



**Ecology is the study of interactions between organisms and their environment. I primarily study animals.**

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# Meet the Scientist!



<http://www.naturalinquirer.org>

<http://www.scienceinvestigator.org>

### Important Scientist Characteristics

★ The strongest characteristic that I bring to a team is creativity. I have always been able to think broadly and sometimes come up with creative solutions to problems.

### Example of a simple research question I have tried to answer:

The question we asked is: why do wolverines live some places and not others? We showed, both historically and currently, that wolverines were confined to climates that produced spring snowpack. Wolverines need to den in deep snow and may have other snow-related needs. Having identified these constraints, we were able to map their worldwide range and were able to project this range into the future.

### Technology or equipment used in research:

The most important tool in my research is the analysis of Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA). With DNA, we can identify an organism's presence from hair, scat, or even from sampling the water in which the organism lives. We can estimate the size and connectedness of populations. Also, if organisms are found in odd places we can tell where the organisms came from and their sex.

### Most Exciting Discovery

The identification of a new species of fish in streams close to my home in Montana. Determining that the fish was indeed a new species and then getting to name the species was great fun. The fact that we are still finding new species in Montana shows how wide-open science still is for new discoveries.

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

I was interested in science as a child. I only considered being a career scientist after seeing the opportunities that it provided to improve natural resource management. I thought, "We can do better, and I can be a part of that."

<http://www.rmrs.nau.edu/people/kmckelvey/>