

Colchester Zoological Society is home to over 150 species and is dedicated to supporting conservation projects around the globe. As an award-winning visitor attraction with over 1 million guests visiting each year, every staff member at the zoo works together to ensure that our guests have an enjoyable and unforgettable experience.

JOB TITLE: Qualified Animal Keeper – Reptile Section (One Year Maternity Cover)

An exciting position has arisen for a Qualified Keeper to join our team and contribute to our mission at CZS in a one year maternity role working within our Reptile department; responsible for a range of reptile, amphibian, fish and invertebrate species.

JOB SUMMARY:	<p>The candidate will work within the Animal Department to carry out husbandry duties and maintain high standards of welfare for the animal species in their care. As a qualified keeper, the candidate will be required to input ideas for the continual progression and development of animal husbandry, breeding management and enclosure design on the section.</p> <p>The Qualified Keeper will be responsible for carrying out day to day husbandry on the section for a range of species and ensuring safe working practices, as well as delivering enclosure encounters and experiences to zoo visitors for a range of species across the section.</p>
MAIN JOB PURPOSE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out husbandry duties and maintain high standards of welfare to a range of species • Ensure safe working practices across the animal section • Deliver enclosure encounters and experiences to zoo visitors
OTHER KEY ACTIVITIES:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate commitment to continuous personal development. • Perform other duties as reasonably directed by the senior members of the Reptile Section (Team Leader, Deputy Team Leader, Lead Keeper and Senior Keeper) and the Animal Management Team (Zoological Director, Curator of Living Collections, Manager of Living Collections and Head Keeper)
WORKING HOURS:	<p>This is a full-time position. An average of 40 hours a week (5 days) which will include regular weekend work and will increase in busy periods.</p>
UNIFORM:	<p>Full uniform (including boots) will be provided. Full uniform must be worn at all times.</p>
SALARY:	<p>£25,792 – £26,208 per annum depending on experience</p>
EVALUATION:	<p>For the first five months of employment, the jobholder will be asked to complete a one month, three month and five month self-assessment. This will gauge their feelings of the job and assess their progress towards meeting targets.</p>
WORKING ENVIRONMENT:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CZS is a non-smoking environment and smoking is not permitted by members of staff whilst on the premises. • CZS is an equal opportunities employer. • You may be required to work offsite on animal transfers on occasion. <p>Whilst doing this job, the employee is likely to be exposed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Category 1/1A animals • Outside weather conditions • Tropical exhibits with high temperatures • Moving mechanical parts • Toxic or caustic chemicals • Lifting heavy loads

QUALIFIED KEEPER SPECIFICATION

	Essential	Desirable
HUSBANDRY SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE	<p>18 months – 4 years’ experience in a zoological collection</p> <p>Good standard of practical skill in animal husbandry, including training and enrichment</p> <p>Good animal observation skills</p> <p>Ability to develop animal husbandry, breeding management and enclosure design on the section</p> <p>Knowledge of water quality parameters and management for a range of species</p> <p>Experience in operating filtration systems and life support systems</p>	<p>Knowledge of ZIMS</p> <p>Knowledge of uv requirements for a range of species</p> <p>Knowledge of zoo licencing and legislation</p>
TEAM WORK AND ABILITY TO FOLLOW INSTRUCTION	<p>Ability to work in a team and contribute to team goals</p> <p>Ability to harness positive relationships with all other team members regardless of level / section</p> <p>Ability to follow instruction and carry out tasks at manager’s / senior staff member’s request</p>	
LEADERSHIP AND MENTORING		<p>Ability to mentor and allocate work duties to volunteers</p>
HEALTH AND SAFETY	<p>Good understanding of risk assessments</p> <p>Ability to ensure safe working practices at Qualified Keeper level</p> <p>Reasonable understanding of zoo emergency procedures</p>	

	Essential	Desirable
COMMUNICATION AND PRESENTATION SKILLS	Good communication and presentation skills to deliver animal encounters and experiences	
SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE	<p>Trained in manual handling</p> <p>Computer literate with good knowledge of the major Microsoft Office programmes</p> <p>Good written skills, including record keeping</p>	
OTHER	<p>DMZAA or equivalent qualification</p> <p>Hard working and highly-motivated</p> <p>Excellent punctuality and time keeping</p> <p>Dependable and trustworthy</p> <p>Flexible and adaptable</p> <p>Warm, open-minded and professional</p>	Ability to use own initiative to solve problems

HOW TO APPLY

If you are interested in applying, please complete the **CZS Employment application form**, Please ensure all sections of the application form are completed, do not enter 'Refer to CV'.

Send your CV and completed Employment Application Form to **Mrs Liz Butcher, Living Collections Manager, by email to vacancies@colchesterzoo.org**

Closing date is **13th February 2026**.

Please be aware that we will only process applications that include a completed application form and CV. We do have a lot of interest in our vacancies, if you have not heard from us after four weeks of submitting your application you should assume you have not been successful on the occasion.

Return completed form by email to the contact named within the advertised vacancy.

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**SECTION FOUR – Continuous Professional Development, other training, current study
(type in information)**

Qualification (Inc. grade)	School / University / Institution	Date Achieved

**SECTION FIVE – Membership of Professional Body, include any offices held
(type in information)**

Qualification (Inc. grade)	School / University / Institution	Date Achieved

SECTION SIX – CURRENT / MOST RECENT EMPLOYMENT (type in information)

Job Title:		Current Job:	
Employer:			
Start Date:		End Date:	
Salary:			
Main duties and responsibilities:			
Notice Period:			
Reason for leaving:			

SECTION SEVEN – PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT: (type in information)

Job Title:		Current Job:	
Employer:			
Start Date:		End Date:	
Salary:			
Main duties and responsibilities:			
Notice Period:			
Reason for leaving:			

PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT CONTINUED... (type in information)

Job Title:		Current Job:	
Employer:			
Start Date:		End Date:	
Salary:			
Main duties and responsibilities:			
Notice Period:			
Reason for leaving:			

PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT CONTINUED... (type in information)

Job Title	Employer	Start Date	Leave Date	Reason for leaving

GAPS IN EMPLOYMENT – please specify reasons and dates for any gaps in employment (type in information)

SUPPORTING INFORMATION – Please provide any information in support of your application. This should provide us with evidence of the skills, knowledge, personal attributes, competence and experience to carry out with the role for which you are applying (type in information)

REFERENCES – Please give the details of two referees, one should be your current or most recent employer (i.e. you line manager or Head of Department) References from family or friends are not accepted if you have an employment history (type in information)

Title:		First Name:	
Can the reference be contacted?		Surname:	
Job Title:			
Address:			
Email:		Telephone:	
Relationship:			

Title:		First Name:	
Can the reference be contacted?		Surname:	
Job Title:			
Address:			
Email:		Telephone:	
Relationship:			

DISABILITY – Do you require any special arrangements to be made to participate in the selection process on account of a disability? If yes, please give brief details (type in information)

CONVICTIONS – Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence i.e. cautions, reprimands or warnings? If yes, please give details of any unspent convictions.

DECLARATION: Please read carefully before signing this application

I confirm that the above information is complete and correct and that any untrue or misleading information will give my employer the right to terminate any employment contract offered. I agree that the organisation reserves the right to require me to undergo a medical examination. (Should we require further information and wish to contact your doctor with a view to obtaining a medical report, the law requires us to inform you of our intention and obtain your permission prior to contacting your doctor). I agree that this information will be retained in my personnel file during my employment and for up to six years thereafter and understand that information will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act. I agree that should I be successful with this application, I will, if required apply to the Criminal Records Bureau/Scottish Criminal Records Office for a basic disclosure. I understand that should I fail to do so, or should the disclosure not be to the satisfaction of the company, any offer of employment may be withdrawn or my employment terminated.

Signed:

Date: