

Animal Care Internship Program



Job Description

Assist the animal department staff with several of the aspects that contribute to our high standards for overall welfare including, but not limited to: daily care, behavioral observations, enrichment, and guest education. Internships are available with either the Bird & Mammal or Reptile Department. If accepted into the St. Augustine Alligator Farm's internship program, you will meet with the Curatorial staff in your area of interest. Together you will plan the projects and goals to be completed during your internship. Interns are required to present a summary of their experience and findings at the end of the internship. The internship program will focus on an independent research project related to the intern's field of interest and the length of term. At the end of the term the intern is expected to present the results of their project to the animal keeper staff.

Requirements

- ❖ Undergraduate or graduate students pursuing a career in a related field.
- ❖ Ability to work as part of a team composed of other staff, interns, and volunteers.
- ❖ Positive attitude and good communication skills.
- ❖ Must enjoy working outdoors in a hot, humid, and buggy environment.
- ❖ Tolerance of strong odors, hay, and animal dander.
- ❖ Able to lift 50 pounds, climb over fences, bend awkwardly, and move quickly in demanding situations.
- ❖ Proof of negative TB test
- ❖ Able to work weekends and holidays as required.

Application Packet

- ❖ Cover letter describing future career intentions and specifying animal department of interest
- ❖ Resume
- ❖ Two references from either a professor or manager in a related field
- ❖ Available time frame for internship (minimum of 3 days per week for 6 weeks, but flexible)
- ❖ If receiving college credit, specify minimum hours and other requirements needed.

To apply for an internship position, please send application materials to: ganderson@alligatorfarm.com

This internship is unpaid in dollars, but the benefits of experience, gained knowledge, a nicer resume, references in the zoo field, and a fun work environment more than make up for it!

The St Augustine Alligator Farm Zoological Park Internship Program

Animal keepers play a vital role in ensuring that animals receive exceptional care through a 360° approach to wellness. The internship position provides the opportunity to gain exposure to a multifaceted approach to animal care through assisting animal keeper staff with several of the aspects that contribute to overall animal welfare. This includes behavioral observations, daily husbandry, exhibit maintenance and modifications, diet preparation, enrichment, operant conditioning, conservation education and public engagement. When possible, there will also be opportunities to observe veterinary procedures, animal catch-ups, and on-going research projects. Interns will primarily shadow keepers and assist with daily duties but may also work independently as determined by the supervisory staff. Interns will gain knowledge in the following areas:

Behavioral Observations: Interns will learn about animals' normal behaviors, postures, use of space, interactions with other animals in the exhibit, etc., and learn the basics of recording behavioral observations.

Animal Husbandry: Interns will learn husbandry procedures that comprise the daily care routine. This includes feeding, cleaning, disinfecting and assessing that animals have opportunities for choice present throughout the day.

Exhibit Maintenance: Interns will learn to assess animal exhibits and holding areas in terms of functionality for species to express appropriate behaviors, safety, and overall aesthetics. Interns are expected to do some heavy lifting and light construction.

Diet Preparation: Interns will become familiar with the nutritional needs of the animals under their care and will learn proper food preparation to meet those needs.

Enrichment: Interns will learn about the role of enrichment in zoos to encourage individual and species specific behaviors and provide enrichment opportunities for the animals under their care.

Population Management: Interns will learn the rationale used to determine which species should be encouraged to breed, when, and why. Various birth control methods used on zoo animals will be discussed. They will also become familiar with population management terms such as: SSPs, TAGs, ZIMS, etc.

Conservation: Interns will learn how modern zoos support and encourage conservation. They will learn about habitat loss, over-population and the many in situ projects supported by the St Augustine Alligator Farm Zoological Park.

Operant Conditioning: Interns will learn the proper use of positive reinforcement to aid in animal care and husbandry.