



Animal Keeper Role Profile

Job Title: Animal Keeper

Location: Hemsley Conservation Centre

Reports to: Head Keeper / Duty Managers

Management Responsibility: None

Role Purpose and Dimensions

To deliver high-quality daily animal care that meets and exceeds the updated Standards of Modern Zoo Practice (2027), ensuring excellent animal welfare, maintain standards of safety, and outstanding guest engagement. The Animal Keeper will support species-appropriate husbandry, environmental enrichment, meticulous record keeping, veterinary procedures, and compliance with statutory standards and policies under management instruction.

The Role

Departmental Contribution

- Prepare for and attend departmental meetings; action agreed tasks promptly and effectively.

Animal Management

- Deliver all scheduled animal husbandry routines, including feeding, enclosure maintenance, cleaning, and habitat management.
- Provide dynamic and evidence-led environmental enrichment to promote species-appropriate behaviours.
- Undertake systematic animal observations and behavioural monitoring; accurately record and report findings, conduct welfare audits where necessary.
- Support veterinary interventions, health checks, treatments, preventative care etc.
- Assist/Conduct animal training using positive reinforcement techniques where appropriate.
- Ensure all animal management supports the welfare outcomes outlined in SSSMZP (e.g., enclosure suitability, behavioural needs, social structure considerations).

Bio-security, Welfare & Compliance

- Follow and uphold zoo bio-security protocols to prevent disease transmission and contamination.
- Adhere to species-specific husbandry protocols, welfare frameworks, and quarantine procedures.
- Maintain a high level of understanding of SSSMZP 2027 standards and how they relate to everyday practice (animal welfare, safety, conservation, education).
- Maintain up-to-date and accurate records for all animals.

Development

- Engage in professional development to strengthen technical knowledge, welfare practice, and legislative understanding.
- Collaborate effectively with colleagues in other departments.

Health & Safety

- Comply with all health, safety, and risk management policies and procedures.
- Maintain an up-to-date understanding of emergency response procedures, and participate in training and drills.
- Act in accordance with lone-worker policies and safety protocols, especially while working in higher-risk environments.

Communications, Education & Guest Engagement

- Provide informal guest engagement and interpretation during daily duties, promoting zoo conservation messages.
- Facilitate and lead animal encounter experiences as required, ensuring visitor safety and positive educational outcomes.
- Assist with media, marketing, and education programmes reflecting institutional conservation goals.

Conservation & Best Practice

- Contribute actively to in-situ and ex-situ institution led conservation initiatives, including breeding programmes, research activities, and species survival plans.
- Maintain strong awareness of ethical practice, population management principles, welfare science, and relevant legislation.
- Champion continuous improvement and industry best practice across the animal department.

The Candidate

Qualifications & Experience

Essential:

- Minimum Level 3 qualification in Animal Management, Biological Sciences, or closely related field, demonstrating academic and practical competence.
- Significant hands-on experience in animal husbandry and management across a range of taxa.
- Developing specialism in one or more taxonomic groups.
- Demonstrable understanding of modern zoo husbandry and welfare principles.
- A keen interest in conservation, welfare science, and zoological best practice.
- Developing knowledge of relevant legislation and zoo standards, including the SSSMZP 2027.

- Willingness to participate in firearms training and joining the firearms response team if required under safety protocols.

Desirable:

- Degree or equivalent in Animal Management, Zoology, Ecology, or Biological Sciences.
- Full, clean UK driving licence.

Attributes

- Ability to integrate academic knowledge with practical application in animal care.
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills, both written and verbal.
- Competency in IT, including animal record systems, spreadsheets, and general office software.
- Flexible approach to working hours, including weekends, public holidays, and early/late shifts.
- Professional demeanour consistent with organisational values and expectations.
- Clear understanding of how this role contributes to the zoo's mission, welfare targets, and conservation outcomes.