



OPPORTUNITIES IN THE UK JOBS MARKET FOR ECOLOGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE CAREERS

There are 3 main drivers that will lead to an increase in jobs for ecologists and climate change specialists in the UK:

1. Changes in the way farming is funded.

Leaving the EU has meant that the Basic Payment System (BPS) which is a sum paid per hectare to help support food production costs is being phased out and removed completely by 2024. On marginal land the BPS payments are higher than the total profit levels for some farms, so they will need extra funding in order to survive. The Environment Land Management (ELM) Bill which is currently going through parliament is providing farmers with opportunities for environmental payments, but they will need advice on how to do this. There are over 200,000 farms in the UK and only around 10% are currently benefiting from the current Environmental Stewardship schemes. Most of the rest are going to have to transition to include environmental management for at least some areas of their farms by 2024 in order to benefit from the ELM payments. However, there is a severe shortage of skilled advisors for this imminent change.

2. Changes to the planning system.

The Environment Act has introduced the concept that all development projects need to have a 10% biodiversity net gain in order to be approved. This means that the current biodiversity value on the site to be developed is assessed and then the biodiversity value of the remaining natural areas of the developed site post development is predicted and compared. If the post development value does not exceed the pre-development value by 10% or more then planning approval cannot be given. The method of assessing biodiversity under this scheme is based on the newly developed UK Hab scheme to identify the habitats and then using the DEFRA Biodiversity Metric 3.0 to quantify the overall biodiversity scores. Knowing how to complete these surveys is a skill that will be needed by all 300+ planning authorities in the UK plus every developer in the country! Moreover, the markets are developing biodiversity credits (they have already been introduced in some Australian states for example) that include faunal metrics as well and knowing how to put one of these private sector biodiversity credit applications together will be advantageous.

3. Adoption of Net Zero Carbon targets.

The UK and most large companies are now adopting Net Zero Carbon targets. Reduction of emissions is the main target for companies but where this is not possible within the time scales proposed then offsetting these emissions by reforesting areas and claiming the carbon is an increasingly buoyant market. Knowing how to assess an area for the carbon currently stored and how to predict likely future carbon accumulation levels with different management practices is going to be an increasingly important skill to have.