

Will Elgar

QUALIFICATIONS PROFILE

Progressive, creative, high-performing, and dedicated management executive offering over 20 years of experience in the zoo and aquarium field

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Operational Management & Guest Experience
- Staff Development, Mentoring and Motivation
- Budget Development & Management
- Revenue Generating Guest Encounters & Interactive Programs
- Strategic Planning & Change Management
- Animal Management & Training (Multiple Species)
- Husbandry & Veterinary Management
- Animal Transports, Acquisitions and Dispositions
- New Exhibit Design & Consultation

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Director of Zoological Operations

Georgia Aquarium, Atlanta

August 2015 – Present

- Lead, inspire and motivate staff to achieve and exceed the organization's vision, mission, and goals
- Consulted, developed and coordinated the planning and operational activities of a new \$40 million exhibit/gallery (Pier 225) launched in 2016
- Develop, monitor and manage operational and capital budgets
- Develop and manage long-term and short term strategic plans for successful growth and development within the zoological department
- Creation, development, and implementation of innovative, inspiring, engaging, and revenue generating guest experiences and programs to support increased visitation (over 2.5 million guests per year)
- Oversee hiring, training, evaluation, professional development and continuing education of Zoological department staff; oversee payroll management and scheduling
- Develop and manage specimen acquisition and disposition plans
- Ensure compliance with all AZA, AMMPA, USDA, and IMATA accreditation standards and regulations
- Direct and support the development, prioritization, and implementation of significant capital expenditures, facility planning, and improvement within the Zoological Operations department
- Collaborate with Georgia Aquarium Board members and Senior leadership team to develop strategies, objectives and plans for future growth
- Work in conjunction with the research & conservation committee to coordinate and facilitate mammal research sampling, conservation initiatives and strategies
- Represent company in media, PR events, conferences and community

Associate Director

Atlantis-Dolphin Cay, Bahamas

February 2014 – August 2015

- Supported, implemented and executed transitional and change management with entire Zoological department team, working with the culture differences to achieve strategic goals and targets
- Key member of the Leadership team who led the daily operations of over 80 staff and 60+ animal collection to support over 800 guests in programs per day
- Assisted and managed the operational and capital budget for Zoological Department
- Managed daily program inventory to support achieving organization goals and targets, while ensuring the highest levels of guest satisfaction, customer service and animal welfare
- Created, developed and implemented new revenue generating guest programs for 2015, incorporating new unique elements for guests, while supporting resort appearances/ambassador program
- Developed specimen acquisition plan for new expansion project involving multiple species

Manager of Marine Mammals

Dolphin Quest Bermuda

March 2011 – February 2014

- Led and inspired strategic change to meet and exceed organization goals and revenue targets
- Responsible for overseeing the facility's operational and capital budgets
- Collaborated with Owners, Senior leadership and Bermuda tourism to create and implement national marketing campaigns
- Frequently collaborated with Government of Bermuda, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and CITES for research and conservation projects
- Coached and mentored team members in all aspects of behavior conditioning techniques, sample collection, husbandry, and troubleshooting
- Coordinated, managed and performed artificial insemination procedures (both voluntary and under restraint) with veterinarians and consultants, led cytology and hematology collection and analysis in conjunction with veterinarians
- Skilled in technical capabilities involving general and fetal ultrasound probing and image interpretation

Team Leader

Zoological Society of London-Whipsnade Zoo

August 2010-March 2011

- Developed and implemented training and interaction programs for all animals within department
- Led, coached and mentored all staff in behavior conditioning techniques, sample collection, husbandry, and troubleshooting
- Consulted and developed husbandry training programs for various large mammal species across Zoo

Head of Animal Behavior and Enrichment

Chesington World of Adventures & Zoo

(February 2005-August 2010)
May 2000 – August 2010

- Integral member of the park management team; involved in problem solving, decision-making, park leadership, breach, recovery and recapture team (including firearms and tranquilizer training), animal health and guest safety
- Managed elements of the Zoological operational and capital budgets; developed revenue generating guest programs and created marketing opportunities
- Oversaw the entire Merlin group's Animal Training and Enrichment program; collaborated with multiple facilities across Europe
- Developed and implemented fundraising activities and opportunities for EAZA conservation projects
- Acquired, transported and relocated multiple animals for various facilities across UK and Europe

EDUCATION

Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, England

2019 - Present

Master of Business Administration

Anglia Ruskin University, Coventry, England

2013-2015

Graduate Certificate in Management

Kingston University, Kingston-Upon-Thames, England

2000-2003

Biology

CREDENTIALS & AFFILIATIONS

Certifications

PADI Rescue Diver (SCUBA)

Firearms and Fork Lift Licensed

Emergency First Aid and CPR certified

Affiliations

Associations of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) – Member since 2015

International Marine Animal Trainers' Association (IMATA) – current President-Elect (Member since 2003)

Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums (AMMPA) – Inspector since 2019

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) Chair for Georgia Aquarium - since 2020