Volunteering with Animals

By: Amelia Valente

Overview

• About Me.
• Benefits to volunteering with animals.
• Requirements to volunteering with animals.
• How to find resources.
• Examples of volunteer opportunities.

About Me

• 4-H member, Monmouth County: 1996-2010
• Delaware Valley University: Class of 2014
  • Bachelor of Science: Conservation Wildlife and Management
• New Jersey Wildlife Rehabilitation Staff: 2012-Present
• Elmwood Park Zoo Nutritional Team: 2012-2015
• Jacksonville Zoo & Gardens, Mammal Keeper: 2015-2016
• Monmouth County 4-H Staff: 2016-Present
• Saint Francis University: Class of 2020
  • Master: Organizational Development
About Me

Breakdown

- Within New Jersey
- Out of state
- Abroad
- Domestic animals
- Wild animals
- Requirements
- Resources

Benefits to Volunteering with Animals

- Insight to the field of interest.
- Develop practical skills.
- Improve resume.
- Position yourself for a future job.
- Build a network of professionals.
- Make new friends.
- Strengthen the community.
- Feel great doing something for the good!
What to consider before volunteering

• Time Commitment.
• Training Requirements.
• Weather Conditions.
• Physical toll.
• Animal Behavior.
• Accident and Injury Policy.
• Noise Levels.
• Volunteer Overload.
• Heartbreak.

Types of Responsibilities

Animal Care Volunteer:
- Laundry
- Cleaning cages and enclosures
- Feeding
- Enrichment
- Animal transport
- Answering animal related phone calls
- Assisting with medical treatment and examinations
- Animal rescue
- Release

Administration Volunteer:
- Data entry
- Filing
- Mailings
- Grant writing
- Staff, volunteer, and educational program scheduling
- Fundraising

Maintenance and Construction Volunteer:
- Enclosure (caging) construction and mending
- Facility upkeep including basic carpentry, plumbing, and electrical work
- Facility grounds maintenance such as mowing grass, trimming plantings, and similar work

Outreach and Education Volunteer:
- Provide public education through presentations and informational booths at local events
- Presentations to schools, seniors, and other community groups
Types of Responsibilities

High School Service Week

Rutgers New Jersey 4-H
**Types of Responsibilities**

- **Responsibility** – If you do not perform tasks responsibly, you may put yourself and the animals at risk. Doing a thorough job ensures that animals receive the quality of care that they deserve.

- **Reliability** – Staff relies on you to be there at a certain time on certain days. If you have to miss a shift, make sure to provide staff with enough notice to arrange a sub if necessary.

- **Sensitivity** – Always approach cages/exhibits in a calm, quiet, and sensitive manner.

- **Respect** – Respect is vital in caring for amazing creatures.

- **Communication** – If you have a question or concern or if something is bothering you, you should always be able to talk to a staff member about it.

- **Flexibility** – Each new day brings a new set of tasks, responsibilities, and challenges. Your willingness to do whatever needs to be done will make you a vital member of the team.

- **Being Observant** – Look for signs of abnormal behavior. Always alert the staff if anything seems off or unusual, never address it on your own or without guidance.

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**What organizations are looking for in you**

- **Responsibility** – The federal government doesn't usually regulate animal rescues, they are dependent on good people following good protocol. It is a must to review The Animal Welfare Act. These are the basic standards for how a facility should conduct itself. Also, it is good practice to review the standards of care that have been published. If the organization does not have a standard of care, something is wrong.

- **Adequate Space** – Review The Animal Welfare Act, it provides an understanding of the minimum requirements for animals.

- **Reviews online** – Take into consideration what others are saying about the organization. Carefully consider all positive and negative reviews to make your decision.

- **The facility is filthy** – It should be understood that all animals aren't the cleanest, but there is a difference between "animal dirtiness" and just plain "filthiness." Indicators are smelling high levels of ammonia, excessive feces, inadequate ventilation and/or light.

- **The website lacks key information** – The website should provide basic information including contact information. Each organization should have a mission statement and include their non-profit status.
Always make sure the place is credible

https://charitycheck101.org/
https://www.volunteermatch.org

Pre Exposure Rabies Vaccination

https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/OIDEOR/CZVBD/Shared%20Documents/PreExposure_Information_DHMH_4157.pdf

In-State

- Animal Shelters:
  - Usually require ages 16 and up.
  - Some require one year commitments.
  - Complete an online application and interview.
  - Under 16 Junior Program

https://monmouthcountypca.org/get-involved/volunteer-opportunities/junior-volunteer-program/
In-State

- Animal Shelters:
  - Daily dog walking
  - Cat Enrichment
  - Shelter Cleaning
  - Offsite adoption events
  - Fundraising events
  - Animal Rescue


In-State

- Farms and Farm Sanctuaries:
  - Usually require ages 18 and up, but many welcome teens.
  - Complete an online application and interview.
  - An array of options
    - Animal Sanctuaries
    - Working Farm and Community Farm Assistance
    - Therapeutic Riding Assistance
    - Barn Assistant for working animals (Racers, Trotters, Pacers, etc.)
    - Equine Assistance at a Show Stable
In-State

- Farms and Farm Sanctuaries:
  - The Barnyard Sanctuary
  - Farm Life House
  - Hwy 4 Life
  - NYC Animal Sanctuary
  - Farm Sanctuary

https://www.vegan.com/sanctuaries/

In-State

New Jersey

- The Barnyard Sanctuary
- Farm Life House
- Hwy 4 Life
- NYC Animal Sanctuary
- Farm Sanctuary

https://www.vegan.com/sanctuaries/

In-State

- Wildlife Rehabilitation:
  - Usually require ages 18 and up.
  - If working with Rabies Vector Species, will need vaccination.
  - Provide current tetanus vaccination.
  - Complete an online application and interview.

https://www.nwrawildlife.org/page/FAQ_Volunteer
In-State

• Wildlife Rehabilitation:

https://www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/pdf/rehab_list.pdf

In-State

• Parks and Wildlife Protection:

http://m66.siteground.biz/~morrispa/index.php/commission/volunteer

In-State

- Marine Life Opportunities:
  - Various ages accepted.
  - Easy to difficult tasks available.

http://www.conservewithlifetenj.org/getinvolved/volunteer/

In-State

- Zoos/Aquariums:
  - Usually require ages 18.
  - Complete an online application and interview.
  - 7 day training course including course fee.
  - Commit to a set amount of hours throughout the year.
  - Provide current tetanus vaccination.
  - Might require SCUBA certification .
  - VolunTEEN welcome ages 14 and up.

http://bronxzoo.com/volunteering
In-State


SCUBA Certification

- Programs are usually 3-4 days.
- Require good physical health and fitness.
- Course can cost between $200-$400.
- Minimum age 10 yrs.
- E-Courses available.

https://diveaai.com/learn-about-scuba/certification-faq/

Out-of-State and Abroad

- Overview:
  - Age varies depending on program.
  - Many programs are costly
- What you are provided:
  - Housing
  - Meal Plan
  - Transportation
  - Stipend
Out-of-State

- Wildlife Sanctuaries:
  - Available throughout North America
  - Most sanctuaries exist because:
    - Abandoned by owners
    - Abused by owners in order to force them to perform
    - Retired from performing acts
    - Saved from being slaughtered to make fur coats
    - Rescued as babies after hunters killed their mothers.

Out-of-State

- Is this wildlife sanctuary legitimate?
  - Questions to ask yourself-
    - Are there baby animals? It is quite rare for sanctuaries to breed their animals unless they are a part of the SSP (special survival plan) and they are closely working with the AZA (association of zoos and aquariums).
    - Exceptions: the mother arrives to the sanctuary already pregnant
    - Are the animals being used for entertainment?
    - Do the animals have enough room?
    - Are keepers in the enclosure with the animals?

What you do not want to see

- [Images of animals in captivity and interaction with humans]
What you do want to see

http://www.assanimalsanctuaries.org/

Out-of-State

http://www.assanimalsanctuaries.org/

Out-of-State

Remarkable Outcomes
VolunteerMatch connects people with projects, like this one, that make a difference. Learn more volunteer and mentor your community to achieve remarkable outcomes.
Out-of-State

- Resources:
  - https://www.aza.org/jobs
  - https://www.imata.org-colleges_universities
  - https://wfscjobs.tamu.edu
  - https://www.fws.gov/volunteers
  - https://www.sanctuaryfederation.org

Abroad

- Costly.
- Specific vaccinations required.
- Many offer 2, 4, 6, 8, or 12 week lengths.
- Life changing experience.
- Valid passport

Abroad

- Resources:
  - https://www.goabroad.com/articles/volunteer-abroad/how-to-volunteer-abroad-with-animals
Be on the look out for credibility

https://www.conservationtravelafrica.org/articles/6/when-is-a-wildlife-sanctuary-not-a-sanctuary
http://www.bigcat.org/about-us

The Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries

Application Examples
Conclusion

- Make sure to always do your research:
  - Credibility
  - Reviews
  - Animal Welfare and Care
  - Proceed Usage
- Give yourself ample time to make the right decision (6mo-1yr).
- Never be afraid to ask a professional for help!

Thank you! Questions?