

Career Profile: Ecologist Researcher

Ecologists use their broad knowledge of biological principles and research techniques to better understand the interactions of living organisms with each other and with the environment in which they live. The ultimate goal of their investigative work both in the laboratory and field settings is to identify how best to manage natural resources and conserve the environment. Ecologists usually work in fields such as agriculture, forestry, nature conservation, pollution control, population dynamics, and the disciplines related to environmental conservation and management.

Education Requirements

National Senior Certificate (NSC)

For a career in ecology students are advised to select Mathematics, Physical Science and Biology and to add to this a selection from the designated subjects. These are subjects that are particularly suitable for tertiary study.

Bachelor Degree

Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Economics – BSc (Agri. Econ/Agri. Business) (4 years)

A four year degree programme that focuses on developing knowledge and skills for entry into careers in agricultural economics/agribusiness.

BCom (Agri-business) (3 years) economics and business management for agriculture

BAgric. Admin option (3 years) with Agricultural Economics and Animal and Plant production.

Offered at:

- [North-West University¹](http://www.puk.ac.za/fakulteite/natuur/index_e.html) (Faculty of Natural Sciences - Potchefstroom Campus)
- [University of Pretoria²](http://web.up.ac.za/default.asp?ipkCategoryID=48) (Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences)

Admission requirements

As admission requirements vary from one institution to another, find out what the specific requirements are by checking on the website and contacting the university if you have any queries.

¹ http://www.puk.ac.za/fakulteite/natuur/index_e.html

² <http://web.up.ac.za/default.asp?ipkCategoryID=48>

Possible Employers

- [CSIR](#)³
- Universities
- [Department of Agriculture](#)⁴
- [Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism](#)⁵
- [Department of Water affairs and Forestry](#)⁶
- [The National Parks Board](#)⁷
- Museums
- Large industries who have an interest in conservation

Find out more

Find out more about ecology, game farming and conservation, bursaries and jobs:

- [Ecologists: Profile Directory](#)⁸
- [A story about the relocation of some wild dogs from the Shamwari Game Reserve](#)⁹ in the Eastern Cape to the Madikwe Game Reserve with the expertise of Declan Hofmeyr, the Madikwe Field Ecologist and guidance of WAG (Wild dog Advisory Group)
- [The curriculum vitae of a Botanist and Ecologist](#)¹⁰ It gives a feel for the type of projects that are possible.

³ <http://www.csir.co.za/>

⁴ <http://www.daff.gov.za/>

⁵ <http://www.environment.gov.za/>

⁶ <http://www.dwaf.gov.za/>

⁷ <http://www.parks-sa.co.za/>

⁸ <http://www.esa.org/ecologists/>

⁹ <http://www.ananzitravel.co.za/cgi-bin/ananzitravel/search.pl?id:1201678246>

¹⁰ http://www.bohlweki.co.za/img/File/cent_Way/Appendix%20E1%20Specialists%20cv%20-%20Flora.pdf

Are you suited to this career?

This quick quiz can help you to identify whether you are suited for this occupation. The questions are based on interests, characteristics and values typical of people who work as ecologist researchers.

Quiz	Yes	No
Are you deeply interested in and enthusiastic about nature?		
Do you have excellent observation skills that enable you to note tiny differences in detail?		
Are you able to think logically and persist in searching for answers to complex questions?		
Do you have the stamina to cope with field work under demanding conditions?		
Are you able to communicate well orally and in writing?		
Are you able to work independently and as part of a team?		
Are you interested in the life sciences?		
Do you work methodically to achieve your plans?		
Are you prepared to do routine work in recording data that you collect?		
Are you prepared to work unusual hours?		

If you have mainly yes answers it may be an indication that this is an occupation to consider.