Zoologist

Zoologists are scientists who study animals, their evolution, anatomy, behaviour and environment. They can work in fields such as ecology and conservation, forestry, medicine, fisheries, agriculture and education.

The Work

You could be:

- studying fish (ichthyology), birds (ornithology), mammals (mammalogy), insects (entomology), parasites (parasitology) or reptiles (herpetology), or areas such as physiology, evolution, ecology, morphology, genetics or embryology
- identifying, monitoring, studying and classifying different species of animal and recording the data on computer
- surveying animals in their natural environment or in a laboratory and making recommendations on how to protect endangered animals in their habitat
- involved in animal rehabilitation and the release of animals into their natural environment
- developing new ways of fighting insect-borne diseases such as malaria, or testing the ingredients of drugs for the pharmaceutical industry
- giving talks about the environment and leading guided walks for educational organisations
- managing and maintaining animal collections in museums or local heritage or wildlife centres
- carrying out experiments, collecting and analysing data, writing reports and making recommendations
- working as part of a team of scientists and other staff, perhaps leading and planning projects.

Pay

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

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

Salaries for zoologists vary depending on the type of work done. Starting salaries can vary from £20,000 to £25,000 a year. With experience this can rise to around £30,000 a year. Senior zoologists and those working in research or academic posts can earn up to £45,000 a year or more.

Conditions

- Depending on the type of work you do, you could be working indoors (in a laboratory, office, lecture theatre or classroom, for example) or outdoors gathering information in the animals' natural habitat (doing field research).
- In the laboratory you are likely to wear a lab coat or other protective clothing.
- Outdoors you could be on foot in rough or remote areas and in all kinds of weather.
- In some jobs you may have to deal with dangerous species or be at risk of infection.
- Working hours are usually regular, but if you are doing experiments or out in the field you may work at

anytime of day or night.
- You may have to travel to conferences and you could travel abroad, possibly to tropical countries.

Getting In

- You usually need a degree (SCQF Levels 9-11) in a biological science such as biology, animal biology, zoology, ecology or environmental sciences.
- Many applicants have a relevant postgraduate qualification such as a Master of Science (MSc) (SCQF Level 11) or PhD (SCQF Level 12).
- For entry to a degree course, you need 4-5 Highers, usually including at least 2 from Maths, Biology, Chemistry and Physics.
- You will normally have to get some voluntary experience before getting any work in this area, perhaps volunteering on field survey trips or working in a research lab.

You could work in industry (in companies that develop and manufacture pesticides or pharmaceuticals for example) or with organisations and agencies (such as government departments or agencies and research centres) concerned with forestry, agriculture, conservation, ecology or health. Other employers include museums, zoos and wildlife parks, and universities.

What Does It Take

You need to be:

- practical, logical and methodical
- interested in and enthusiastic about animals and the environment
- observant and have an eye for detail
- patient and willing to persevere
- accurate and careful when carrying out work and keeping records
- able to work on your own initiative as well as in a team
- able to analyse and interpret data.

You need to have:

- project management skills
- excellent written and spoken communication skills
- an interest in animals, ecology and conservation.

Training

- Training is normally on the job.
- You would keep up to date with developments in your specialised subject through attending seminars and conferences.
- You may also study for a postgraduate qualification.
- You would have to develop knowledge of laws and licences relating to ecology and conservation.

Getting On

- You could become the leader of a project, or manager of a laboratory.
- If you do a PhD you might get into research or university teaching.
- It may be useful to become a member of a related professional body, such as the Royal Society of Biology or Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).
- If you work in the scientific civil service or in a university department there will be a formal promotional structure.
- You could become a self-employed consultant.
- There are opportunities to work abroad.

Contacts

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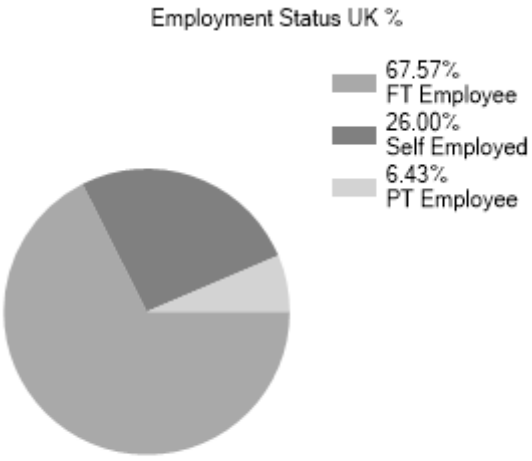
Statistics



Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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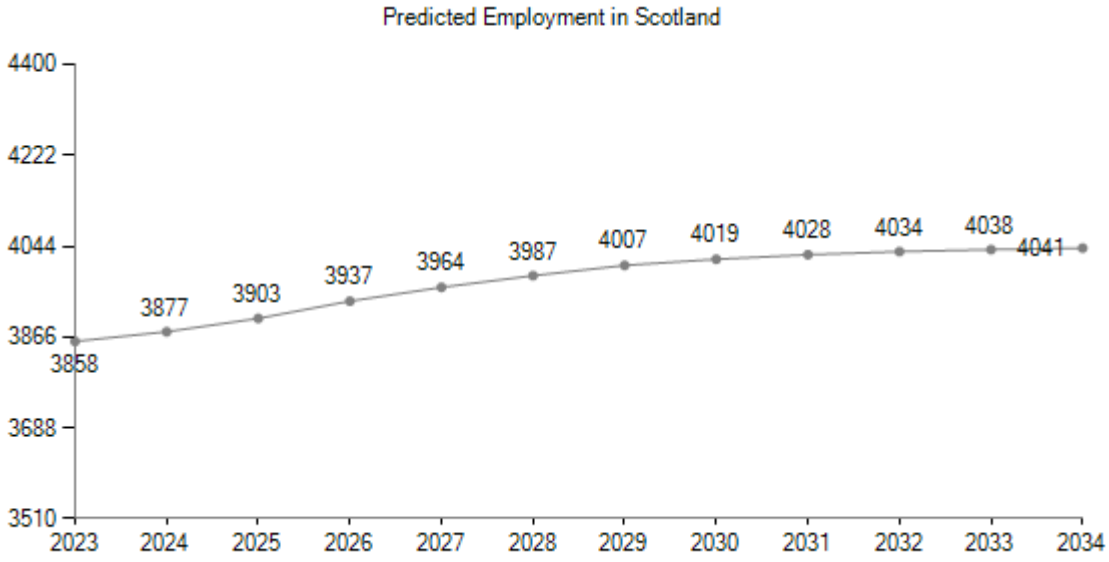

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