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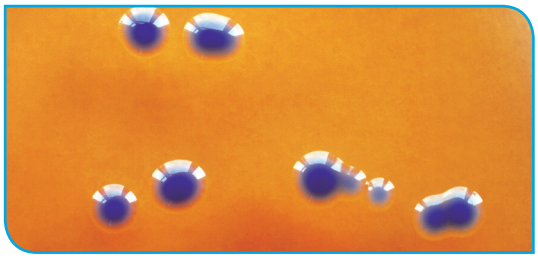
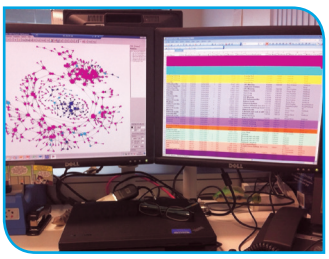
# CAREERS IN MARINE SCIENCE





## Introduction

There are now many opportunities for marine scientists due to increased public interest in the marine environment and its animals. However, this increases competition for jobs as more people wish to become involved with marine life.

There are a vast number of fields within marine sciences including Biology, Oceanography, Zoology, Coastal Sciences, marine planning and technical specialties, such as GIS to name but a few and if you do choose to take this career, you will be rewarded with an interesting and varied life.

## What is involved in being a Marine Scientist?

Careers in marine science may include becoming a researcher, a field biologist, a laboratory technician, a teacher / lecturer, an animal care specialist, a whale watch guide, a naturalist and many more.

Most jobs in marine science are not as glamorous as on the programmes you see on the television. It involves a lot of hard work, including long hard days at sea, hours in the laboratory and long periods working on computers writing reports, sending off for grants, and hours of cleanup after a long day.

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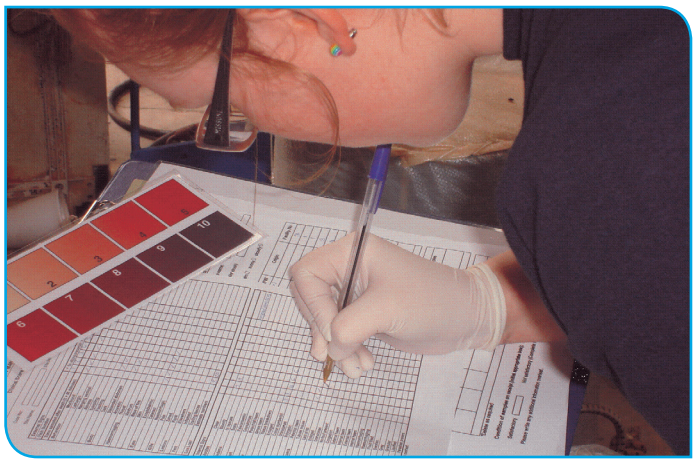


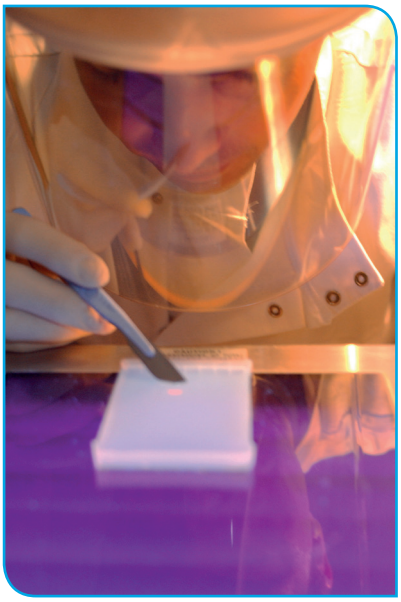
The salary is quite low, a survey carried out in 2006 suggests that half of all marine scientists earned less then £26 000/year. This is very low considering the amount of experience and education needed.

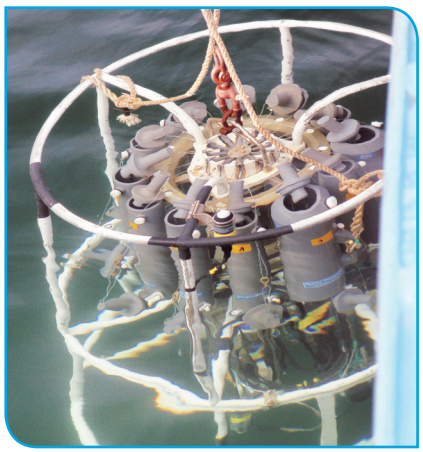
Salaries do increase after years of experience and postgraduate degrees, but remain at a modest level.

A lot of places depend on grants and sponsorships to carry out their research and positions may only be short term contracts which makes life very unstable.

Before launching yourself on your career path it is a good idea to first ask yourself some questions. This will help you choose the right course and then focus on the route you want to take. For example: **What type of marine animal do you wish to study?**

- What are your specific areas of interest, e.g.: genetics, veterinary medicine, conservation, management, education, tourism, etc?
- Which part of the world do you wish to work? (as another language may be advisable)?





- Would you like to work for industry, government, private organisations or prefer to be self employed?

## Qualifications

At GCSE / National 5 level it is helpful to work towards the science subjects, especially biology and chemistry. English, mathematics and computing will also come in useful. If you would like to take a more environmental based course at university, it would also be a good idea to take geography. A language would be an advantage if you wish to work abroad.

Through A levels / Highers, it is best to go for the sciences such as biology and chemistry as well as mathematics. Some computing courses would be useful as a lot of work such as report writing and data analysis will be carried out on computers.

Through your studies you should have an idea about the topics that you wish to study at university, where there are a wide range of courses covering marine life. One of the most popular ones is marine biology, and if you choose this course it might be helpful to have other skills, such as SCUBA diving qualifications and some experience of sailing or handling small boats.

However, this is not the only way to get into marine sciences!

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There are access courses now available for mature students with no formal qualifications. These can lead to National Certificates (NC) and Higher National certificates or Diplomas (HNC/D), which will carry you through to degree level. There are many courses available under these schemes that are relevant to marine sciences. Access courses can also be useful if you didn't do as well as you expected in your GCSE / National 5 or A levels / Highers.

Another way of becoming a marine scientist is to volunteer with marine research groups within your area. While volunteering, you could take a part time course in a related subject.

To get ahead, you should also embark on volunteer work during your degree course to help you get experience and to find out if you like the subject you've chosen and wish to become further involved.

A sample list of some of the relevant courses is shown in box, but there are many more relevant courses at different universities. These can all be found in the UCAS handbook.

**Advanced Diploma, HNC and HND**
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/marine/education/fe/MSCareers/diploma

**Bachelor of Science (BSc) Degrees**
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/marine/education/fe/MSCareers/Degrees

**Postgraduate Degrees**
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/marine/education/fe/MSCareers/Postgraduate

**Short courses** (available at the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS)
http://www.sams.ac.uk/education/short-courses

www.youtube.com/marinescotlandvideo
www.flickr.com/marinescotland