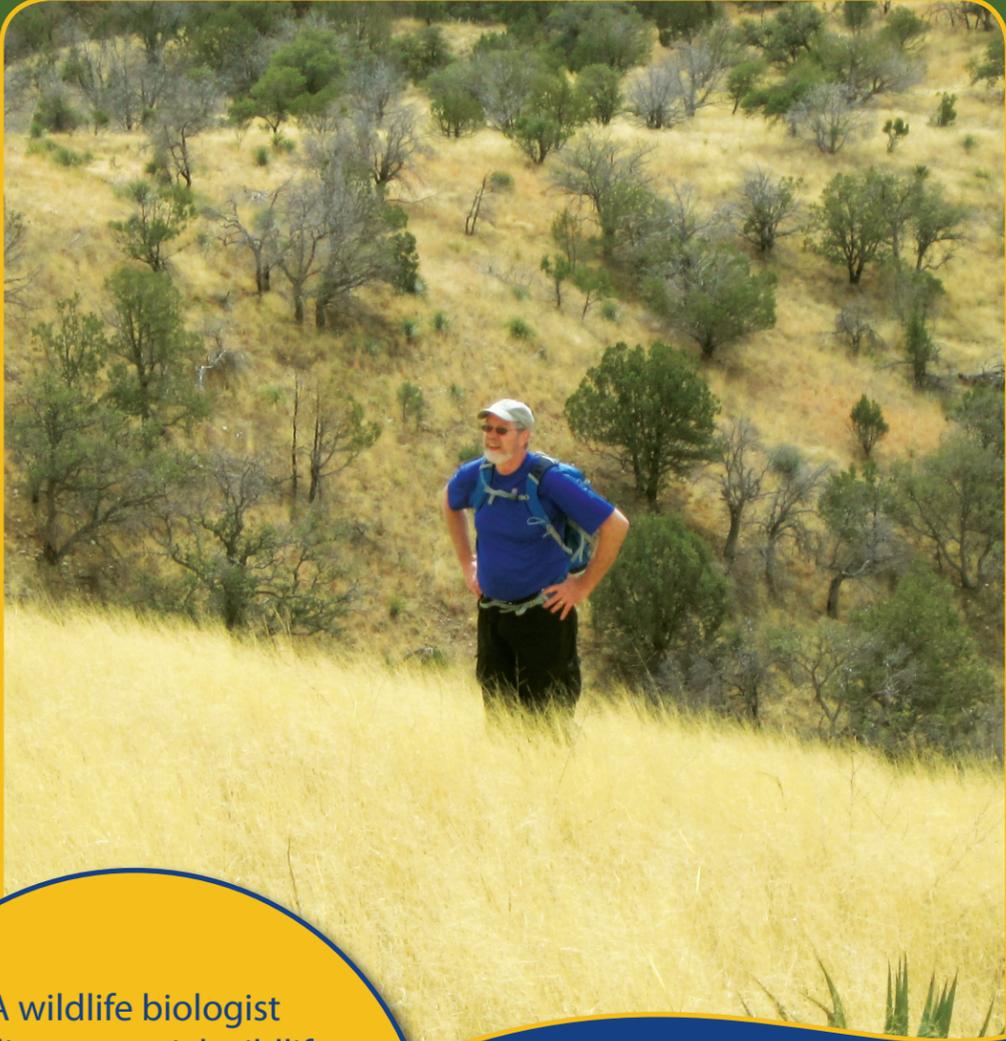




# Meet the Scientist!



A wildlife biologist studies terrestrial wildlife species (mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians) and the habitats they occupy to better understand their biology and habitat relationships.

**Dr. Joe Ganey**  
**Research Wildlife Biologist**  
Ph.D., Northern Arizona University  
USDA Forest Service scientist



<http://www.naturalinquirer.org>

<http://www.scienceinvestigator.org>

## **Important Scientist Characteristics:**

Curiosity about the natural world and how it works drives much of my work. Scientists also need to be creative so that they can develop new questions and adapt research methods as they gain knowledge. Careful observation, critical thinking, and attention to detail also help drive good science.

**Example of a simple research question I have tried to answer:** What does the threatened Mexican spotted owl eat?

## **Technology or equipment used in research:**

We use snare poles and mist nets to capture Mexican spotted owls. We attach color bands to their legs so that we can recognize individual owls, and attach radio transmitters to monitor their movements. We use live traps to capture small mammals to estimate prey abundance. These live traps enable us to release animals unharmed.

## **Most Exciting Discovery**

We learned that Mexican spotted owls primarily eat a few types of small mammals that are active at night, including deer mice, voles, woodrats, and gophers. These owls also eat bats, birds, and insects, but in lesser amounts. Very little was known about the ecology of Mexican spotted owls when we began studying them, so that virtually everything we learned was new and exciting.

## **When did you know you wanted to be a scientist?**

I was always interested in science, ecology, and natural history, but did not focus on wildlife biology until I was in my 20s.

<http://www.fs.fed.us/rm/wildlife-terrestrial/people/profile.php?alias=jganey>