

University vs. Technical School:

Most technical schools offer a two-year degree and have courses which will address most of the entry level requirements. If you choose to go to a technical school or two-year college make sure the school is accredited and courses offered are transferable to other colleges and universities.

A Bachelor or Master of Science degree from a university is preferred by most employers and offers you better promotional opportunities. Regardless of which educational institution you choose to attend be a conscientious student. Good grades are important. Jobs in fisheries and wildlife are limited and turnover is low; therefore, those with the highest grades will be in a better position to compete for the few available positions.



Wildlife Officer

The position of wildlife officer requires all the skills and knowledge already mentioned and more. The position is one of the most demanding in the fish and wildlife field; opportunities are limited and competition for openings is intense. The wildlife officer is quite often the only contact the general public has with the Division of Wildlife. The acceptance of wildlife conservation programs is determined largely by the abilities and actions of the wildlife officer. Therefore, it is imperative that individuals with outstanding knowledge of the job and of unquestionable character be selected for these positions.



A state wildlife officer is assigned to each of Ohio's 88 counties. The officer assigned to the county is required to live in that county. Approximately five wildlife investigators are assigned to each of the five wildlife districts and Lake Erie.

Law enforcement is an important part of the job of the wildlife officer; however, he or she is also much involved with fish management, wildlife management, and information and education projects.



Law Enforcement

Wildlife officers enforce laws of the Ohio Revised Code and Ohio Administrative Code relative to wildlife resources, property owned or administered by the Division of Wildlife, stream littering, and all other areas of responsibility of the Division of Wildlife.

Activities include inspection of hunters, trappers, fishermen, license issuing agents, and holders of various types of permits and licenses issued by the Division of Wildlife, for compliance with laws and regulations. Officers are required to execute search warrants, make arrests, investigate reported violations, prepare affidavits, and testify in court on behalf of the Division of Wildlife.



Fish & Wildlife Management

Wildlife officers are often called upon when a wild animal has become a nuisance in a populated area. Officers are required to have a working knowledge of current fish and wildlife management projects and be able to give technical advice and hands-on help in the administration of these projects. Activities may include collecting information and samples by wildlife surveys, hunter bag checks, creel censuses, test nettings, and the like. Installing and maintaining artificial nesting structures is also a primary responsibility.

Information & Education

Wildlife officers are often called on to speak at public functions in the community and around the state. Keeping the public informed of current wildlife activities and programs is a responsibility of the wildlife officer. Officers are always available for teaching seminars, workshops, field days, etc., related to outdoor education, especially sportsmen's ethics, fishing, hunting and trapping methods, hunter and trapper education, waterfowl identification, and fish and wildlife management techniques.

Minimum Qualifications

Applicants must be 21 years old and possess a valid driver's license. Applicants for this position must possess at least an associates degree or completion of an undergraduate core program in fish and/or wildlife management, criminal justice, environmental law enforcement or related fields. Applicants must be able to swim 100 yards in 5 minutes or less and tread water for a minimum of 5 minutes; must demonstrate physical fitness using standards established by the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission.

Essential Knowledge, Abilities & Skills

College training is necessary for the wildlife officer position. Refer to the "In College" section of this publication for recommended fields of study. Farming experience and a knowledge of agronomy and forestry are also beneficial. Knowledge of the life histories and habitat requirements of fish and wildlife species common to Ohio is highly desirable. It is also helpful to have a thorough understanding of legal methods used to harvest fish and game and to be capable of operating the equipment and tools commonly used. The ability to develop and maintain working relationships with local law enforcement agencies, and to work with and speak to the public effectively is essential. An applicant must be able to write and prepare records and reports clearly. Experience in firearms, boat safety, and first aid training is helpful. He/she must also be able to work additional hours during peak hunting and fishing seasons.

Career Opportunities

Individuals hired as wildlife officers will enter the service as a wildlife officer cadet. Cadets will complete 500 hours of peace officer training in addition to approximately 12 weeks of wildlife officer preservice training school. During this training period cadets receive the base salary plus lodging and meals.

Salary and Benefits

Civil Service Title	Approximate Annual Salary
Wildlife Officer Cadet	\$33,000
Wildlife Officer/Investigator	\$38,000-\$52,000

Fringe benefits include an in-house office allowance, health insurance, vacation, sick leave and personal leave allowances, uniforms, longevity pay, and all other benefits relating to state employees.

Applications for this position are accepted only when it has been offered through a public posting. Information on job postings can be obtained at any local Department of Natural Resources' office or by calling the ODNR Office of Human Resources at 614/265-6990, and on the internet at www.wildohio.com.

If you need more information, or would like to talk to a fish or wildlife professional, feel free to call one of our district offices or the central office in Columbus for an appointment.



Division of Wildlife Headquarters

2045 Morse Road, Bldg. G
Columbus, Ohio 43229-6693
614/265-6300

Wildlife District 1

1500 Dublin Road
Columbus, Ohio 43215
614/644-3925

Wildlife District 2

952 Lima Avenue
Findlay, Ohio 45840
419/424-5000



Wildlife District 3

912 Portage Lakes Drive
Akron, Ohio 44319
330/644-2293

Wildlife District 4

360 East State Street
Athens, Ohio 45701
740/589-9930

Wildlife District 5

1076 Old Springfield Pike
Xenia, Ohio 45385
937/372-9261

The ODNR Division of Wildlife offers equal opportunity regardless of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex (in educational programs). If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility, you should contact: The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office for Diversity and Civil Rights Programs-External Programs, 4040 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 130, Arlington, VA 22203; or, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, EEO Office, 2045 Morse Road, Bldg. C-4, Columbus, OH 43229-6693.

Ted Strickland, Governor • Sean D. Logan, Director
Dave Graham, Chief

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Planning A Career



in the Field of Fish and Wildlife Law Enforcement



A love for the out-of-doors and for the sports of hunting and fishing are influences which may motivate you toward a career in fish and wildlife law enforcement.

If your goal is to get a job in this field, start preparing early.

In High School:

Besides your core courses, you should emphasize courses in the sciences such as biology, chemistry, and math, and in communications including composition, and public speaking. Taking advanced courses in these areas is recommended. Participation in natural resource classes, Scouting, 4H, and FFA activities is also recommended.

In College:

It is practically impossible to obtain even an entry level position without a college education. Some colleges or universities do not offer a major in wildlife or fisheries management or law enforcement. If such a major is not available at the university of your choice, a major in biology, ecology or zoology with emphasis in mammalogy (the study of mammals), ornithology (the study of birds) or ichthyology (the study of fishes) would suffice.