

Career of the Fortnight

Zoo Keeper



Zoo keeper

Job description:

A zookeeper is responsible for maintaining the health, safety and welfare of different types of animals. You are likely to work with a particular type of animal. You will get to know the animals in your care well, allowing you to spot any signs of diseases, stress or injury.

Your day-to-day role will often include cleaning, feeding and medicating animals, checking enclosures and for any signs of damage, and keeping records. You will often be involved in educating members of the public, answering questions about the animals and their natural behaviour and habitat in the wild.

Skills:

- Public speaking and customer service skills
- Excellent record keeping skills
- Computer literacy
- Excellent observational skills
- May be required to drive a vehicle
- A medium to high level of physical fitness. This position may require significant physical effort on a daily basis such as walking, bending, stooping, repetitive motions, lifting heavy objects or standing for long periods.

Roles and Responsibilities

- keep animal enclosures clean, germ-free and safely secured
- prepare food such as pellets, fresh produce, meat or hay and administer medications
- observe animals and check for any signs of distress or ill health
- design, build and repair environments which are as close to natural habitats as possible
- educate visitors by sharing your animal knowledge through demonstrations with live animals, talks, tours, and visitor experiences
- keep daily detailed records of behaviour, eating habits, births, deaths and other events
- assist with breeding procedures and raising young animals, particularly with endangered species
- train animal behaviour to make feeding, medicating and monitoring easy and safe

Employers of zoo keepers:

- animal collections within other family attractions such as theme parks
- aquariums
- Bird gardens and birds of prey centres
- city farms
- city zoos
- open-range countryside zoos or safari parks
- petting zoos - designed for children to feed and pet gentle domesticated animals

Working conditions

Outside in all weathers, some inside paper work and report writing.

Qualifications:

- Although not exclusively a graduate profession, keepers are increasingly qualified to degree level, and often to postgraduate level.
- A degree in zoology is the most direct route into this career but a degree in a life science or animal-related subject such as the following can also be advantageous:

biology
psychology
animal science
animal behaviour
animal welfare.

College: 5 GCSE's grade 9-4 or equivalent including English, Maths and Science
Level 3 Extended diploma in Animal Management
Level 3 Diploma in Animal Care

University: 1-2 A Levels, or equivalent, for a foundation degree or national higher diploma or 2-3 A Levels (including Science), or equivalent, for a degree.

Working Hours:

You'll need to be prepared to work year-round, and over weekends too. Animals require care and attention every day, including Christmas and other holidays. Keepers often work unpaid overtime and need to be flexible about their days off, particularly if animals are unwell or births are expected. Part-time, seasonal and short contracts are common.

Annual Income:

Starting salary:
£12,000 – £14,000

Experienced salary:
£16,000 - £20, 000

Head Zoo Keeper:
£25,000 plus

Labour Market Information

Labour Market Information (LMI) shows you what sorts of employment opportunities exist in your area and which sectors are growing. It can help you decide on a career path or where to get more information.

Animal care services occupations n.e.c.	Biological scientists and biochemists	Veterinary nurses
Weekly Pay £270 Hours/Week 26h Annual Pay £14,040 Hourly Pay £10	Weekly Pay £810 Hours/Week 37h Annual Pay £42,120 Hourly Pay £22	Weekly Pay £360 Hours/Week 33h Annual Pay £18,720 Hourly Pay £11
Workforce Change (projected) Growth 13.4% Replacement 57.9% The workforce is projected to grow by 13.4% over the period to 2027, creating 9,900 jobs. In the same period, 57.9% of the workforce is projected to retire, creating 42,900 job openings.	Workforce Change (projected) Growth 5.9% Replacement 40.3% The workforce is projected to grow by 5.9% over the period to 2027, creating 6,300 jobs. In the same period, 40.3% of the workforce is projected to retire, creating 42,600 job openings.	Workforce Change (projected) Growth 13.4% Replacement 57.9% The workforce is projected to grow by 13.4% over the period to 2027, creating 2,100 jobs. In the same period, 57.9% of the workforce is projected to retire, creating 9,200 job openings.
You might find this job in Agriculture, etc Veterinary Sport & recreation Education Libraries, etc	You might find this job in Health Scientific research Education Public admin. & defence Architectural & related	You might find this job in Veterinary Health
More infoClear card	More infoClear card	More infoClear card



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A ZOOKEEPER