



# Animal Careers

This pack is for people who are interested or researching animal careers, with a focus on wild animals and conservation.



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# The Animal Industry

The animal industry is part of the larger sector of the environmental and land-based industry, which includes 230,000 business across the U.K., employing around 1,126,000 people and over 500,000 volunteers.

This information pack will focus on the zoological sector. Within the UK ,there are 350 zoo licences, which cover zoos, as well as safari parks, aquaria and bird gardens. Collectively they employ approximately 3,000 full time workers.

The main job roles in the zoological sector are animal keeping, veterinary work, conservation, research and educational work. It is important to remember these roles are linked and not exclusive from each other. For example, an animal keeper will also be part of conservation, research and education work, as well as limited veterinary work in some cases.



# Roles of Zoos in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Zoo are now more than just a good day out to see animals, zoo have a role to play in education, conservation and research.

There are over seven billion people on the plant and 1 in 10 of those people will visit a zoo or an aquarium. This gives zoos an opportunity to help and improve people's understanding of the world, as well as providing support for conservation work.

Colchester Zoo, like other zoos, has four roles:

- A place for recreation
- A place for conservation
- A place for education
- A place for research



**Recreation:** A day at the zoo should be enjoyable as many zoos, including Colchester Zoo, rely on people visiting as a source of income. Furthermore, visitors who enjoy their day will spread the word to others, thus increasing the amount of people who can be educated and providing more funds to support conservation.



**Conservation:** Zoos are able to support small, lesser known charities by providing them with a platform to promote their work and the zoo can raise money on their behalf. Additionally, zoos are active members of breeding programmes and support work in the U.K. as well as across the world.



**Education:** Raising awareness of human impact on the world, as well as improving understanding, can be carried out in zoos. It can be done through signage, keeper talks, as well as providing school educational trips to help their studies. It is also a legal requirement in the U.K. to provide education opportunities for visitors.



**Research:** Zoos offer opportunities to aid scientists in gaining close and easy access to animals that would be very hard to get to in the wild. Also, students are able to complete research papers to aid their studies.

# Staff at Colchester Zoo

Colchester Zoo employs around 280 members of staff on a full or part time basis. During the summer season, additional seasonal staff are employed to manage the higher visitor numbers.

Some of the main department at Colchester Zoo include:

## **Admission, Guest Services & Administration**

This is our visitors' first point of contact when entering the zoo. In this department, they coordinate ticket sales, process group bookings and the various "Keeper for the Day" experiences. They are also an information point and coordinate lost visitors and lost property.

## **Retail**

This is our visitors' last point of contact when leaving the zoo as our retail team runs the gift shop, selling everything from magnets, books and cuddly toys, to ornaments and furniture.

## **Catering**

From washer-uppers and cooks, to catering assistants and cashiers, our catering team are responsible for running our many catering outlets around the zoo and making sure our visitors have choices of food and drink, no matter what their requirements may be.



## **Play Area**

The play area team look after our smaller visitors! They supervise the soft play area, the Crazy Sand Shop and face painting. This team also create and host several shows for the visitors.

## **Grounds**

This is an extremely busy team who ensure the 60 acres of zoo grounds are kept to the highest standards of cleanliness, making sure the bins are emptied regularly, the paths are kept clean and clear, and the toilet blocks are all kept to a high standard.

## **Gardening**

The gardening team maintain the plants around the zoo. This includes all the formal plants in visitor areas, plants within animal enclosures and native British plants on the zoo's Nature Area.



## **Communications and Development Team**

This team deals with all of the PR and promotions. As well as maintaining and developing the zoo's online presence on the website and social media, they also design posters, arrange filming for programmes like Zoo Days and publish our newsletter.

## **Maintenance and Development**

A complete building team, consisting of carpenters, labourers, digger drivers, plumbers and electricians – all responsible for the construction of new animal enclosures and buildings around the park, together with the maintenance of all of our existing buildings.

## **Accounts & Human Resources**

This team is responsible for all finance within the zoo. They ensure that staff are paid, organise invoices, pay our suppliers, manage our accounts, and coordinate NI, staff benefits and other paperwork. Additionally, this department assists with the coordination of job applications, as well as onboarding and inductions for new employees.

## **Animal Team**

The animal keepers form one of the largest teams at Colchester Zoo, ranging from our curators to our trainee keepers. They look after all of the daily needs of the animal species to the highest standards possible. As part of ensuring the animals' welfare, keepers do training with the animals to allow for better husbandry as well as for veterinary purposes. The animal keepers also require public speaking skills, as this is the team that delivers the talks at animal enclosures as well as guiding and leading most of the behind-the-scenes experiences.



## **Conservation Education Department**

This department is responsible for the formal and informal learning within the zoo. This includes learning for general visitors, with informational signs as well as online resources. Learning for formal groups includes running sessions for schools, home educators, and youth groups. Research projects on site are coordinated through this department, as is work-based learning and our 'Student Keeper' programme.

## **Volunteers**

Colchester Zoo also has a dedicated team of volunteers. These people volunteer their free time to the zoo. We have two different roles for our volunteers. Our Animal Ambassador volunteers support visitor learning by providing information about animals and enclosures while helping raise awareness of conservation work and the threats these animals face. Our Zoo Host volunteers help us ensure our guests have a great visitor experience. They are the smiling face that many of our visitors see after they enter the zoo and are always happy to point the way or provide any information needed.



## **UmPhafa Team**

Colchester Zoo's charity, Action for the Wild operates a private nature reserve called UmPhafa in South Africa. The staff working for this department are mainly based in South Africa. They are responsible for the management of the reserve, support research, coordinate the rehabilitation of the habitats and ensure the reserve is a safe place for wildlife. Most of the staff are hired from the local community and the team are involved in community projects as well.

## Staff Recruitment

Recruitment may be due to: growth of the business, internal promotions or staff leaving. Vacancies at Colchester Zoo can be filled internally – i.e. by someone who already works at the zoo; or, externally – i.e. by someone outside of the zoo.

Colchester Zoo is an equal opportunities employer and has an equal opportunities policy. The policy's aim is to ensure no job applicant, employee or worker is discriminated against either directly or indirectly on the grounds of: race, colour, ethnicity, nationality, beliefs, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age or disability.

## Recruitment Process

There are several steps to the recruitment process:

1. **Job description:** Describes the main tasks and responsibilities that comprise the job.
2. **Personnel specification:** Describes the type of person you are seeking.
3. **Advertisement:** Job advertisements need to raise interest and be eye catching. Colchester Zoo advertises jobs on the website and through the BIAZA website.
4. **Short listing:** Short-listing should be done by those who will be doing the interviewing. The personnel specification, job description and application form should be used as the most accurate and objective tools in short listing. Short-listing is simply deciding which candidate you wish to invite for an interview.
5. **Interviews:** An interview is a controlled conversation with a purpose, it is to gain information to determine suitability and involves continuous assessment. Interviewers want to find out if the candidate can do the job, will they do the job and will they fit in?
6. **Second Interviews:** In some cases a second interview may be part of the process. This would normally be a working interview to help see how that person works and for the staff members they may be working with to get to meet them and to then help with the selection.
7. **Selecting:** . The best person is then selected and a job offer made. It is also a good idea to have a second person as a 'back up' in case the first candidate declines the offer.

## Induction

All new employees at Colchester Zoo receive a staff induction when they start. There is usually an 'induction session' or training day, with further information provide pre and post session. This induction is often carried out by a member of the relevant department working with a member of the human resources team. Depending on the job role, a group induction day covering many of the main points may be provided for many new employees on the same day (e.g. all new seasonal catering staff may have an induction together prior to the start of the busy Easter school holidays).

The purpose of an induction is to:

- Reduce anxiety
- Provide an introduction to Colchester Zoo and our mission statement
- Give the opportunity to meet co-workers as well as other relevant staff from other departments
- Ensure all paperwork is completed accurately and appropriately
- Allow new employees to understand ways of working
- Provide legal health and safety information
- Explain the working environment and facilities
- Reiterate terms of employment and main duties of job roles

During the induction process the following categories are covered:

**Pre-employment** which includes: joining instructions; ensuring right to work; paperwork (including banking details, computer logons, etc.); uniform policy; employee handbooks; etc.

### **Health and Safety**

which includes: emergency procedures (e.g. fire, animal escapes, etc.); first aid procedures; accident reporting; PPE as appropriate; smoking policies; etc.

**Workplace Compliance** which includes: security; confidentiality agreements; data protection; etc.

**Facilities** which includes: IT (as appropriate); staff parking; orientation to the zoo (including relevant staff rooms, admin buildings, first aid locations, etc.).

**Organisation Information** which includes: the zoo's mission statement; products and services; our customer care policy; etc.

**Benefits and Policies** which includes: pay (methods and date); NI information; pension schemes; other benefits; working hours; timesheet reporting; etc.

**Role Specific Information** which includes: reiteration of the job role and requirements; introduction to the department/team; organisational orientation (of the entire zoo).

As part of the induction process, departments utilities job specific New Employee Checklists. This provides a handy list of all the steps in the induction process of a new employee. It ensures that no steps are forgotten and that all employees are appropriately trained. This includes training for job roles (e.g. the use of computer systems or cash tills), as well as health and safety training.

### **Staff training and development**

Colchester Zoo values its staff members and so offers training and development throughout employment. This is based on job roles and staff specific skills and expertise.

#### In house training may include:

Customer relations  
Dealing with difficult customers  
Successful merchandising  
Environmental enrichment  
Animal training  
Presentation skills

#### External training may include:

Food and Hygiene Certificate  
First Aid  
Driving courses (fork lift)  
NVQ Team Leader  
NVQ Customer Services  
Level 3 Zookeeper & Aquarist Apprentice

### **Staff Appraisals**

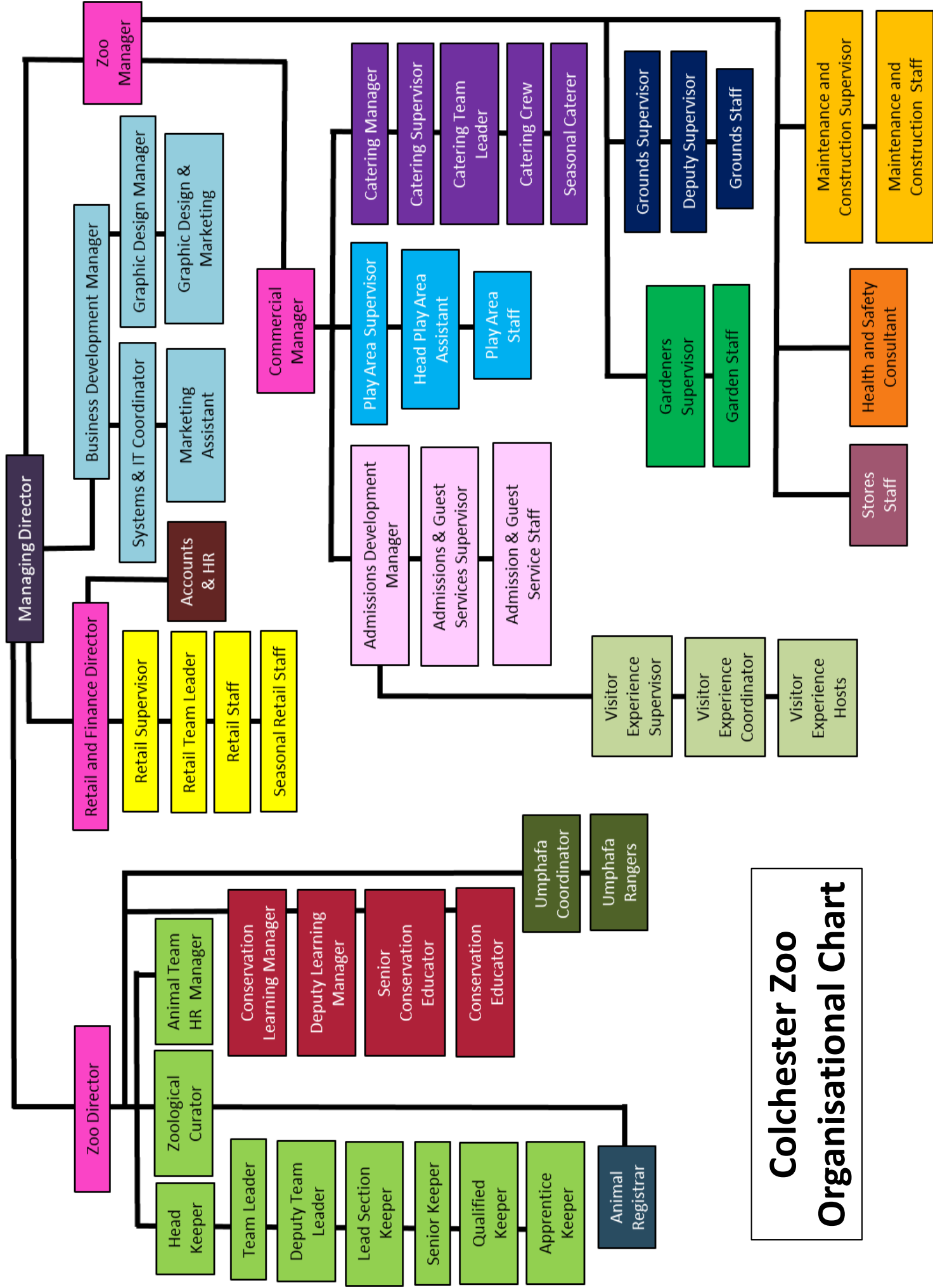
Colchester Zoo monitors work performance via appraisals on a continuous basis so that strengths can be maximised and any weaknesses overcome

New employees have designated appraisals at set times depending on their job role. After finishing their probation period appraisals are then annually.

Appraisals record an assessment of an employee's performance, their potential and any development needs. Appraisal objectives include:

- Reiterating key job roles
- Highlighting successes and why
- Identifying areas to be improved and why
- Re-evaluating of any set targets or aims
- Agreeing on future targets or aims and planning how to achieve these
- Identifying skill gaps and relevant training or assistance to bridge these gaps





**Colchester Zoo  
Organisational Chart**

Zoo Director

Head Keeper

Team Leader

Deputy Team Leader

Lead Section Keeper

Senior Keeper

Qualified Keeper

Apprentice Keeper

Animal Registrar

Zoological Curator

Animal Team HR Manager

Conservation Learning Manager

Deputy Learning Manager

Senior Conservation Educator

Conservation Educator

Umphafa Coordinator

Umphafa Rangers

Visitor Experience Supervisor

Visitor Experience Coordinator

Visitor Experience Hosts

Admissions Development Manager

Admissions & Guest Services Supervisor

Admission & Guest Service Staff

Play Area Supervisor

Head Play Area Assistant

Play Area Staff

Catering Manager

Catering Supervisor

Catering Team Leader

Catering Crew

Seasonal Caterer

Grounds Supervisor

Deputy Supervisor

Grounds Staff

Health and Safety Consultant

Stores Staff

Maintenance and Construction Supervisor

Maintenance and Construction Staff

# Conservationist

The term “conservationist” is a broad term and does include animal keepers, education staff and wildlife rangers. Some job roles may be very specific and require specific qualifications and experience. Several organisations employ scientists to aid conservation work, who may work on research on a certain species or habitat for example.

Scientists are often associated with a zoo, museum, university or other scientific institute, whose work can be field based and/or lab based. They will often work as part of a team but also complete work on their own. Scientists often have to source funding to obtain equipment and cover travel in order to complete their work.

Many scientists are research assistants who are students who have already obtained a degree and are working towards a masters or a PhD.

There are many different roles within conservation work, some roles can be based in the field whereas others are based in an office. Field work may include managing the habitat, replanting trees, removing invasive plant species, as well as improving water and soil quality. Other work can include population control of invasive species and community support work.

Office-based conservation can be record keeping, organising funds and fund raising events, coordinating people, non-government and government departments.

There are many roles in the U.K. and worldwide and there are a number of opportunities to volunteer.



# Animal Keeper Job Profile

The animal keeper, sometimes called zoo keeper, ranger or animal carer is often the largest department with many specialised keepers focusing on one group of species, as well as keepers with a broad knowledge on several species.

There are several levels of animal keeper, from trainee keeper to zoological director. The following will outline the basic role of an animal keeper.

- Enclosure cleaning and presentation
- Food preparation and feeding
- Care and maintaining welfare
- Accurate record keeping
- Assisting with animal training
- Interacting with zoo visitors
- Responsible – could work with dangerous animals

## Experience

The keeping level will depend on the amount of experience needed. This can vary depending on the individual zoo. The table below states Colchester Zoo's level of experience.

Keeper Level	Amount of Experience
Animal Manager	15+ years
Team Leader	10+ years
Deputy Team Leader	10+ years
Lead Keeper	7+ years
Senior Keeper	4-6 years
Qualified Keeper	18 months - 4 years
Apprentice Keeper	Under 18 months

Experience can include any work with animals, not necessarily at a zoo. It can be with farm animals, rescue animals etc. For qualified keepers the zoo may want more specific experience with a certain species. For senior keepers, it is more likely the zoo would want someone with specific species experience.



# Conservation Educator Job Profile

The Conservation Educator, sometimes referred to as an education officer or school's coordinator is the formal education and learning side of a zoo or aquarium. They deliver talks and workshops to students and visitors. Some zoos and aquaria include a presenter team in this department as well, to deliver animal talks. Colchester Zoo does not have a presenter team as the keepers themselves deliver the animal talks.

The basic role of an education officer can include the following:

- Teaching all age groups
- Develop learning resources
- Complete admin
- Develop and deliver public engagement activities
- Develop relationships with schools and other educational bodies

Education and research departments work closely together with some research staff including in the education department.

## Experience

- 2 years experience in an education role
- Education/teaching in a formal or informal context
- Understanding of zoology and conservation
- Leading activities for high numbers of people

Experience does not need to be with zoo visitors or schools, it can be experience gained whilst working with youth groups, brownie or scout groups.

Some education departments have their own animals to use in sessions and it is often the education team who care, train and maintain the well being of the animals. Even if the department does not have their own animals, the staff will likely use animals to aid sessions. For this reason, some experience handling small animals would be desired.



# Wildlife Ranger Job Profile

Colchester Zoo's charity Action for the Wild operates a private nature reserve in South Africa called UmPhafa.

UmPhafa employs people from the local area to be rangers, whose role includes the following:

- Removing snares
- Habitat studies
- Animal studies
- Reserve maintenance
- Animal releases
- Population studies
- Habitat creation
- Controlling wildfires
- Supporting students and volunteers
- Habitat management

## Experience

Specific experience is difficult to get as the only way to get that experience is to work on a reserve, however experience in certain areas can be obtained in other ways, this can be gained through volunteering and internship programmes. It is desired that rangers have the following experience:

- Worked with electric fencing and maintenance
- Experience with fire fighting/fire-breaks
- Working in the field of security
- Working with wild animals

## Qualifications

There are no set qualifications that rangers need, most can be obtained whilst working. However, there are some that can be gained before becoming a ranger and would greatly aid in getting into this area. These are:

- Full driving licence
- Firearms competency certificate
- First Aid Qualification
- The Field Guides Association of Southern Africa (FGASA) training



# Skills and Attributes

As with all jobs there are certain skills and attributes that are needed. Most skills are developed over time, however having some before starting a job will be an advantage.

- High standard of husbandry skills
- Proactive attitude
- Work well on your own or in a team
- Attention to detail and observation skills
- Accurate record keeping
- Be reliable and have good time management
- Full driving licence
- Able to use office software
- Understanding of BIAZA and EAZA
- Follow policy and protocol correctly
- Speak confidently and appropriately
- Strong presentation skills
- Animal/environmental knowledge
- Leadership skills
- Proactive attitude
- High standard of customer care
- Able to use Office software
- Honest and trustworthy
- Good communication skills
- Good literacy skills
- Able to learn quickly and adapt to new conditions
- Confident and level headed



# Qualifications

Depending on the department, the qualifications needed vary. The following is an outline of standard qualifications required.

An animal related qualifications is required for animal keeping, normally at either level 2 or level 3. There are many colleges across the U.K. that offer animal related courses. These colleges are often land based or agricultural colleges which are affiliated with universities. The courses provided vary among colleges and include:

- Level 1 Diploma Animal Care
- Level 2 Technical Certificate in Animal Management
- Level 2 Diploma in Work-based Animal Care
- Instructor in Dog Training
- Level 3 Advanced Technical Extended Diploma in Animal Management
- Level 3 Advanced Technical Diploma in Animal Management

If someone does not have a zoo/wild animal related qualification (most animal care courses are based on companion animals and domestic livestock) and have limited practical experience, they will be put on the Level 3 Keeper and Aquarist Apprenticeship. This is a two year course and is funded by government grants.

It is not uncommon for animal keepers to have degrees or other higher education (HE) qualifications as well, in a range of animal and environmental areas. Staff in education and research departments require a HE level qualification as standard. Qualifications include:

- FdSc (Foundation Degree) Applied Animal Studies
- Diploma of Higher Education in Animal Science
- Diploma of Higher Education in Animal Management
- Certificate of Higher Education in Animal Studies
- BSc (Hons) Animal Science
- BSc (Hons) Animal Management
- BSc (Hons) Applied Zoology
- BSc (Hons) Applied Animal Studies (Top Up)
- MSc Animal Welfare

Additional training can be obtained before starting or during work. These are normally self funded, however some zoos and aquaria may fund them as personal development. Such training can be:

- Chainsaw licence
- First aid
- Customer Service
- Health and Safety
- Management training
- Public speaking

Some people may have or the zoo or aquarium they work my put new staff onto the Diploma in the Management of Zoo and Aquarium Animals (DMZAA).

This is a two year distant learning course designed for people who are already working in a zoo or aquarium.

# Getting Qualifications

## Entry Requirements

Requirements for Further Education (FE) courses vary from college to college. It is always best to check the individual college website for their exact requirements. Below are the average requirements.

Level 1 - At least two GCSE grades at D-E/3-1.

Level 2 - Four GCSE grades D/3 and above or a Level 1 Diploma in a related subject.

Level 3 - Four GCSEs at A\*-C/9-4, including English and Maths at grade C/4 or above.

Level 1 and 2 courses last one year and level 3 courses last two years.

For University or Higher Education (HE) courses the following is required.

BSc - Level 3 FE qualification or 3 A-levels C or above and depending on the BSc one of the A-levels should be in a life science

FdSc - Level 2 FE qualification or 2 A-levels C or above with one in life sciences

Diploma of Higher Education - Level 2 FE qualification

Masters - BSc

Some universities require GCSE maths and English at grade C/4 or above or Level 2 functional skills in maths and English.

A BSc lasts three years and a FdSc and a Diploma of Higher Education last two years. Top ups are done after completing a Higher National Diploma (HND) or FdSc to convert that qualification into a degree. The top up qualification is one year.

Masters are one year and can be either taught or research-based.

Below are some of the colleges and universities that offer animal related courses.



Capel Manor College





# Membership Organisations

There are a number of organisations that offer the opportunity to become members to access information and professional development and support. Being part of these organisations will provide access to people and information and will show commitment. The organisations detailed below have both professional memberships (people who are already working in that area) and students memberships, which have a reduced membership fee.

**ABWAK - The Association of British Wild Animal Keepers:** <https://abwak.org/>

ABWAK a membership organisation for those interested and involved in the keeping and conservation of wild animals, which seeks to achieve the highest standards of excellence in animal welfare through communication, cooperation, training and development. (ABWAK 2018)

**ICZ - International Congress of Zoo Keepers:** <http://www.iczoo.org>

ICZ provides a variety of assistance to international colleagues and enhances communication among the world's zoo professionals. (ICZ 2018)

**IZE - International Zoo Educators Association:** <http://izea.net>

The Zoo Educators' Associations a non-profit organisation dedicated to improving the education programmes in zoos and aquariums. (IZE 2018)

**UFAW - University Federation for Animal Welfare:** <https://www.ufaw.org.uk>

The Federation for Animal Welfare is an animal welfare science society and works to improve animals' lives by promoting and supporting developments in the science and technology that underpin advances in animal welfare. (UFAW 2018)

**IMATA - International Marine Animal Trainers Association:** <https://www.imata.org>

The International Marine Animal Trainers Association is a professional group composed of persons active in the marine animal field and other individuals who are interested in marine mammals. (IMATA 2018)

**BVZS - British Veterinary Zoological Society:** <https://www.bvzs.org>

The British Veterinary Zoological Society is the specialist of the Association (BVA) recognised as having responsibility for exotic pets, companion avian species, animals and wildlife. (BVZS 2018)

# Gaining Experience

Experience is often required to work with animals, yet gaining the desired experience is sometimes difficult to find.

Most qualifications will include a practical or work-based element as part of the course content and there are often a number of opportunities to volunteer. Most zoos, rescue centres and other charities will have a volunteering and work-based learning scheme.

Colchester Zoo has both a volunteering and work based learning scheme which are different from each other. The following is information regarding Colchester Zoo's volunteering and work based learning scheme, however other zoos may have different requirements and the role may differ as well. It is advisable to check the individual organisation directly.

## **Visitor Engagement Volunteering**

### Requirements

- 17 years old (some zoos require 18 years old)
- Be open and friendly

### Role

- Enhance the visitor experience
- Enable visitors to get the most from the zoo
- Provide a learning experience
- Raise awareness of the zoo's conservation work

Zoo volunteering is not a position that offers direct animal contact.

## **Work Based Learning**

Colchester Zoo has three work based learning schemes that are designed to support the different phases of learning and development for students from entry level to post qualification. Work-based learning placements are undertaken within the animal keeping sections. As this is work experience, the placements are full time over 5 consecutive days and will include some weekend work. These are voluntary placements and not accommodation is offered.

The three work based learning schemes are:

- 10 week placement – only for students who require an industry placement for their course
- 3-6 month placements
- 12 month placement – referred to as Student Keeper

### Requirements

- 18 years old or over at the time of placement
- Have completed or are completing an animal related course
- Be able to commit to five consecutive days per placement week
- Student keeper only—You will be able to demonstrate some animal husbandry experience, though not necessarily within a zoo environment.

The one year student keeper placement has a taught element covering a range of zoo related topics as well as topics aimed to improve employability and understanding of the role.

# Seasonal Work

One way of getting employed full time is to do seasonal work, which is a common way into zoo work. As zoos have increased visitor numbers during the school holidays, they require additional staff to cope with the increased visitor numbers. This period is referred to as The Main Season. This covers the months from March through to the end of October. The period outside of the Main Season is called the Low Season and has lower visitor numbers.

Staff that are hired to work over the Main Season only work for this period, however it does provide an opportunity to make yourself known within the organisation and hear about up and coming jobs sooner.

Many zookeepers start in a seasonal position often in another department such as catering or retail. Sometimes there are seasonal animal keepers and educator positions as well, however this varies amongst zoos.

On occasion a seasonal position can lead to full time employment, which is subject to a number of conditions, one being how well the person has done in the seasonal position and if there is a need for a full time position. It is worth remembering that a seasonal positions does not always lead to full time employment but is a good way to get a 'foot in the door' and get known by the zoo.



# Additional Skills

Gaining additional skills can be a major advantage when gaining employment in zoos and other animal related work. The list below highlights some of the additional skills that will look good on a CV as well as help in career progression. Many of these can be gained as part of a college or university course, however they can also be gained independently.

Additional skills include:

- Chainsaw Licence
- Tractor driving
- Presentation/public speaking skills
- Computer skills
- Safe use of veterinary medicine
- COSHH training
- Research techniques
- Butchery skills
- Craft and DIY skills and carpentry
- Diving qualifications
- Mechanic skills
- Gun licence
- Understanding of risk assessments

Some of the above can be done at adult learning centres and online, others can be done at local colleges. For further information visit the local library or an internet search for adult learning centres in the area.



## ADULT LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

# Where to Find Jobs

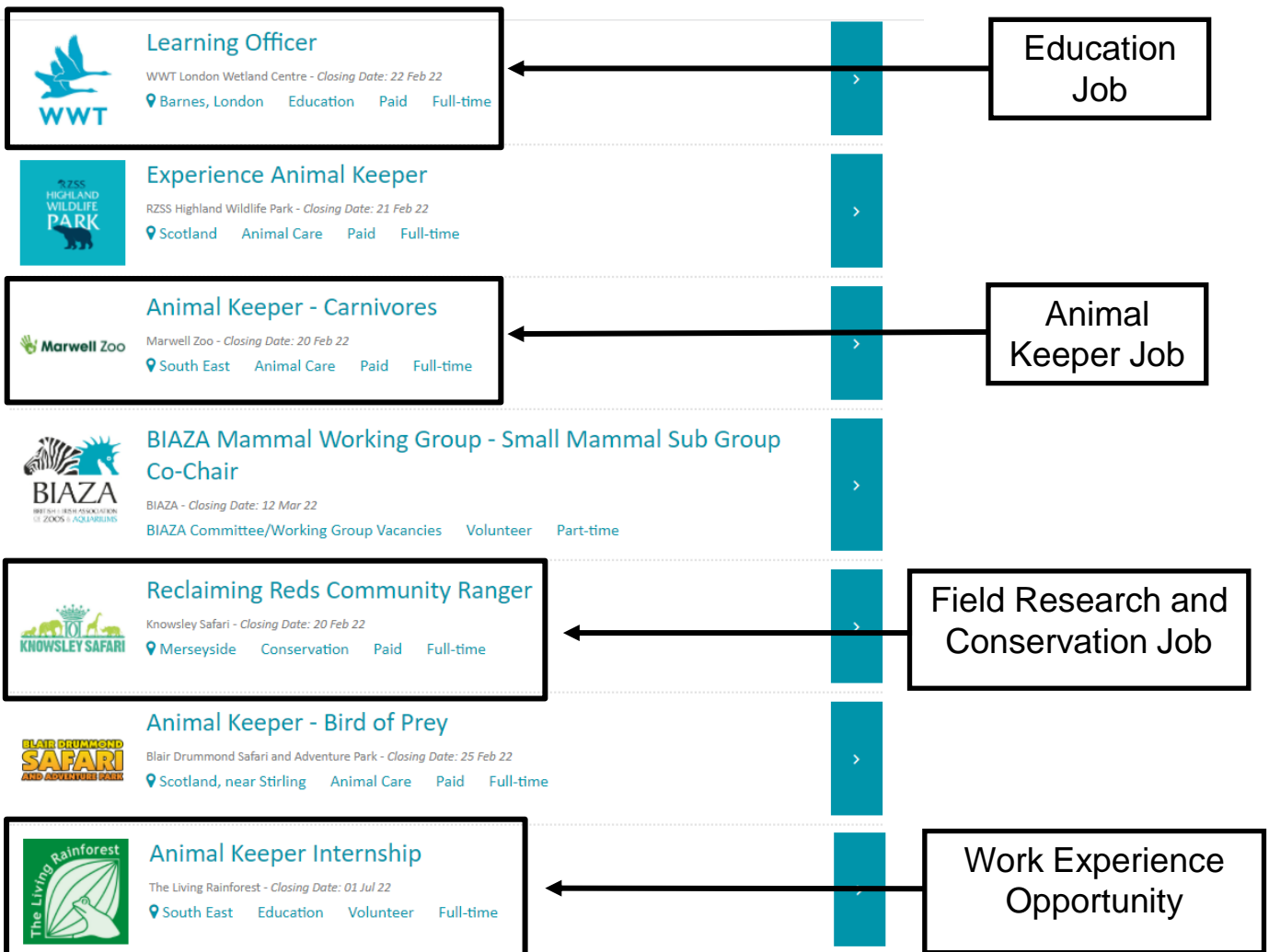
There are several ways to look for animal related jobs, the simplest is an internet search or go to the individual organisation's websites. There is also a more efficient way to look for jobs and this is to go the BIAZA website.

BIAZA is the British and Irish Association on Zoos and Aquaria, with 116 members across the U.K. and the Republic of Ireland.

BIAZA career page: <https://biaza.org.uk/careers>



Below is a screen grab from the BIAZA careers page from February 2022.



# Where to Find Jobs

To find jobs outside the U.K. in the same field as BIAZA there are two other organisations, EAZA and WAZA and for jobs, as well as news on zoos from around the world, there is Zoo Digest.

EAZA is the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria, which has 345 members across 34 countries in Europe and the Middle East. These roles can be animal keeping, education and research roles, however knowing a second language (French, Spanish) is desired and sometimes required.

EAZA's career page: <https://www.eaza.net/about-us/vacancies/>



WAZA is the World Association of Zoos and Aquaria and has 280 members across the World. As with EAZA there are the same roles and a second language is desired and sometimes required.

WAZA's career page: <http://www.waza.org/en/site/get-involved/job-postings>



World Association of  
Zoos and Aquariums  
**WAZA** | *United for  
Conservation*

Zoo News Digest is an internet base of current zoo related news for people interested in zoos and for those working within the zoo industry. The Digest includes comments and notification of courses and events as well as jobs.

Zoo Digest job page: <http://zoowork.blogspot.co.uk/>



# Day in the Life of a Tiger Keeper

The following is the average day of our tiger keepers. This animal section is made up of two keepers who are responsible for three Amur tigers, five Philippine spotted deer, three warty pigs, two Andean condors, two great grey owls, two king vultures, timber wolves and two bush dogs.



## Both keepers

07:45 - Arrive at the Zoo, collect keys, radio and visually check the Andean condors, great grey spotted owls, king vultures, timber wolves, tigers and bush dogs.

08:00 - Team meeting regarding previous day and discuss jobs for the day.

08:15 - Check the Philippine spotted deer and the warty pigs. Prepare first feed of the day and give to the deer and pigs.

08:45 - Clean public areas - clean windows, sweep viewing areas and clean signage.

09:30 - Clean the wolf enclosure, check fences and feed and provide enrichment.

10:00 - Clean tiger houses and outside areas, check fences and provide enrichment.

10:45 - Break

11:10 - **Keeper one** - Public talk at the Andean condors, great grey owls and king vultures.

**Keeper two** - Feeds the Andean condors, great grey owls and king vultures.

11:25 - **Keeper one** - Cleans bush dogs enclosure, Philippine spotted deer and the warty pig enclosures and the Andean condors, great grey owls and king vultures enclosures.

**Keeper two** - Does the Keeper Shadow experience.

12:00 - **Keeper one** - Continues with cleaning.

**Keeper two** - Does the VIP experience.

12:45 - **Both keepers** - Public tiger talk. One keeper talks, the other keeper places enrichment or food out for the tigers.

13:15 - **Keeper one** - Continues cleaning.

**Keeper two** - Feeds Philippine spotted deer and the warty pigs their afternoon feed.

## Both Keepers

13:30 - Lunch, start writing diaries.

14:30 - Finish any cleaning, animal training, making enrichment and general section up keep.

15:45 - Start giving any final feeds, final visual check of the animals. Get rid of rubbish and waste from cleaning and secure the section.

16:45 - Finishing diaries and daily report.

17:15 - Finish for the day.

# Points to Remember

The following are some points to consider when looking into working with animals and wildlife in general.

- Competitive - Animal keeping jobs especially. It is not uncommon for some zoos to have between 60-100 applicants for one position and on average 10% of applicants will be invited for interview.
- Emotional - With animal keeping, keepers form a bond with the animals in their care and when animals are sick or move to another zoo as part of a breeding programme, it can be emotionally hard.
- Physically demanding - All roles are active, manual work, working in all weathers throughout the year. Often working outside the standard working period, including night work.
- Mentally demanding - Need to be aware of the surroundings, protocol and health & safety. Some roles involve working with dangerous animals.
- Can be a long process - It may take years to get to the desired positions and some times there is not a direct route.
- Often work for free - At the start it is common to do volunteering before getting a paid position.
- Working in other departments - Sometimes working in retail or catering in a zoo can make it easier to apply for animal jobs as well as build up a skill base and making yourself known.
- Get any experience - Any thing working with any animals or an education role will be beneficial, doesn't need to be zoo work at the beginning.
- All weather work - Be it  $-5^{\circ}\text{C}$  or plus  $30^{\circ}\text{C}$ , in rain or shine the same work needs to be done 365 days of year. Working weekends and holidays are standard as well as working 40 plus hours a week.
- Working with animals can be rewarding and offer unique experiences and opportunities.





# Can you please give us feedback?

To help us improve this and other resources, we would be grateful if you could take a few minutes to provide **feedback** using the below link or QR code.

Everyone who completes feedback on our information packs will be entered into an annual **prize draw** to win a Guardian level **Animal Adoption** at Colchester Zoo!\*

**Win an Animal Adoption!**



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