

Lead Keeper: Carnivore Team

Carnivores, small mammals, birds of prey



Salary £29,944

Job Profile

We have an exciting opportunity for the role of Lead Keeper on the Carnivores Team. This role will fit in with the restructuring of our animal department due to growth and development of the zoo site and the arrival of new species as part of our ambitious Master Plan.

You will be part of a dynamic team, reporting to and working alongside the Team Manager of the Carnivores Team including a range of large and small carnivores, small mammals and birds of prey. Your role will be to inspire and mentor the keepers and volunteers. You will be responsible for ensuring the best standards of animal husbandry, welfare and exhibit presentation are being carried out. In addition to this, you will be supporting both in-situ and ex-situ conservation, education and research along with providing input into new zoo developments.

Main Duties & Job Responsibilities

- The Lead Keeper will assist the Team Manager in the running of the carnivore team, and overseeing it in their absence
- Leading the way in day-to-day husbandry routines for various species and guiding and motivating Keepers, students and volunteers
- Providing behavioural output-based enrichment opportunities for various species on a daily basis and carrying out and evaluating animal training using operant conditioning
- Leading keepers in ensuring high standards of animal welfare including welfare assessments
- Designing, refurbishing and maintaining enclosures with high standards of welfare and exhibit design in mind
- Ensuring that all keepers adhere to risk assessments, bio security and safe working practices
- Representing the zoo during animal presentations, encounters and external conferences
- Working effectively in a team as well as on own without supervision, supervising animal keepers and occasionally deputising for senior management
- Leading by being passionate and driven with a positive outlook, to help the zoo achieve its mission and goals
- Observations and record keeping with great attention to detail and communicating well with animal team and all Zoo departments

Skills and Experience

- At least 4 years of professional zoo work experience working with animals in a zoo environment including carnivores and birds of prey would be an advantage
- Experience of leading a team and mentoring others.
- Must have high animal welfare standards with regards to care and daily husbandry routines
- Qualified in an appropriate captive wild animal husbandry, biological or conservation discipline
- Experience with implementing environmental enrichment and operant conditioning
- Outstanding observational skills when working with the animals in the park, understanding animal behaviour
- The ability to keep accurate records relating to animal welfare. Experience in the use of ZIMS would be advantageous
- You will need to be hard working, physically fit, enthusiastic, and reliable with conservation at the heart of your drive, helping to push our message not only amongst the keepers, but to members of the public too
- Be well organised, with excellent initiative and a positive outlook
- Have strong interpersonal skills and be confident to interact with the public whilst demonstrating the zoos values
- The ability to remain calm and prioritise effectively in busy situations
- Good DIY skills

General

- Full driver's license and access to vehicle required due to rural setting of zoo
- Have great team working and communication skills and adaptability to suit the needs of the role
- Be able to work effectively and with minimum supervision within a timely manner
- Have strong interpersonal skills and be confident to interact with the public
- Be physically fit and able to work outdoors in all weathers
- Take responsibility for own personal development, seeking out opportunities to learn new skills

Benefits

- 28 days holiday (including BH's) pro rata, rising by 1 day per year to 33 with service
- 1 additional day off for your birthday after a successful probation
- Company sick pay package after a successful probation
- Staff discount in our cafe and gift shop
- Nest Pension scheme (statutory contributions)
- Free Zoo entry whilst you are an employee
- Free Zoo tickets each year for family and friends
- £5 daily food allowance in the zoo cafe

To apply please send you CV and covering letter to Hannah Webb, Animal Manager by

Sunday 26th April 2026

h.webb@northumberlandzoo.co.uk