

ZOOLOGICAL ASSISTANT

KIND OF WORK

Professional level animal management and research work acting as the assistant to a Zoological Curator.

NATURE AND PURPOSE

An employee in this class acts as the program assistant to a Zoologist in charge of a major animal management area. The employee participates in specialized animal management programs for the Minnesota Zoological Gardens exotic animal collection of over 200 species involving 1200 animals. The incumbent may be assigned to provide primary care to a significant portion of the animal collection. He/she assists in coordinating the activities of other workers as well as the assigned lead worker responsible for specific areas of animal management as well as being responsible for a major area in a Zoologist's absence. Considerable latitude is given the employee in identifying, assessing, and resolving animal management needs in the assignment areas. The employee is expected to demonstrate a high level of initiative in dealing with both routine and long term issues, especially when leading teams analyzing animal management procedures and exhibitions. Technical decisions are made by the incumbent and reported to the Zoologist on an as needed basis. Work is reviewed through conference, oral and written reports, and inspection review.

EXAMPLES OF WORK (A position may not include all the work examples given, nor does the list include all that may be assigned.)

Acts as an assistant to a Zoologist so that the Zoo's animal management areas maintain effective programs.

Leads teams analyzing animal management procedures and exhibitions, develops recommendations and directs implementation and review so that the animal management program at the MZG continues to develop and expand.

Initiates and implements diet redesign to assure that animals remain healthy.

Recommends, develops and conducts special animal research projects and procedures so that the program continues to improve.

Attends, participates in, assists in development of and conducts internal zookeeper training programs so that para-professional employees continue to be aware of developments in animal management techniques and that the MZG's animal collection is in good quality.

Assists in developing and evaluating training staff and volunteers in interpretive materials so that the Zoo's message to the public is conveyed.

Develops, prepares and submits animal management records to the animal management record specialist so that information and data is kept in good order on the animal collection.

Assists other MZG staff in the handling of or explaining habits and lifestyles of selected animals to the MZG visitor so that the public is given an informative and entertaining picture of the Zoo's purpose in collection.

Assumes total animal management responsibility for a specific portion of the Zoo's animal collection so that it is developed and exhibited properly.

Coordinates the work of other staff within an animal management area so that the work in the Zoo is done in accordance with proper procedures.

Directs zookeeping activities in the Zoologist's absence to provide a continuation of supervisory control.

Suggests improvements in animal nutrition, breeding, sanitation, animal management procedures, exhibition, scheduling, training, and routine health procedures based on observation so that the welfare of the animals at the Zoo is maintained.

Reports and records observed irregularities in animal appearance, condition, behavior, functions or eating habits so that the problems can be spotted and recorded on a timely basis.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES REQUIRED

Knowledge of:

Considerable knowledge of the principles, practices and techniques of biology, zoology or animal husbandry.

Considerable knowledge of animal management principles and practices that apply to an animal collection of mammals, birds, reptiles or aquatic life.

Working knowledge of biological research principles and procedures.

Working knowledge of the Minnesota Zoological Garden, its organization operations and programs.

Ability to:

Ability to coordinate and lead small groups in technical analysis of animal management procedures and exhibition.

Ability to identify animal management needs and recommend or implement appropriate solutions.

Ability to comprehend difficult and technical information.

Ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing.

Ability to coordinate the work of others.

Ability to determine abnormalities in an animal's appearance and behavior.

Ability to work with and handle exotic and domestic animals.

Ability to understand and carry out oral and written instructions.

Ability to prepare detailed animal management records and reports.

Est.: 9/82

Rev.:

T.C.:

Former Title(s):