

ZOO CAREERS



notes

ADELAIDE ZOO
EDUCATION SERVICE

ZOO

Zoos employ people in a wide variety of jobs. Zoo Keepers constitute a large proportion of a Zoo's workforce but, in fact, more people may be employed in other areas such as administration, horticulture, maintenance, education, gate keeping, graphics/signage, clerical, marketing, veterinary, research and retail.

All employees of a Zoo must be prepared to work together to ensure that its aims and objectives are achieved. Today, most Zoos have four main objectives- education, conservation, research and recreation. The animal collection forms the basis around which zoo employees work to achieve these objectives.

Adelaide Zoo's animal collection is divided into three departments-Mammals, Birds and Reptiles. These departments have a supervisor that is responsible for their overall management. The Supervisors must liaise with other staff including the Director, Curator, Vet, Marketing and Education staff and volunteers. They also direct and support keepers, consulting with others to plan, develop and maintain exhibits and monitor animal welfare within the budget.

Keepers in each section have a number of animals to care for daily.

Their work is varied and includes cleaning and maintaining enclosures and lock-aways, food preparation and feeding animals. The keeper must have an understanding of the animals' nutritional requirements to maintain a healthy balanced diet. This is done in association with the vet and passed on to the store person and driver who are in charge of the ordering and collecting of food. Keepers' work also involves observing all the animals in their care, and recording any births, deaths, injuries, behavioural changes and medicines given.

These daily records are used by keepers, the Records Officer, Vets and other staff to help in the ongoing care of the animals. They also assist the specialist keepers to keep track of genetic information and to support regional Species Management plans.

Keepers commence their jobs with a wide variety of qualifications and experience. Most have tertiary training which may be a TAFE diploma or a university degree. They also have experience with managing animals which goes well beyond keeping some pets at home.

All the keepers at the Zoo are passionate about working with animals and conservation and enjoy working in an outdoor environment.

To exhibit animals in habitat settings it is important for keepers to work with the Horticultural and Maintenance staff to ensure appropriate design, landscaping and upkeep of enclosures.

The Zoo's horticultural team is made up of trained horticulturists. They are responsible for the care and maintenance of plants within and outside the enclosures.

They must research the types of trees, flowers, and grasses that will flourish in the Zoo setting. They must also know what vegetation is native to an animal's habitat to try and recreate an enclosure that is a safe and behaviourally enriching environment for the animals.

The Maintenance team includes plumbers, carpenters, painters and builders. This team of people are in charge of maintaining the Zoo grounds and the equipment needed for the general running of the Zoo. They also redevelop individual enclosures, but for larger projects, contractors are brought in to work closely with the maintenance, horticultural and keeping staff.

Education Officers at the Zoo are all qualified and experienced teachers with a good knowledge of animals, the environment and conservation. Other Education staff develop the Interpretation material for the Zoo – signage, web site, the Discovery Zone and multimedia around the Zoo.

The administration team is made up of many dedicated people such as accountants, clerical officers, marketing and media liaison officers and visitor services personnel. These people must work together with all the staff to maintain the smooth running of the Zoo.

Work experience with the keeping staff is offered at Adelaide and Monarto Zoos for Year 11 and 12 students. Contact the Zoos SA Education or visit www.zoossa.com.au/education for more information.

All job opportunities at the Zoo are highly sought after and preference is given to hard working people that show dedication and enthusiasm towards animals and conservation issues.

