

Brought to you by the **ASPCA**[Nose for News](#)[Pet Care](#)[Ask Azula](#)[Animal Careers](#)[Animal ABCs](#)[Real Issues](#)[Cartoons](#)[Activities](#)[Pet of the Week](#)[Home](#)

ANIMAL CAREERS



Laura Minich

Biology Major, Bowdoin College

What she does:

Laura Minich, a senior at Bowdoin College in Maine, is majoring in biology, with a minor in geology. In addition to learning about animals in her classes, Minich gets to know them up close and personal too.

She's earned college credits for studying animals in their natural environment, and she spends her summer vacations volunteering on cool projects that involve wildlife.

What kind of cool projects?

"Most of what I've done involves my passion—seabirds," Minich says, "I spent one summer as a volunteer for a study that was checking up on birds after the big 1989 oil spill in Prince William Sound. I also spent a month studying the sounds made by the Little penguins in Australia. And last summer I conducted a census of a kind of seabird—Leach's storm-petrel—in the Bay of Fundy." (FYI That's in Canada.)

Did you get to check out other animals, too?

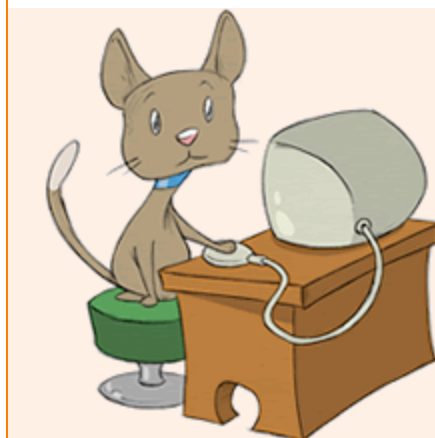
"I've had amazing views of humpback whales, orcas and porpoises—and I've even seen 100 otters at one time!"

Hardest part of field work:

"You have to work long days, sometimes with not a lot of free time—in the worst kinds of weather."

That's REALLY the worst part?

Well, there IS one other thing.... "Since I work with sea birds, I tend to work on islands where gulls are nesting as well," explains Minich. "Gulls are very protective parents, and if you get too close to their eggs or chicks, they swoop at you while squawking. And you get very

[Veterinarian](#)[Lawyer/Lobbyist](#)[Pet Therapy Handler](#)[Photographer](#)[HLE Officer](#)[Arachnologist](#)[Biology Major](#)[Zookeeper](#)[Director of Public Information](#)[Feline Behavior Counselor](#)

accustomed to getting pooped on by them!"

Her all-time favorite animal:

The cassowary, a huge (as in people-sized!) flightless bird found in the tropical rain forests of Australia and New Guinea. Says Minich, "I like them because they're important to the ecology of the rain forest they inhabit—not to mention they have cool-looking bright blue heads!"

Advice to future biologists:

"Mostly, it takes initiative and interest to do the kinds of jobs I've done," says Minich. The application process is pretty tough, and you'll need to be able to work well with others. "But there are a lot of jobs out there, so keep your eyes and your mind open!" (Oh, and watch out for flying gull poop!)