





It's a ZOO-tiful day to
be a Zoo Vet!



What can you do to become a zoo vet?



In High school

- VOLUNTEER
 - At a zoo
- Get involved!
 - FFA/4H
 - School clubs related to animals
- Ask a vet to shadow them
 - Small animal, large animal or zoo vet
- Become familiar with a wide variety of species of animals

In College

- Pick a degree that gives you the best education and hands on experience with animals
 - Animal science, biology, zoology, etc.
- Keep in mind the qualifications needed to apply to your vet schools of choice
 - Volunteer hours, class prerequisites, GPA requirements, time spent shadowing a veterinarian
- Work at a veterinary clinic!
 - This is not required to get into vet school, but we DEFINITELY recommend it
- Continue volunteering at zoos
- Apply for zoo internships
 - Contact your local zoo or check out listings at <https://www.aza.org/jobs>

Many students are accepted in veterinary school with degrees of all kinds. So if you realize well into your degree or even after you've received it, this does not mean you cannot still become a zoo vet.

In Vet School

- Join clubs to learn more about working with zoo animals
 - Behind the scenes tours of zoos
 - Networking opportunities with zoo vets
 - Lectures and labs
- Get involved in research opportunities!
 - Becoming a boarded zoo vet involves lots of research and writing papers!
- Find a mentor in the zoo medicine field
- Try to take leadership roles when available
- U of I vet med specifically: Join the wildlife medical clinic, Non-traditional Species Club, take zoo med related electives, take the ZCAMS rotation



After Vet School

- 2 main routes to becoming an ACZM board-certified zoo veterinarian
 - Residency route
 - 1 year small animal rotating internship
 - 1 year zoo medicine internship
 - 3 years zoo medicine residency
 - Experiential route
 - 6+ years working full time with zoo animals
- Lots and lots of peer-reviewed research!
- 3 letters of recommendation
- Take the board exam
 - 2-day exam
 - Held only once a year

Now you're a zoo vet! What do you do?

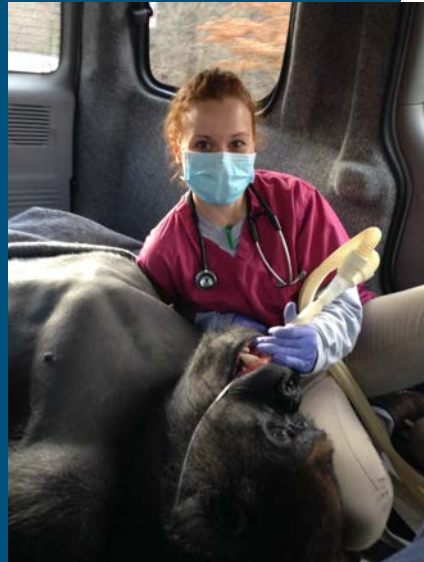
- As a zoo vet you essentially have to be every type of doctor rolled into one sometimes:
 - General practitioner, surgeon, radiologist, dentist, anesthetist, nutritionist, endoscopist, ophthalmologist, etc.
- Being a zoo vet includes more than just the medical side
 - They also are involved in exhibit design, policy making, fundraising, USDA liaison, and even monitoring the health of fellow employees due to the risk of zoonotic diseases
- One of the most important roles: conservation advocate!

- Zoo vets need to be flexible - patients can range from the size of a golf ball (frogs & birds) to the size of a school bus (elephants)
 - Also, equipment doesn't always "fit" or wasn't made specifically for wild and exotic patients



Varied Responsibilities

- Surgery
- Dentistry
- Anesthesia
- Taking x-rays



Links to procedures done by zoo vets

- Otter Pup Physical Exams:
https://www.facebook.com/118069138254801/videos/784081348787216/?__so__=channel_tab&__rv__=all_videos_card
- Amur Tiger Physical Exam:
https://www.facebook.com/52678154169/videos/262483644830802/?__so__=channel_tab&__rv__=playlists_card
- Gorilla Physical Exam:
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=330956744985697&extid=Z1UfwStWVPJJTlds>
- Sea Turtle Physical Exam:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HP0pmR20WIM>

Myths about zoo vets BUSTED!

- **As a Zoo vet you get to handle a lot of really unique species!** - True, although you don't interact with many of these animals as you would with your house pets. A lot of the examination process occurs from a distance
- **A Zoo veterinarian salary is typically less than that other types of veterinarians** - It depends! As of August 2020 the reported average salary was around \$85,000 though it ranges from \$75,000-103,000
- **Zoo veterinarians only work with medical staff, they do not interact with animals keepers or other park members** - FALSE! Taking care of zoo animals is a **team effort**, zoo keepers are an essential part of animal management and often work closely with the vets. Zoos also have nutritionists, behaviorists, pathologists and much more on site!
- **Being a zoo vet is a dangerous job** - This is true, however there are risks associated with almost every job! Zoo veterinarians combat this by ensuring they are educated and prepared for every situation.
- **Being a zoo vet is the best job!** - TRUE (but we're biased). Being a zoo veterinarian provides you with exciting new experiences each and every day. This career is challenging and requires a lot of work, but it is incredibly rewarding.

Thank you for helping provide info and images for this presentation!

Dr. Sam Sander

Miller Park Zoo

Brookfield Zoo

Buffalo Zoo

Houston Zoo