

BIRDS INTERNSHIP

The Houston Zoo is offering opportunities to participate in unpaid internships in the Bird Department! Students will shadow and assist Zoo staff in the care of one of the largest zoological collections of birds the United States. The Houston Zoo is home to over 165 species of birds, with more than 800 individual animals. This includes flamingos, kookaburra, macaws, hornbills, and other endangered species. From learning about exhibit maintenance to enrichment of the animals, this position will give real world experience in the field of zoo keeping. In addition to learning each routine's duties, interns will gain knowledge of anatomy, behavior, and the conservation status of each species.

Candidates for this position should be self-motivated, dependable, positive, and show an interest in pursuing a career in animal care management or conservation of birds. The internship is designed to provide students the opportunity to learn the following:

- Diet preparation and feeding
- Proper nutrition and care for a variety of bird species
- Maintaining of animal exhibits and holding areas (perching, trimming, propping, etc.) according to AZA regulations
- Observing and recording animal conditions, social behaviors, and responses
- Observing vet care and treatments
- Designing and constructing of enrichment and evaluations
- Positive and educational interaction with Zoo guests

PHYSICAL EFFORT AND ENVIRONMENT:

This position involves a lot of walking and lifting. Time outdoors can be expected, in all different weather conditions including heat, humidity, rain, cold, or dust. It may also involve considerable physical exertion such as climbing, reaching, assuming awkward positions, repetitive motions, and lifting and/or moving of heavy objects (up to 25 pounds) on a regular basis. Due to the nature of this environment, interns will have some public contact requiring considerable communication skills. Interns can expect to present keeper chats for the public towards the end of the internship.

REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS:

- Ability to multi-task and excel in a fast-paced environment
- Ability to work independently while being an important part of a team
- Exhibit strong professionalism and communication skills
- Possess a desire to gain experience and knowledge working with birds
- Some knowledge of husbandry is preferred, but not required
- Interns are required to complete approximately 350 hours at a commitment of 27 hours/week. This can be accomplished in three, 9 hour shifts per week, for 13 weeks. Applicants must be able to work any day of the week, including weekends. Shift times are 7 a.m. until 4 p.m.
- Candidates do not need previous husbandry experience but working at other animal facilities is a plus
- Coursework in biology or zoology-related field is preferred but not required
- Compose and present an educational presentation at the end of internship