



## POINT DEFIANCE ZOO AND AQUARIUM Internship Program

---

Thank you for your interest in the **Small Exotics Animal Husbandry** internship in the Kids' Zone exhibit areas at the Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium. This internship is an in-depth program requiring a 32 to 40 hour per week commitment, for a minimum of 400 hours for 10-12 weeks (12 weeks for fall, winter and spring sessions and 10 weeks for the summer session). Interns must be flexible with their schedule, and have the ability to work weekdays, weekends and holidays. It is an unpaid position and there is no housing provided. We will do everything possible to accommodate school requirements for those who can earn class credit.

As our internships are unpaid, interns are considered volunteers so the zoo does not provide any medical coverage for on or off the job injuries or incidents.

Intern positions are offered year round, up to two per quarter. Our schedule is as follows:

- Spring internship: March/April/May  
Applications accepted until the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday in January
  
- Summer internship: June/July/August  
Applications accepted until the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday in March
  
- Fall internship: September/October/November/December  
Applications accepted until the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday in June
  
- Winter internship: December/January/February/March  
Applications accepted until the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday in October

Good luck,

Cathleen McConnell  
Education Specialist  
Internship Program Coordinator

Natalie Davis  
Staff Biologist  
Kids' Zone Intern Supervisor



# POINT DEFIANCE ZOO & AQUARIUM

## Small Exotics Animal Husbandry Internship Description

---

The Small Exotics Animal Husbandry Internship at the Kids' Zone is designed to provide participants with practical, hands-on learning opportunities and knowledge in animal husbandry. In return, the intern makes a significant contribution to the daily operation of the Kids' Zone area at Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium.

The Kids' Zone exhibit area at Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium offers the most diverse display of animals at the Zoo. This exhibit area houses over 30 animal species and more than 175 individual invertebrates, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals from all over the world. The diversity of animals in the Kids' Zone provides for some unique challenges and opportunities for students pursuing a career in the field of biology, zoology, or other natural sciences.

Due to the limited amount of time for this internship position, it is not possible for each intern to gain experience with every species in the Kids' Zone complex. Interns will be assigned to a specific area and assist with projects in the other areas. This internship will also include opportunities to learn about the red wolf husbandry and conservation.

This internship will provide instruction in the following areas:

1. Animal Husbandry
  - General maintenance of animal exhibits and enclosures
  - Animal observations and record keeping
  - Dispensing medications
2. Nutrition and Diets
  - Diet preparation
  - Feeding techniques
3. Environmental Enrichment
  - Implementation and recordkeeping
4. Animal/Species Knowledge
  - Natural history
  - Behavior
  - Taxonomic relationships
5. Animal Handling
  - Basic handling techniques
  - Safety practices
6. Public Education/Animal Interpretation
  - Informal public presentations
  - Messaging



# POINT DEFIANCE ZOO & AQUARIUM

## Small Exotics Animal Husbandry Internship Assignments

---

During your internship, you will be asked to complete the following tasks:

### Journal

Keep informal journals describing your daily activities and to record your thoughts and experiences, and any questions or concerns you would like to share with the staff. The internship supervisor will review your journal regularly to evaluate your progress.

### Monthly Meetings

Once a month you will meet with the intern supervisor. This will be an opportunity to evaluate how your internship is progressing, review your journal entries, and answer any questions.

### Daily Assignments

On a daily basis you will be responsible for assisting the staff with routine husbandry and maintenance. The assignments will reflect the areas of instruction of this internship.

### Personal Project

Depending on the requirements of your college or university and the number of credits you will be receiving for your internship, you will be asked to come up with a project to implement under the guidance of the Kids' Zone staff. You will be required to submit a written proposal for your project before the third week of the internship.

The following are suggestions:

- ◆ Develop a collection or exhibit plan for a potential new exhibit species and/or habitat.
- ◆ Coordinate and carry out a research project on a topic relating to the Kids' Zone collection (i.e. animal behavior, nutrition, enrichment, guest experience).
- ◆ Do an in-depth library research project on one species and write a thorough report paper.
- ◆ Create an interpretive presentation for the general public on one or more of Kids' Zone's exhibits or animals.



## POINT DEFIANCE ZOO & AQUARIUM Internship Application Process

---

The internship program at Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium is designed to provide individuals with practical learning experience while gaining valuable knowledge related to her/his career goals. Applications for internship positions are evaluated on experience - professional and/or volunteer, academic achievement, interview success, and positions available.

To apply for an internship at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium you must:

1. Be currently enrolled in, or have recently graduated from, a college or university.
2. Have a minimum of one year of course work in a major field of study to be applied during the internship (e.g. biology, zoology, animal behavior, etc.)
3. Be capable of the physical abilities required to work with animals (e.g. lift 50 pounds, frequent bending and stooping, etc.)
4. Submit an application.
5. Submit a cover letter including your career goals.
6. Submit a resume.
7. Submit answers to application questions.
8. Submit two letters of recommendation from an advisor or supervisor. (These may be sent separately.)
9. Undergo a phone, Skype or on site interview.
10. Commit to working 40 hours per week for 10-12 weeks
11. Once selected, provide proof of a tetanus vaccination within the past 5 years.

**Please note:** Candidates may apply for multiple positions during one application period; however complete applications must be submitted for each position. Candidates may not apply for multiple seasons during one application period (applications will not be kept for future positions).

Please email OR mail completed application materials to:  
[cathleen.mcconnell@pdza.org](mailto:cathleen.mcconnell@pdza.org)

Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium  
Internship Program Coordinator  
Education Department  
5400 North Pearl Street  
Tacoma, WA 98407



