

Blank Park Zoo

The Blank Park Zoo in Des Moines, Iowa is a non-profit organization and home to more than 2,800 animals representing nearly 240 species of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish, and is fully accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. The mission of the Blank Park Zoo is to inspire an appreciation of the natural world through conservation, education, research and recreation.

Herpetologist Keeper

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Position Purpose

The Herpetologist Keeper is responsible for the care and management of a diverse collection of species, including reptiles (small- to medium-sized snakes and lizards), amphibians (such as Panamanian golden frogs, multiple species of dart frogs, and Axolotls), and invertebrates (including Emperor scorpions, Madagascar cockroaches, and Bird-eating tarantula). This role serves as the lead keeper for the Wyoming toad conservation program, which involves close collaboration with AZA SAFE program partners, daily health monitoring, and the breeding and rearing of tadpoles and toadlets. The position also offers opportunities to participate in field releases of head-started individuals in Laramie, Wyoming.

As a member of the Aquatics team, the Herpetologist keeper contributes to the care of freshwater fish, saltwater fish, and aquatic invertebrates while supporting a variety of conservation initiatives. This role actively advances the Zoo's mission to inspire appreciation of the natural world through conservation, education, research, and recreation.

Essential Functions

Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform these essential functions.

- Preparing diets and distributing food according to feeding schedules. Maintain and update feeding schedule as needed and research nutritional improvements to maintain a high level of health in the collection.
- Cleaning and performing routine maintenance and minor repair of animal exhibits and holding areas to assure the health of animals and the presentation of the species in an attractive environment. Maintain water quality to keep aquatic animals in healthy condition.
- Design and fabrication of new exhibits with the assistance of team members and supervisor.
- Maintain feeder cultures and breeding programs through SSP and conservation partnerships
- Assisting with administration of medications and treatments according to established procedure and veterinary instructions. Providing assistance in handling or restraining animals in accordance with established safety procedures as necessary to ensure animal welfare.
- Supervising animal care interns and/or volunteers temporary.

- Observing animals and evaluating behavior to determine physical and behavioral health and well-being.
- Assisting with animal acquisition, acclimation and quarantine.
- Lead all aspects of the Wyoming toad conservation program, including health monitoring, captive breeding, rearing of tadpoles and toadlets, coordination with program partners, and participation in field release efforts.
- Serving as a customer service liaison through daily contacts with visitors providing information and answering questions.
- Involved in professional networking, public relations, media contacts, public speaking and assistance in development and fund-raising activities.
- Participate in training programs in order to develop and maintain desired husbandry behaviors.
- Comfortably work with venomous and dangerous animals.
- Complete daily record keeping.
- Cover fish and aquatic invertebrate exhibits and holding areas when needed.
- Other duties assigned by Area Supervisor.

Competencies

- Resourceful – Understanding of or can research all applicable topics as they relate to modern zoological management, operations of an attraction and customer service.
- Flexible – Ability to handle a flexible workload with a variety of assignments while also maintain composure in an environment that can be stressful.
- Independent – Must be able to operate independently, exercise initiative and demonstrate capacity for detail and follow-up.
- Positive – Must be a positive, effective team member and be able to establish professional working relationships.
- Communicator – Communicates clearly, both verbal and written. Effective listening skills.
- Critical Thinker – Ability to make decisions while under pressure or solve complex problems that arise daily.
- Innovative – Ability to propose solutions to areas of concern as related to animal care.
- Efficient – Ability to complete task in a thorough but quick manner.
- Customer-oriented – Always exercises professional customer service skills. Interacts with many different types of people and situations.
- Team Player – Collaborates with area supervisor and team to achieve common husbandry goals.

Work Environment

Animal Care

While performing the duties of the job, the incumbent is regularly required to stand, walk on even terrain, climb, and utilize manual dexterity to use various tools, machines, and equipment. The incumbent is regularly exposed to all types of weather conditions including extreme heat and cold, snow, hail, wind, and rain. Most of the job tasks are completed outside. Cares for dangerous animals. Some work is required in small and/or confined spaces. Incumbents are exposed to noisy environments such as mowers and motors.

Physical Requirements

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

Ascending or descending ladders, stairs, scaffolding, ramps, poles and the like.

Never Occasionally Constantly

Moving self in different positions to accomplish tasks in various environments including tight and confined spaces.

Never Occasionally Constantly

Remaining in a stationary position, often standing or sitting for prolonged periods.

Never Occasionally Constantly

Moving about to accomplish tasks or moving from one worksite to another.

Never Occasionally Constantly

Adjusting or moving objects up to 60 pounds in all directions.

Never Occasionally Constantly

Communicating with others to exchange information.

Never Occasionally Constantly

Repeating motions that may include the wrists, hands and/or fingers.

Never Occasionally Constantly

Operating machinery and/or power tools.

Never Occasionally Constantly

Operating motor vehicles or heavy equipment.

Never Occasionally Constantly

Assessing the accuracy, neatness and thoroughness of the work assigned.

Never Occasionally Constantly

Driving.

Never Occasionally Constantly

Stooping, kneeling, crouching, or crawling –

Never Occasionally Constantly

Reaching with hands and arms.

Never Occasionally Constantly

Tasting or smelling.

Never Occasionally Constantly

Vision

Close vision; Distant vision; Color vision; Peripheral vision; Depth perception; Ability to adjust focus

Lifting Requirement.

> than 50 pounds Up to 50 pounds Up to 40 pounds Up to 25 pounds Up to 10 pounds

Required education and experience

Four-year college degree, or relevant zoo experience.

1-2 years of paid experience in the zoo field.

Intermediate word processing skills.

Working knowledge of Microsoft Office required.

Additional eligibility requirements

- Must be insurable to drive a zoo vehicle.
- Must be able to maintain work hours that will serve the needs of the Blank Park Zoo
- Must be able to operate various equipment, including skid loaders, trailers, and large vehicles.
- Must be able to maintain calm and act professionally in all situations such as emergencies and guest interactions.

Licenses/Certifications

Valid Iowa motor vehicle license

First Aid/CPR Training

Other Duties

Please note this job description is not designed to cover or contain a comprehensive listing of activities, duties or responsibilities that are required of the employee for this job. Duties, responsibilities, and activities may change at any time with or without notice.

Affirmative Action/EEO statement

Blank Park Zoo is an equal opportunity employer and give employment and promotional consideration without regard to race, color, sex, religion, age, disability, disabled veterans, veterans of the Vietnam era, and any

other protected class as required by local, state, or federal law. We seek applicants for employment who are dedicated, hardworking and seek fulfilling employment. In return Blank Park Zoo offers competitive income, benefits, and an excellent working environment.

Experience Required

4 Year degree of relevant work experience

How to Apply

Please apply directly through our website at www.blankparkzoo.com.

Blank Park Zoo
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Des Moines, IA 50315
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