Aquarium & Marine Science Careers

The available careers in aquatic and marine science are diverse and offer something for everyone. These careers range from caring for animals to working for the government to protect oceans and watersheds.

**WAYS TO GAIN EXPERIENCE AT THE NATIONAL AQUARIUM**

**Summer Student Volunteer Program**
Available to Maryland high school students who have completed 9th grade and at least one biology class.

**College Internships**
The National Aquarium offers unpaid internships to college students (both undergraduate and graduate students) in 16 areas.

**Veterinary Preceptorship/Externship**
Specifically designed for third year vet students with an interest in aquatic and exotic animal medicine, laboratory medicine and environmental medicine.

**Volunteer**
Volunteering at the Aquarium requires a one-year commitment to the program and the equivalent of four hours of work per week. More information on the volunteer program can be found on our website aqua.org/volunteer.html.

**Employment**
Visit our employment page at aqua.org/employment.html. You can view open positions and post your resume for future openings.

**TYPES OF CAREERS AT THE NATIONAL AQUARIUM**

**Animal Husbandry Positions**
The Aquarium’s husbandry staff is responsible for maintaining the animal collection found on exhibit and behind the scenes. They are involved in all aspects of care including exhibit cleanliness, food preparation, monitoring animal health, medical treatments, acquisition of new animals, exhibit design and installation, behavioral training, breeding and record keeping. The Aquarium’s animal husbandry team is divided into three areas. Aquarists are responsible for all aquatic exhibits, both freshwater and marine. SCUBA certification is usually required. Aviculturists maintain the Aquarium’s bird collection. Herpetologists care for the Aquarium’s reptile, amphibian and invertebrate collection.

For more information about animal care, please visit the Society for the Study of Amphibian and Reptiles website at ssarherps.org, the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists website atasih.org/pubs/ichjobs.htm and the American Federation of Aviculture website at afa.birds.org.

**Water Quality Technicians**
Good animal care begins with clean water. Water quality technicians use specialized laboratory equipment to monitor the dissolved oxygen levels, ammonia levels, nitrate levels, temperature and salinity of Aquarium water. They work with animal husbandry staff to ensure that the water composition is healthy and safe for aquarium animals.

**Marine Mammal Trainers**
Marine mammal trainers care for the Aquarium’s Atlantic bottlenose dolphins. They spend a great deal of time preparing food and cleaning up. Sometimes, training behaviors can be difficult and they need to be very patient and possess a unique understanding of animal behavior. SCUBA certification and public speaking skills are also necessary to be a successful trainer.

For more information, visit the Society for Marine Mammalogy website at marinemammalogy.org.
Veterinarians and Veterinary Technicians

Veterinarians and veterinary technicians are responsible for the health of the entire animal collection. They perform “rounds” every week, talking to the husbandry staff to assess and treat any existing health problems and prevent future ones from occurring. They make diagnoses, recommend treatments, and perform surgeries, preventive tests and physicals. For more information, please visit the American Veterinary Medical Association website at avma.org.

Educator Positions

Aquarium educators share their knowledge of marine and aquatic science through formal education programs, visitor interactions, and public presentations. These programs occur at the Aquarium, in schools and in the local community. By sharing this knowledge, educators strive to promote environmental stewardship. For more information, visit the National Marine Educators Association website at marine-ed.org.

Conservation Specialists

Conservation specialists perform a wide variety of tasks to ensure the Aquarium’s conservation message becomes a reality. Conservation specialists coordinate school-based programs and conduct wetland conservation events. At these events, participants restore tidal wetlands and sea grass habitats throughout the Chesapeake Bay. For more information, please visit the Aquarium’s website at aqua.org/conservation.html.

OTHER MARINE SCIENCE CAREERS

Aquaculture

With an increasing human population and decline of the ocean’s fisheries, aquaculture is the fastest growing form of food production in the world. Aquaculture is the breeding, rearing and harvesting of plants and animals in water environments, including ponds, rivers, lakes and oceans. It is also a significant source of protein for people in many countries, including the United States. Globally, nearly half the fish consumed by humans is produced by fish farms. This worldwide trend toward aquaculture production is expected to continue. At the same time, demand for safe, healthy seafood is also expected to grow. For more information, visit aquaculture.noaa.gov.

Biotechnology

Biotechnology is the use of living organisms (especially microorganisms) in industrial, agricultural, medical and other technological applications. Biotechnology associated with marine and aquatic organisms is a new and growing field. It encompasses marine biomedicine materials technology, bioremediation, marine biomedical model organisms, molecular genetics, genomics, bioinformatics and much more. Many of these life forms reside in the deep oceans and are poorly known. Through a better understanding of these organisms, discoveries may be made in a wide variety of related fields.