

POSITION DESCRIPTION

POSITION TITLE: Animal Care Specialist

UPDATED: September 2022

SUPERVISOR'S TITLE: Section Supervisor

FLSA Status: Nonexempt

PURPOSE

The Animal Care Specialist performs work necessary to provide daily animal care for zoo animals and ensures appropriate animal wellbeing (welfare). This position works with a wide variety of species and also performs husbandry practices such as operant conditioning, enrichment strategy, and assisting with husbandry and enclosure furnishing design. This position also contributes to positive guest experiences and performs other duties as required.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

- Cleans animal exhibits and animal holding areas including raking, sweeping, hosing, scrubbing, and disinfecting.
- Maintains a clean, orderly working environment.
- Provides food and water to zoo animals per established protocols. Presents food and water using species-appropriate methods.
- Reports observations related to animals to appropriate zoo staff.
- Maintains written and digital documentation of animal observations and work performed as needed.
- Utilizes operant conditioning techniques to assist with animal health and management.
- Provides opportunities for animals to exhibit species-appropriate behavior through the use of exhibit furnishings and enrichment techniques.
- Develops enrichment strategies and plans for animals in a designated section.
- Conducts and documents regular animal wellbeing assessments.
- Engages with guests both informally and through formal presentations (e.g., Keeper Chats, Wild Encounters, VIP tours, etc.).
- Assists the Section Supervisor and Area Curator with designing husbandry practices for the animals in a designated section.
- Assists the Section Supervisor and Area Curator with designing and planning enclosure furnishings.
- Assists with hand rearing of animals as needed.
- Conducts minor repairs and improvements to animal exhibit/holding areas and public areas.
- Provides treatment to animals as directed by Supervisor and zoo Veterinarian.
- Maintains all equipment and supplies in good working order.
- Obtains regular weights on animals.
- Operates vehicles to transport supplies, equipment, and animals within the zoo and between other facilities.
- Participates in maintenance, operations, and education functions of the zoo as necessary.
- Supports the zoo's commitment to continued growth of diversity, equity, access, inclusion, and belonging for zoo team members, volunteers, guests, and supporters.
- Assists with special projects and helps other zoo employees as needed.
- Actively contributes to positive guest experiences.

EDUCATION AND/OR EXPERIENCE

To perform this job successfully, an individual must have the following education and/or experience.

- High school diploma or GED is required.
- Valid driver's license is required.

- » Bachelor's degree in an animal-related field is preferred.
- » One year of experience in a zoological setting is preferred.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES

The requirements listed below are representative of the knowledge, skills, and/or abilities required to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

- » Knowledge of advanced animal care and handling.
- » Demonstrated knowledge of zoo policies, standards, operations, cleaning, and maintenance techniques.
- » Knowledge of the natural history for the species under direct care.
- » Knowledge of animal wellbeing concepts and ability to apply that knowledge to assess the wellbeing of individuals or groups of animals.
- » Ability to endure high-stress situations when feeding, transferring, or restraining animals.
- » Ability to utilize specialized tools (ladders, spin trimmers, mowers, hand drills, etc.).
- » Ability to identify native trees and shrubs when providing browse to animals.
- » Ability to adapt to a rapidly changing, dynamic work environment.
- » Ability to professionally and effectively communicate with others through written correspondence.
- » Ability to troubleshoot, analyze situations, and make sound business decisions.
- » Ability to make independent decisions and manage time effectively.
- » Ability to work a highly flexible schedule; weekend, evening, holiday, and irregular hours will be required.
- » Ability to handle confidential information.
- » Ability to understand and follow all safety regulations.
- » Ability to handle multiple tasks simultaneously.
- » Ability to arrive to work on time and maintain a positive attendance record.
- » Ability to serve in every respect and at all times as a goodwill ambassador for the Fort Wayne Zoological Society and the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo in contacts with zoo visitors and the general public.
- » Ability to deal tactfully and politely with guest questions and misbehavior.
- » Excellent communication skills to establish and maintain effective working relationships with staff, volunteers, partners, and/or the public.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

- » Ability to operate office equipment, including computers, copiers, fax machines, and phones.
- » Ability to professionally and appropriately interact and communicate with others, both in person and through phone, email, and written correspondence.
- » Ability to regularly travel to assigned areas several times per day and efficiently enter all assigned areas.
- » Ability to negotiate a confined workspace while working with one or more coworkers.
- » Ability to handle and restrain a variety of small animals in a program setting.
- » Ability to properly lift and carry items up to 50 pounds.
- » Ability to stand and sit for periods of time and to move intermittently throughout the workday.
- » Good speaking and listening skills.
- » Ability to perform focused work with close attention to detail.
- » Ability to work both indoors and outdoors, with exposure to extreme temperatures and inclement weather conditions; the environment may include wet, icy, or muddy conditions.
- » This position may include exposure to hazardous materials, fumes/odors, dirt, and dust.
- » This position may include exposure to potentially dangerous or venomous animals.
- » This position may include exposure to zoonotic diseases.
- » This position may include exposure to noxious native plants.
- » This position may include exposure to native biting insects and arthropods.