

# A SCIENTIST just like me



**Dr Ben Woodcock**  
**Ecological entomologist**

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**Hi there! I am Dr Ben Woodcock -  
An ecological entomologist**

## **Where do I work?**

I work in a place called the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, but a lot of my time is spent working in grasslands and farmland.



## **What did I like doing when I was at school?**

I liked biology best when I was at school but was never great at English. I had to work hard for that subject.

## **What do I like doing in my spare time?**

I like to play guitar and go rock climbing. I used to spend a lot of time collecting insects as well so that I could identify them.

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## What do I do as an ecological entomologist?



When farmers grow food they must keep pests away, but also attract insects like bees which pollinate their crops. I find new ways to help farmers grow food so it is safe for insects and other wildlife. I investigate the lives of insects, spiders and other bugs.

## How does what I do make the world a better place?

The number of insects in the world has been declining, due to the loss of the places where they live and because of climate change. I want to find ways to help keep insects. Did you know that a third of every mouthful of food comes from crops that needs insects, like bees, to pollinate it? Without them you would have no fruit.

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## What I like about my job

I design experiments that enable me to let farmers know the best way for them to manage their land and to increase the number of helpful insects, as well as reduce the number that are pests. I get to do this in the UK where I work, but also in Africa and Latin America.



## Challenges I have faced

Not everyone is happy when you say farming can have bad effects on insects. You have to learn to work with people who have different views to you to help them understand the problem and change what they are doing. If you don't do this nothing will ever change.

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If you want to be an ecological entomologist, you need:

- ✱ **to be good at asking questions** about how things work
- ✱ **to be inquisitive** and be able to support your findings with evidence
- ✱ **to work hard at maths and English** so you can describe what you are doing to people
- ✱ **to be observant**
- ✱ to be able to 'think on your feet'  
**to find solutions** to problems



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## Discussion time

- ✦ Would you like to be an ecological entomologist like Dr Ben Woodcock?

**Why? Why not?**



- ✦ What skills and interests do you already have that would help you become an ecological entomologist?
- ✦ What new skills and knowledge would you need to develop?

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## Free supporting resources for ecological entomology

[Science Fun at Home](#) – see 'Spider Safari'

[Earth Explorers](#) – see 'Going Underground'

[Science for One](#) – see 'Coat hanger Quadrats' for children aged 9-11

[I bet you didn't know...](#) articles use cutting-edge science research as a context for learning. Teacher Guides describing the research and activities and investigations for children can be used as classroom presentations. See:

- What is happening to the bees
- Bees and caterpillars can change the evolution of plants
- Stripes and concealment

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