

Dallas Zoo Management Careers

Zoological Manager - Animal Ambassadors

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Animal Care & Conservation • Dallas, Texas

Description

JOB SUMMARY

The Dallas Zoo is seeking a leader to join our Animal Ambassador Experiences team. Ambassador Animals cares for a diverse collection of birds, mammals, and reptiles that participate in programs both on and off Zoo grounds. These animals are featured in dynamic, guest-centered experiences designed to inspire connection while prioritizing animal well-being. Our program is focused on implementing welfare-driven practices that emphasize choice and control and immersive experiences that allow animals to demonstrate natural behaviors and guests to form meaningful connections. This position works closely with the other Zoological Manager, Associate Curator, and Senior Curator to lead a team of Zoologists and oversee daily operations within assigned ambassador areas. The Zoological Manager is responsible for personnel management, training and development of staff, and implementation of effective husbandry, training, and enrichment programs to ensure exemplary animal care. The Manager serves as a primary contact and liaison for their area and supports the delivery of high-quality ambassador programming that aligns with the Dallas Zoo's mission of Engaging People & Saving Wildlife.

SPECIFIC DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Organize, coordinate, and establish priorities for assigned section's daily activities, overseeing animal care staff and providing both written and oral instructions.
- Develop, implement, and communicate all aspects of the animal program, ensuring effective documentation, accurate records, and clear communication with direct reports, curatorial, and veterinary staff.
- Mentor, develop, and evaluate employees for professional growth, including writing and reviewing annual performance plans and appraisals.
- Lead by example and maintain familiarity with all aspects of animal training and husbandry routines.
- Proactively identify, oversee, and participate in operant conditioning, behavioral management, and environmental enrichment programs; collaborate with Associate Curators/Curator and Behavioral Husbandry staff regarding training goals, behavioral management plans, and introductions (including mixed species).
- Organize and appropriately delegate tasks to Assistant Supervisors and Lead Zoologists.
- Hire and train animal care staff in all aspects of husbandry, including diet preparation, feeding, cleaning, and exhibit maintenance.
- Develop and maintain protocols, programs, and ambassador-specific SOPs to meet and exceed USDA and AZA standards, including animal handling, transport, program use, and public presentation.
- Regularly observe and monitor the health and welfare of animals in the area.
- Prepare and maintain records of animal management including daily behavior, breeding behavior, restraint, and routine and non-routine medical procedures.
- Confer with veterinary staff regarding health and preventative medicine programs, report relevant health concerns, and assist with treatments and procedures as necessary.
- Oversee animal propagation and breeding programs, ensuring staff and facilities are prepared and protocols are implemented and monitored.
- Coordinate and manage safe animal capture, restraint, and transfers (within the zoo and between institutions) in compliance with professional and veterinary standards.
- Work closely with curatorial staff on institutional collection planning and animal acquisition/deacquisition.
- Ensure exhibits and facilities meet high standards of animal welfare, aesthetics, and regulatory compliance; prioritize exhibit enhancement projects, participate in renovations, and communicate facility needs through appropriate channels.
- Follow all safety protocols to ensure the safety of animals, staff, and the public; serve as a member of the Dallas Zoo Emergency Response Team.
- Complete incident reporting and documentation, ensure follow-up discussions occur, and communicate safety or facility issues to the Curator in a timely manner.
- Under Curator/Associate Curator direction, communicate with vendors, purchase equipment and supplies, and obtain estimates for small capital projects for annual budgeting.

- Keep current with animal and husbandry research and correspond with other institutions and specialists.
- Oversee the quality, consistency, and welfare-first delivery of guest-facing ambassador animal programs.
- Establish and uphold interpretation and guest engagement standards, including messaging frameworks, presentation quality, and conservation storytelling.
- Collaborate with internal stakeholders to align program design, animal management decisions, and departmental policies.
- Support development of community and institutional partnerships that advance ambassador programming and mission delivery.
- Present animal talks to Zoo visitors and represent the Zoo in media and public presentations.
- Perform other duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS

- A bachelor's degree in biology or related science field is preferred
- Must have strong supervisory skills: ability to promote positive morale and productivity;
- Must have extensive knowledge of animal husbandry, with at least nine years preferred of exotic animal care experience, at an AZA-accredited facility, three years at a supervisory level;
- Minimum of three years' experience working in an ambassador animal setting strongly preferred;
- Advanced free flight bird experience strongly preferred;
- Must be solution-oriented, finding creative solutions for complex challenges;
- Demonstrated interest and expertise in management, reproduction, and training;
- Comprehensive knowledge of reproduction, as well as neonate care;
- Comprehensive knowledge of behavioral management, including operant conditioning philosophy, techniques and terminology, as well as benefits and goals of environmental enrichment;
- Incumbent should have broad interests in research, behavior and conservation;
- Excellent facilitation, as well as communication skills, both oral and written;
- Comfort with computer software: MS Word, Excel, Outlook, Power Point;
- Ability to represent the Zoo in a professional manner at all times;
- Ability to exercise sound judgment in emergency situations and to respond with appropriate action;
- Ability to work with minimal supervision, must be self-directed;
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationship with others;
- Must be able to walk, stand, sit, kneel, stoop, crawl, twist, reach above head, pull bend, climb stairs and ladders and carry up to 50 lbs;
- Must be able to work holidays and weekends and actively work outdoors extreme weather;
- Successful candidates must pass pre-employment drug screening, background check and TB test;
- Must have a valid Texas Class C driver's license or the ability to obtain this license, to operate zoo vehicles.
- Must have reliable transportation.

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