

Nature Conservationist

Nature conservationists are responsible for the practical management of the countryside. They develop policies to preserve and protect areas such as woodlands, fields, rivers, mountains, forests or coastal areas, to develop awareness and understanding and to encourage visitors.

The Work

You could be:

- monitoring plants, wildlife and habitats and recording results
- leading and managing staff and volunteers in conservation work or projects
- investigating how developments in agriculture and industry affect the local environment through factors such as fertilisers in the soil and waste in rivers
- giving advice to farmers, landowners or their advisers on helping preserve the wildlife and habitats on their land
- working out the effects of developments such as housing, and advising other professionals such as planners and landscape architects
- making sure people observe countryside and environmental regulations
- analysing data, researching and writing reports and preparing information leaflets
- giving talks and presentations to other specialists and to the public, running training courses and organising exhibitions
- applying for grants and funding.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

Starting salaries for suitably qualified nature conservationists tends to be around £20,000 a year. Experienced conservationists and project managers may earn up to £30,000 and above.

Conditions

- You would be based in an office or other centre, but there is outdoor work.
- Outdoor work can be wet, cold or windy and you may have to do some physical work.
- You might work in remote locations.
- You may have to travel to a number of different sites on a regular basis.
- The work can include irregular hours, evenings and weekends.
- Part time and seasonal work are sometimes available.

Getting In

- Entry to this job can be very competitive.
- There is a varied range of jobs, some may require more outdoor skills than others, while some will be more involved with policy.
- Qualifications at HNC (SCQF Level 7), HND (SCQF Level 8) or degree (SCQF Level 9-11) level may be required, depending on the specifics of the job. Useful subjects include conservation, countryside management, ecology, environmental science, rural resource management or a similar subject.
- Entry requirements can range from 1-2 Highers for an HNC or HND, up to 4-5 Highers for a degree. Relevant subjects include Environmental Science, Geography or science subjects.
- Previous work experience in the countryside, including voluntary work or internships, is very useful and can provide an alternative route into this career.
- The [Conservation Volunteers \(TCV\)](#) list all local volunteering opportunities on their website.
- You may need a full, clean driving licence.
- You should be fit as there may be a lot of active work.

Nature conservationists work for government departments and agencies such as the [Forestry and Land Scotland](#), [NatureScot](#), environmental research centres and voluntary conservation organisations such as the [National Trust for Scotland \(NTS\)](#) and the [Royal Society for the Protection of Birds \(RSPB\)](#).

What Does It Take

You need to have:

- a strong interest in conservation and the natural environment
- a logical and scientific approach
- good spoken and written communication skills
- tact and diplomacy
- leadership skills
- organisational skills.

You need to be:

- able to analyse and interpret data
- willing to work outdoors in cold, wet or windy weather
- alert and observant
- able to work both on your own and as part of a team
- practical and able to use hand tools and equipment
- energetic.

Training

- You would train and gain experience on the job.
- You would attend short courses, training sessions and conferences to keep up to date with new developments.
- The [Field Studies Council](#) runs professional development courses for environmental professionals.
- The [Conservation Volunteers \(TCV\)](#) offer a variety of long and short training courses in areas such as

building stone walls, fundraising, leading groups to environmental conservation.

- You may study part time for a postgraduate degree if you don't already have one.
- You may also aim for membership of a relevant professional body.

Getting On

- With experience, you may be able to gain promotion to a senior post in a government agency or voluntary body.
- You could become an adviser to wildlife or conservation trusts or other environmental organisations.
- You could move into teaching or lecturing or develop a new career in environmental journalism.
- There can be opportunities abroad with national governments and national and international conservation organisations.

Contacts

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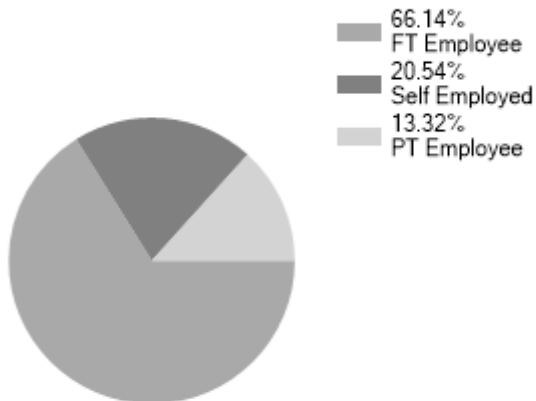
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Statistics

Employment Status UK %

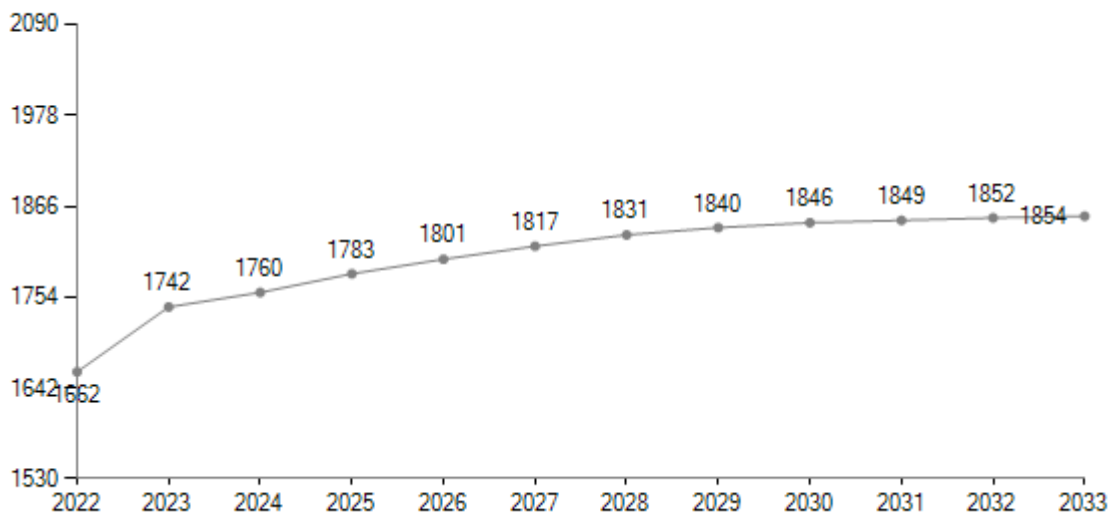


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by [LMI for All](#)

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)