

SEA LIONS INTERNSHIP

The Houston Zoo is offering students an opportunity to participate in an unpaid internship with our Sea Lions Department! The curriculum for this program is structured to help interns gain a strong understanding of a career in husbandry, training, conservation and research of California sea lions. Throughout this experience, interns will shadow Zoo staff in routine husbandry techniques, training and animal care for our sea lions.

Candidates for this position should be self-motivated, dependable, positive, and show an interest in pursuing a career in animal care management, with an emphasis on working with marine animals. The internship is designed to provide students the opportunity to learn the following:

- Diet preparation, including fish and squid
- Proper nutrition and care for sea lions
- Maintaining of animal exhibits and holding areas according to AZA regulations
- Observing and recording animal condition, behaviors, and responses
- Filtration system, water sampling and chemistry
- Designing appropriate enrichment
- The fundamentals of modern animal training techniques
- Positive and educational interaction with Zoo guests
- Improvement of public speaking skills through the development of an educational presentation

PHYSICAL EFFORT AND ENVIRONMENT:

This position involves a lot of walking and lifting. The majority of the internship is spent outdoors; you will also be in a covered but non-climate controlled building. You will be exposed to all levels of 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 60 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 during this 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 sea lions or marine mammals
- Some knowledge and/or coursework in marine biology and psychology is preferred but not required
- Previous experience with marine mammals preferred but not required
- Interns are required to complete a minimum 400-hour commitment. Depending on other opportunities that the intern chooses to take advantage of, he/she may complete more hours. Interns must be able to work any day of the week, including weekends. Most shifts will be 7 a.m. - 4 p.m.; to meet hours, this requires interns to be at the Zoo 4 or 5 days/week during the internship period.
- Complete provided study guides and quizzes
- Coursework in biology or zoology and psychology-related fields preferred
- Compose and present an educational presentation at the end of internship