

Life & Times of the whitetail **Biologist**



What line of work are you in?

IT'S PRETTY common when I meet new people to be asked this question. When I answer, "wildlife biologist," I'm met with looks of curiosity, envy or fascination. My mother still shows me off like a circus oddity. Most of my colleagues are also wildlife biologists, making it the norm in my world.

This profession seems to capture the imagination; I am still fascinated by it. Not everybody has the opportunity to wrestle deer, radio-collar elk calves, visit a sow and her cubs in the den, fly over mountains and valleys chasing bats, or be an integral part of a species management program.

But being a wildlife biologist isn't all Jeff Corwin and Animal Planet. TV frequently covers only the "fun" stuff, which is edited neatly into an hour, often omitting equipment failures, weather issues and uncooperative wildlife. Reality isn't always so exciting; there are endless reports to write, mountains of paperwork to complete, and barrels of smelly deer heads to collect data from.

In an attempt to show you "real world" biology and biologists, *The Life and Times of the Whitetail Biologist* will follow the scientists who follow this graceful ungulate. For the next year, you will have a front row seat to all the mundane and exciting things biologists of the Game Commission's Deer & Elk Section do.

The work of a biologist changes seasonally and involves what some might consider unique tasks. From being a slave to the computer, to not remembering what your office looks like because you haven't seen it in weeks. And let's not forget the most dreaded aspect of every job – the meetings. Yes, biologists must endure them, too. And while the "job" of wildlife biologist isn't quite what I expected, I can't imagine doing anything else – except maybe winning the lottery and doing fun field work (Animal Planet-type stuff) the rest of my life.

So let's explore the adventures of the wildlife biologist. Perhaps it won't be what you expected, either! 



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