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Careers in Wildlife Services

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Careers in Wildlife Services

Wildlife Damage Management

Because wildlife is a valuable and publicly owned resource, Federal and State governments are responsible for maintaining healthy, stable wildlife populations. When wildlife causes damage, government also has an obligation to control that damage on behalf of the public. Responsibility at the Federal level has been legislatively delegated to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) through its Wildlife Services (WS) program.

Role of WS

Maintaining a balance between a range of cultural, environmental, and economic factors and the needs of those directly affected by wildlife damage requires sensitivity. If government specialists do not provide reasonable and prudent solutions to damage loss situations, affected individuals may attempt a solution on their own that could be ecologically harmful. By providing a sound, efficient response to wildlife damage complaints, WS helps to reduce the frustration felt by the person suffering wildlife damage, promotes tolerance toward the offending species, and avoids the likelihood of ecologically unacceptable control attempts. WS strives to strike a balance in human-wildlife conflicts through:

- Collection, evaluation, and dissemination of information,
- Training of wildlife management professionals, and
- Cooperative wildlife damage management programs that are supported by a strong commitment to environmental sensitivity.

Your Career in WS

For some wildlife species, the need for damage management is at the highest level in decades. Efforts toward conservation are paying off with higher population levels of some animals. But increased suburbanization and the conversion of land to developed uses have created greater and more frequent conflicts between animals and people.

By selecting a career with WS, you will have a unique opportunity to help people and, at the same time, conserve and improve America's natural resources for future generations. You will work with many different wildlife species and communicate with a wide range of people. Access to the latest technol-

ogy is provided by WS' well-known research branch, the National Wildlife Research Center. Interaction with other Federal, State, and local agencies will keep you up-to-date on the latest developments in the wildlife field.

Education is also an important component of the WS program. In addition to providing recommendations and information to individuals who sustain damage, WS employees give lectures and demonstrations to farmers, ranchers, homeowners, university classes, and other interested groups.

APHIS encourages its employees to maintain professional affiliations and makes education and training available through workshops, seminars, and on-the-job educational programs. A career with WS may be full-time, part-time, or temporary. Depending on your education and interests, you may be qualified to work for WS in one of these challenging assignments:

Wildlife Specialists are assigned to specific projects to ensure that control methods are being used correctly and to record the effect a particular method has on reducing or preventing damage. These specialists conduct operational duties, including the trapping and relocation of birds and mammals that cause damage to agriculture, natural resources, or property.

Wildlife Biologists are responsible for the dissemination and/or implementation of proven or newly developed methods of reducing wildlife damage. They may also work on developing management plans to increase the success rate of any given technique. For example, wildlife biologists in Nebraska help protect the endangered interior least tern and the three-lined piping plover while biologists in Ohio, Texas, and Vermont help stop the spread of rabies in wildlife.

Wildlife Biologists (Research) work to develop or improve methods of reducing damage caused by wildlife species in a wide variety of damage situations. These specialists conduct experiments on such wide-ranging subjects as the effectiveness of wildlife contraception delivered by vaccination and the use of repellents, electronic trap-monitoring devices, and habitat modification to control wildlife damage.

Computer Assistants maintain a data base of wildlife damage complaints, operational projects, instructional sessions, surveys, assessments, exhibits, and information requests. They may also assist in office support situations.

Budget Assistants/Analysts compile and maintain budgetary data. They analyze expenditures and other information for use in annual work planning and coordinate daily office administrative functions.

Internships and Summer Volunteers fill paying but time-limited positions in a wide range of WS disciplines.

Sources of Career Information

The WS program provides careers that are interesting and rewarding. If you are interested in learning more about the USDA/APHIS/WS program, please contact one of the WS offices listed below or visit the APHIS Web site at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov>.

USDA/APHIS/WS
Eastern Regional Office
Suite 200
920 Main Campus Drive
Raleigh, NC 27606
(919) 716-5636

USDA/APHIS/WS
National Wildlife Research Center
4101 LaPorte Avenue
Fort Collins, CO 80521
(970) 266-6000

USDA/APHIS/WS
Western Regional Office
Suite 204
12345 W. Alameda Parkway
Lakewood, CO 80228
(303) 969-6560

You may also contact the nearest branch of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to receive information about vacancies nationwide or to become familiar with the requirements of a particular position. OPM maintains a Web site with a listing of all Federal civil service jobs currently vacant. Go to <http://www.opm.gov> to search the job listings electronically.

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