders on this project, from local volunteers to farmers.

## Key Tips

**What key tips would you give to younger people who want to get into this sector?**

The experience you gain outside the environmental sector can help you develop transferable skills, so try not to get frustrated if you don't break into the conservation world as quickly as you'd like to. Polishing up your communication and organisational skills and growing in competence and maturity are essential assets – so it all helps.

Don't give up! Your heartache for the job shows how passionate you are about it – and passion is vitally necessary in the conservation sector.

Volunteering and networking is key. Use your energy and time to show your face, get yourself noticed and earn recognition for your efforts.



# Eleanor Healey

## Development Officer

### What was your starting point for a career in the environmental sector?

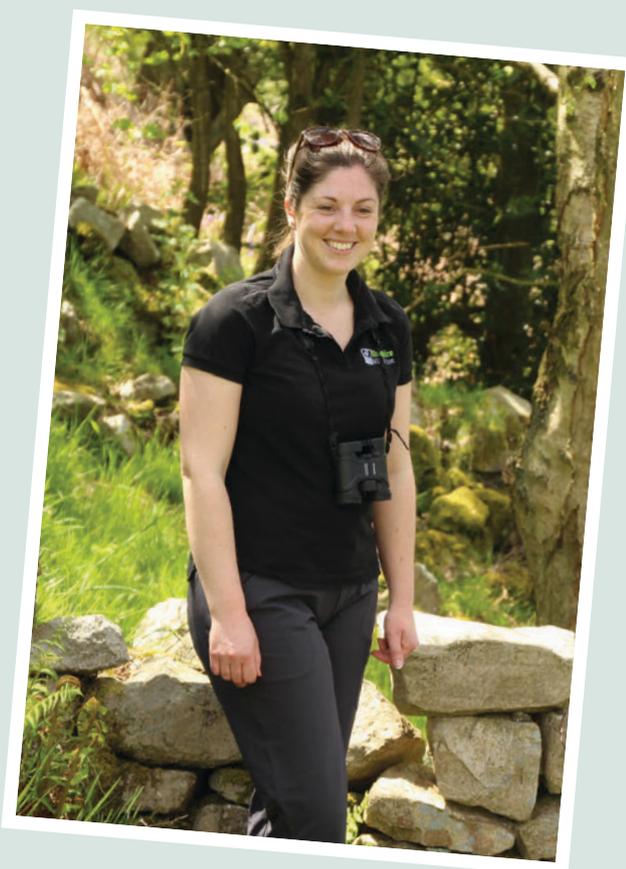
I always knew I wanted to work in the rural sector but wasn't sure quite what role this would be. I did a university degree in Countryside Management, which gave me a broad range of knowledge. Then I started applying for jobs and ended up working for a consultancy that focused on developing funding bids for large heritage buildings. This was a new world to me! I learnt new skills, which eventually led to me applying for a job at Shropshire Wildlife Trust.

### What challenges did you face to get to where you are?

My challenge was that I didn't know what I wanted to do! I've been extremely lucky to find myself a role that I enjoy and to have got there relatively quickly. However, I was only successful in achieving this role because my previous job allowed me to develop a set of skills and knowledge that the Trust needed at the time.

### What are you doing now?

As a development officer, I secure funding for the Trust to allow us to deliver project work – this could be continuing current work, or developing new projects that fit in with funders' requirements. This crosses over to digital fundraising, running appeals through online platforms and crowdfunding. My writing skills also allow me to support our communications and membership teams.



## Key Tips

### What key tips would you give to younger people who want to get into this sector?

It was chiefly the experience I gained through my previous job that landed me my role at the Wildlife Trust – rather than my environmental degree. Work experience gives you a good insight into roles available within an organisation and you may discover opportunities you never knew existed.

# Farm Adviser

This role involves providing advice for landowners on how best to manage their land in an environmentally sustainable manner, reducing water pollution and making improvements for wildlife.

### What you will be expected to do

- Provide landowners and farmers with advice on environment-friendly land management techniques
- Carry out habitat surveys
- Assist with grant applications
- Give management advice for projects to restore wildlife habitats

### Salary

A starting salary can be £22,000, increasing to £35,000 with experience.

### Qualification:

Qualification Level	Course	Entry Requirements
College Diploma	Level 2 Diploma in Agriculture	2 GCSEs grade 9 – 3
	Level 3 Extended Diploma in Agriculture	5 GCSEs grade 9 - 4
University Degree	Agriculture	2 A Levels for a foundation degree
	Biology / Ecology	
	Crop / Soil Science	3 A levels for a degree
	Countryside & Environmental Management	

It's worth looking for degree courses that are accredited by the Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management. It may also be worth considering a postgraduate qualification such as a Master's in Agroecology. Employers will want to see some experience in both the environmental sector and agriculture. Volunteering with a local conservation organisation is a good start.

### Progression

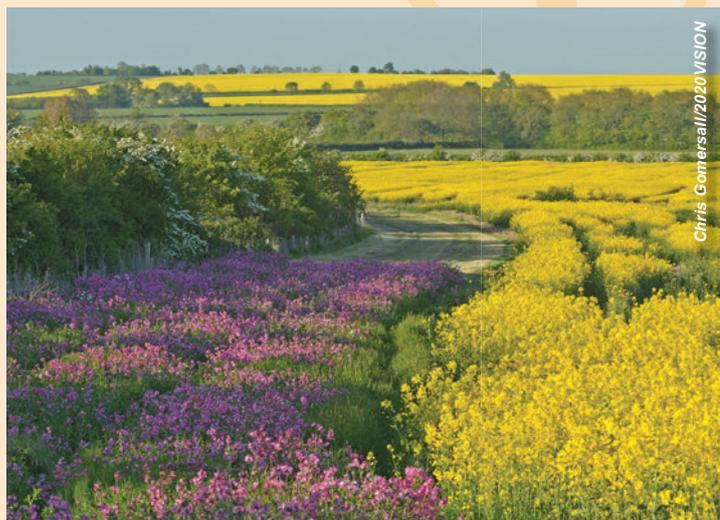
Research and development roles, even into policy development with government organisations.

### Skills

- Good communication skills, both verbal and written
- Knowledge and understanding of habitat management
- Good understanding of current agricultural practices and legislation
- Species identification & knowledge of different habitat types
- Knowledge of habitat and species legislation
- Good IT skills, and experience of using GIS software

### Types of employers:

- Natural England
- The Wildlife Trusts
- RSPB
- Utility companies such as Severn Trent Water



Chris Gomersall/2020 VISION

# Rights of Way Officer

Maintaining the footpath network is increasingly being recognised as integral to supporting local tourism and the wellbeing of communities. The job principally involves checking that paths are accessible and ensuring they follow an acceptable route.

## What you will be expected to do

- Maintain the surface of public rights of way and enhance conditions on priority routes
- Ensure paths are clearly way-marked
- Remove obstructions
- Preserve bridges and ensure gates and stiles are useable
- Work with landowners, parish councils and local volunteer groups

## Salary

£30,000

## Qualification:

Start by getting a qualification in Countryside Management:

Qualification Level	Course	Entry Requirements
College Diploma	Level 2 Diploma in Countryside & Environment	2 GCSEs grade 9 – 3
	Level 3 Diploma in Countryside Management	5 GCSEs grade 9 - 4
University Degree	Environmental Studies	2 A Levels for a foundation degree
	Countryside Management	3 A levels for a degree

Then, in order to specialise, training in:

- Countryside management skills including: installing stiles, gates, bridges and steps and improving surfaces; chainsaw, hedge-cutter and brush-cutter operation
- Rights of way laws and practice
- GIS, ArcGIS and MapInfo software training

## Skills

- Good communication, tact, diplomacy & patience
- Appreciation of the countryside, farming, forestry and wildlife
- Ability to read a map and walk over long distances
- Ability to communicate with members of the public
- Skills in writing and presenting reports
- Good IT and organisation Skills
- Knowledge of using Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

## Types of employers:

- City or County Council
- Natural England
- National Parks



# Species Monitoring Officer

This role involves monitoring and protecting species that may be endangered to promote their survival.

You will carry out regular surveys and analyse your findings, then work to protect, manage and enhance the local environment for these specific species.

### What you will be expected to do

- Regularly survey and monitor key habitats
- Maintain effective records using IT database systems
- Supervise and train supporting staff and volunteers
- Work in partnership with local and national groups to write and implement biodiversity action plans
- Educate the wider community on relevant issues
- Keep your knowledge of policies and legislations up-to-date

### Salary

Initial salaries are £18,000 to £24,000, managerial roles can be £30,000 and over.

### Qualification:

You can get into this career through college or university courses

Qualification Level	Course	Entry Requirements
College Diploma	Level 2 Diploma in Countryside and Environment	2 GCSEs grade 9 – 3
	Level 3 Certificate in Countryside Management	5 GCSEs grade 9 - 4
University Degree	Countryside or environmental management	2 A Levels for a foundation degree
	Biology, Geography or Ecology	3 A levels for a degree
	Environmental Science	

### Skills

- Good attention to detail
- Able to work independently and as part of a team
- Good communication skills, both written and verbal
- Good IT skills, including knowledge of geographical information systems (GIS)

### Types of employers:

- Environment Agency (EA)
- Natural England
- RSPB
- The Wildlife Trusts



# Waste Management Officer

An awareness of the environment and sustainability and the ability to understand legislation are just some of the skills you'll need as a waste management officer. You will organise waste disposal, collection and recycling facilities.

## What you will be expected to do

- Supervise waste management schemes, such as at landfill sites
- Manage the transportation of waste to ensure that it takes place efficiently without contaminating air, land, or water sources
- Manage budgets for waste disposal
- Collate statistics and write reports, often to strict deadlines
- Communicate with residents, community groups, councillors, housing associations and traders' associations about waste management issues, identify their requirements and provide appropriate solutions

## Salary

Starting salaries vary between £22,000 and £25,000 rising to £45,000 at senior levels as an operations manager or chartered waste manager.

## Qualifications:

Qualification Level	Course	Entry Requirements
College Diploma	Level 3 Certificate in Principles of Sustainable Waste Management	5 GCSEs grade 9 – 4
University Degree	Waste Management	2 A levels for a foundation degree
	Environmental Science	
	Biology / Chemistry / Physics / Geography	3 A levels for a degree
	Earth / Environmental Science	

Many employers prefer a degree accredited by the Chartered Institution of Waste Management.

## Progression

With additional qualifications you could become a Chartered Waste Manager.

## Skills

- An understanding of legislation relating to waste and the environment
- An appreciation of issues relating to environment and sustainability
- Good communication skills, both verbal and written
- Good organisational and administrative skills
- Good IT and general office skills

## Types of employers:

Private waste management firms and consultancies, industrial organisations, environmental agencies, and non-profit-making conservation projects

- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
- Environment Agency (EA)



# Ecologist

An ecologist works to protect and restore the natural environment by providing information about how human activity affects specific species and ecosystems.

## You can specialise in different ways

- **Ecological Scientist** - Carry out fieldwork surveying and recording information on plants, animals, environmental conditions and biodiversity
- **Ecological Consultant** - Investigate the impact of human activity, such as housing and intensive agriculture, on the environment or specific habitats
- **Landscape Ecologist** - Develop and create wildlife conservation areas, such as woodland and meadows

## Salary

Graduate starting salaries range from £22,000 to £25,000. For those with two to five years' experience salaries can increase up to £35,000. A senior ecologist could earn between £45,000 and £60,000.

## Qualifications:

Entry can be via an apprenticeship or, more commonly, university courses.

Qualification Level	Course	Entry Requirements
Apprenticeship	Level 4 as an Environmental Practitioner	5 GCSEs grade 9 – 4 & A levels
University Degree	Ecology / Environmental Science	3 A levels
	Biology / Chemistry	
	Conservation Biology / Zoology	
	Agricultural Science	

It's also common for employers to look for a postgraduate qualification and experience working in the sector. Some employers may offer a postgraduate ecologist degree apprenticeship which usually takes around three years to complete. Volunteering is vital to gain experience. It will also give you the chance to develop your practical skills.

## Progression

With experience, you could progress to a senior or principal ecologist position. You may also be able to apply for a Chartered Environmentalist position through membership of the Society for the Environment.

## Skills

- Good mathematical & analytical skills
- To be thorough and pay attention to detail
- The ability to use your initiative
- Outstanding written and verbal communication skills
- Good knowledge of geography and map skills
- Good IT skills, and experience of software such as GIS

## Types of employers:

A variety of organisations employ ecologists, including Nature Conservation Agencies, Government organisations and Non-governmental & wildlife organisations.



# Environment Drone Operator

This role involves gathering geographical and spatial information and its storage, analysis and presentation.

## What you will be expected to do

- Learn to safely pilot an unmanned aerial vehicle
- Use a range of GPS tools in the field to capture the location of assets
- Transfer the data to IT systems for analysis

## Salary

Starting salaries can be £19,000 up to £28,500 for more experienced people

## Pathways to this career

- Complete a Level 3 Certificate or Level 4 Diploma in the Remote Piloting of Unmanned Aircraft
- Apply directly to companies. They will expect you to have experience of flying drones, with at least 40 hours of recorded flying time
- Specialist courses approved by the Civil Aviation Authority

After completing your training, you can apply for the Permission for Commercial Operations certificate, which is required to fly drones for commercial purposes. You must renew the certificate every 12 months.

## Skills

- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- IT skills, including the use and manipulation of complex databases and spreadsheets
- Mathematical skills with the ability to analyse data and statistics
- Presentation and project management skills
- Teamworking skills and the ability to work independently

## Types of employers:

A variety of organisations including government departments, environmental consultancies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).



# Wildlife Photographer/ Filmmaker

This is an exceptionally competitive field demanding a strong level of commitment, technical expertise and passion.

## What you would need to do

- Chase up and create opportunities for yourself
- Use a wide range of technical gear, including cameras, lenses, lighting and specialist software
- Work in a variety of locations to capture different images and film
- Develop a portfolio, building up contacts with others in the industry in order to secure future projects

## Salary

As with other artistic professions, salaries vary enormously. As a freelance photographer, your income is likely to fluctuate from year to year.

Starting salary for assistant producers may be £18,000 to £25,000. With experience, salaries can reach £40,000 to £60,000.

## Qualifications:

There are a variety of different college and university courses you could consider.

Qualification Level	Course	Entry Requirements
College Diploma	Level 2 Certificate in Photography	2 GCSEs grade 9 – 3
	Level 2 Diploma in Creative Media Production & Technology	
	Level 3 Certificate in Media Techniques	5 GCSEs grade 9 - 4
	Level 3 Diploma in Photography	
University Degree	Photography / Art & Design	2 A levels for a foundation degree
	Visual Arts	3 A levels for a degree, including Photography
	Commercial Photography	

Look for a course that offers hands-on experience, perhaps through a work placement.

## Progression

Numerous photographers and filmmakers are self-employed. You could do a combination of contract work and developing your own interests. It can be useful to specialise in a particular field, such as underwater filming or aerial photography.

## Skills

- Confidence in your ability
- Strong communication and people skills
- Skills for presenting and pitching ideas
- Strong time management skills
- Exceptional technical skills, using both digital and film cameras, and industry-standard software such as Photoshop
- Creativity and an eye for detail
- The ability to work both independently and in a team, building rapport with clients, colleagues and other businesses



## Types of employers:

These could include television production companies and print/digital publications.

# Nature Reserves Officer

You work to protect, manage and improve the natural environment. You might be based on specific reserves, or a range of different sites, and be responsible for a variety of different habitats.

## What you will be expected to do

- Undertake practical management and monitoring tasks on nature reserves
- Design and write management plans
- Establish groups of volunteers to help with practical tasks
- Work with local landowners on management of sites
- Engage with members of the public visiting reserves

## Salary

A starting salary is £18,000 to £24,000. Wages at senior level can be up to £30,000. Skilled managers may earn more than this.

## Qualifications

Entry into this role can be via apprenticeship, college or university courses:

Qualification Level	Course	Entry Requirements
Apprenticeship	Level 2 Countryside Worker	English & Maths GCSE
	Level 4 Countryside Ranger	5 GCSEs grade 9 – 4, and A Levels
College Diploma	Level 2 Diploma in Countryside & Environment	2 GCSEs grade 9 – 3
	Level 3 Diploma in Countryside Management	5 GCSEs grade 9 - 4
University Degree	Environmental Science	2 A levels for a foundation degree
	Countryside Management	3 A levels for a degree
	Biology / Geography / Ecology	

## Progression

Paid or unpaid work experience can be very useful when applying for your first job. With time and experience, you could become a Senior Reserves Officer or Manager, and then a Regional Manager.

## Skills

- Good verbal communication skills
- The ability to work well on your own and as part of a team
- Good IT skills, including specialist mapping software such as GIS
- A chainsaw licence
- A good knowledge and understanding of ecology and of local wildlife
- An understanding of legislation relating to the environment
- Willingness to work outside in all weathers

## Types of employers:

Both national and local conservation charities will have roles for Reserves Officers, as will some government organisations.



# USEFUL ORGANISATIONS

## Volunteering, skills and employment opportunities

### Check out websites for the following:

#### **The Wildlife Trusts**

With 46 independent Wildlife Trusts across the UK this is a grassroots movement of people from a wide range of backgrounds and all walks of life, on a mission to restore a third of the UK's land and seas for nature by 2030.

#### **Groundwork UK**

Practical community action for a greener environment

#### **RSPB**

Britain's foremost bird charity

#### **National Trust**

Owens and manages large areas of land for nature

#### **The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)**

Great community volunteering opportunities

#### **Field Studies Council**

FSC offers a range of courses, both online and in the field. This is a great way to build up any skills and knowledge for getting into the environmental sector.

#### **Local groups**

Check out your college/university society groups to get involved with projects. Research your local area to find further environmental opportunities.

#### **Countryside jobs service (CJS)**

This is a great resource to find both volunteering and job opportunities.

**A focus on nature** connects, supports and inspires young people, aged 16-30 with an interest in nature and conservation via social media, events and mentoring schemes.

#### **For Purpose Jobs**

A useful website for anyone looking for jobs with a positive social or environmental impact.

**Shropshire Wildlife Trust, 193 Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury SY2 6AH.**

**01743 284280**

**[www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk)**



**Registered charity: 212744**

**Shropshire Wildlife Trust is a company limited by guarantee in England and Wales (729746).**