Senior Curator – Fish, Invertebrates, and Herpetology #02557
City of Virginia Beach – Job Description
Date of Last Revision: 10/09/2017

FLSA Status: Exempt    Pay Plan: Administrative    Grade: 9

City of Virginia Beach Organizational Mission & Values
The City of Virginia Beach exists to enhance the economic, educational, social and physical quality of the community and provide sustainable municipal services which are valued by its citizens. The City of Virginia Beach organization is based upon a belief in the democratic process of government. This belief provides meaningful ways for citizens, reflecting the diversity of our City, to contribute to the development of public policy. This process is enhanced by organizational values which guide member performance within the Virginia Beach Quality Service System. These Values define our desired organizational culture. We value quality customer service; teamwork; leadership and learning; integrity; commitment; and inclusion and diversity.

Class Summary
Assist the Curator Manager in the development, operations, and management of the Virginia Aquarium's fish, invertebrates, reptiles, and amphibians sections to meet the mission and objectives of the Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center.

Representative Work Functions and Responsibilities
Manage and oversee all fish, invertebrates, and high profile reptiles and amphibians comprising of fresh and saltwater fishes, crocodilians, monitor lizards, sharks, rays, and sea turtles; including acquisitions, quarantine, collections management, training and husbandry to ensure adherence to the highest standards of safety, compliance, and all applicable standards and regulations. Remains abreast of legal and safety changes and prepares appropriate responses.

Hire and train section animal care staff, supervise day-to-day activities; conduct performance evaluations, handle employee disciplinary issues, oversee employee schedules and approve leave. Train and motivate staff; support career development and goals.

Work with the Curator Manager and the Aquarium’s Animal Care Committee members to develop and maintain exhibit collection plans to ensure optimal levels of species are maintained in all displays through the Aquarium.

Work with Curator Manager and the Aquarium’s Animal Care Committee members to develop and maintain engaging animal programs, interactions, and demonstrations to enhance the visitor experience and support the Aquarium’s mission.

Assist in quarantine protocol development and diagnosis and treatment of animal disease and illness by collaborating with the Aquarium’s veterinary team and water quality section to ensure the highest standards of animal care and welfare for species quarantined and housed in a network of aquariums and terrestrial exhibits / animal housing areas.

Support and assist in live collection management by participating in specimen acquisitions, transports, and dispositions by collaborating with the Aquarium’s animal collection team, other facilities, and vendors.

Collaborate with all sections of the Aquarium to facilitate programming projects, exhibit improvements, implementation and design, by assisting with the oversight of aquatic exhibit displays throughout public
and behind the scenes areas; develop protocols and procedures to ensure accurate, up-to-date standards and state of the art design to enhance the visitor experience and support the Aquarium’s mission.

Collaborate with all sections of the Aquarium to repair, maintain, and renovate existing exhibits. Plan new exhibits to include aspects of life support systems, exhibit water filtration, materials, treatments, fiberglass and concrete décor, acrylic repair and maintenance, and exhibit lighting design.

Investigate, initiate, and collaborate with Aquarium staff, volunteers, fellows, and other professional institutions on research projects and professional participation in committee or animal programs such as Species Survival Plan (SSP), Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) Studbook Keeper, AZA Taxon Advisory Groups (TAG), and AZA SAFE: Saving Animals From Extinction, or other AZA animal health, husbandry and welfare programs.

Prepare and present information at public and professional meetings, conferences, and other events; speak in front of a variety of audiences to address public relations issues, while ensuring Aquarium mission and values are communicated effectively and in a professional manner.

Oversee record keeping and the maintenance of daily records for aquarium systems and exhibit specimens using Zoological Information Management System (ZIMS) software through direct supervision of staff.

Assist with budget development, maintenance, and reporting.

Compile data and prepare statistical and narrative reports; presentations and articles for publication that promote and support the Aquarium’s mission and goals; projects and work plans; compliance with standards, regulations, and guidelines; and registrar requirements.

Adhere to standards for permitting, regulations, Federal, State, City guidelines, and accreditation standards, for organizations such as but not limited to; United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF), and Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA).

Perform other job duties requiring skills, knowledge and physical requirements as demanded by those duties described or less. Individual assignments will be determined by the supervisor based on then current workloads and department needs.

**Performance Standards**

Effectively perform and supervise exhibit development, maintenance, and management; maintain health of live collections according to animal welfare standards accepted by the Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center. Adhere to policies, procedures, and performance standards set forth by the City. Effectively manage subordinate staff; ensure compliance and staff awareness to all safety regulations and guidelines. Compile timely reports and narratives with a high degree of accuracy; use appropriate sources of information and data to develop projects and work plans consistent with departmental goals within budget guidelines. Communicate effectively with staff, volunteers, and general public to promote a positive, productive, and informative work environment and public image; promote Aquarium and maintain knowledge of industry innovations and new techniques, permit requirements and other relevant issues through professional exchange via professional meetings, training, and membership in professional organizations and presentations and publications for professional groups.

This description is intended to indicate the kinds of tasks and levels of work difficulty that will be required of positions that will be given this title and shall not be construed as declaring what the specific duties and responsibilities of any particular position shall be. It is not intended to limit or in any way modify the right of any supervisor to assign, direct, and control the work of employees under his or her supervision. The use of a particular expression or illustration describing duties shall not be held to exclude other duties not mentioned that are of similar kind or level of difficulty.
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**Minimum Qualifications**
Requires any combination of education (above the high school level) and experience equivalent to nine (9) years in fields utilizing the required knowledge, skills, and abilities and associated with such positions as Exhibits Technician, Aquarist, Animal Keeper, Assistant Curator, or Curator.

Must have, or obtain, a current and valid Virginia or North Carolina driver’s license in accordance with Virginia or North Carolina DMV driver's license eligibility requirements.

**Preferred Qualifications**
Bachelor’s degree or higher in biology, marine biology, marine science, zoology, aquarium science, aquaculture, fisheries or related field.

Experience supervising and leading animal care staff, including daily husbandry, acquisition and quarantine protocol development and management.

Extensive experience with fish and invertebrates collections management, including sea turtles and elasmobranchs in a public aquarium or similar institution.

Experience with herpetological collections management in a public aquarium or similar institution.

Experience developing institutional collection plans.

Experience developing and maintaining budgets.

Experience adhering to local, state, federal permitting regulations, and animal facility accreditation standards.

Experience overseeing and managing animal records using ZIMS (Zoological Information Management System).

SCUBA certified to Open Water or equivalent from a recognized United States certifying agency.

Experience working for an Association of Zoos and Aquarium (AZA) accredited institution and professional participation in committee or animal programs such as Species Survival Plan (SSP), AZA Studbook Keeper, AZA Taxon Advisory Groups (TAG), and AZA SAFE: Saving Animals From Extinction, or other AZA animal health, husbandry and welfare programs.

**Special Requirements**
Must be available to work evenings, weekends, holidays, and overtime when required to meet operational needs.

This position may require that incumbents to wear and maintain appropriate personal protective equipment such as, but not limited to, steel toed shoes, hard hats, safety glasses, gloves, or other safety attire and equipment in designated areas of risk. Specific requirements will be determined and communicated by the employee’s supervisor based on position assigned.

Positions within this class have been designated as Alpha I positions requiring employees to work during inclement weather, regardless of the City’s operational status.
Upon hire, the selected candidate may be required to receive rabies pre-exposure vaccination provided by the City of Virginia Beach Occupational Health Services.

Knowledge-Skills-Abilities Required to Perform Satisfactorily

A. Knowledge
1. Knowledge of aquarium science and animal husbandry of a wide variety of tropical, temperate and cold marine and freshwater specimens including, but not limited to, fish, sharks, rays, jellies, corals, seahorses, cephalopods, and turtles.
2. Knowledge of animal care science and animal husbandry of a wide variety of venomous and non-venomous reptiles and amphibians.
3. Knowledge of maintenance and operation of large aquarium life support systems including, but not limited to, sand filters, drum filters, UV sterilizers, foam fractionators, and ozone generators.
5. Knowledge of the scientific method and experimental design, particularly as it relates to exhibits and fish reproduction, behavior, and physiology.
8. Knowledge of water quality maintenance, sampling, testing, and interpretation of data.

B. Skills
1. Skill in training and maintaining husbandry, medical and other behaviors with a wide variety of taxa.
2. Skill in SCUBA diving in exhibits and in open water.
3. Skill in the application of research methods and materials.
5. Skill in the use of small hand tools as well as basic shop tools.
6. Skill in operating laboratory equipment (when applicable).
7. Skill in identifying and treating common disease and parasites in aquarium specimens.
8. Skill in interpreting water quality data and giving clear and concise direction regarding water treatments.
9. Skill in job related computer applications including industry standard animal record keeping software (Microsoft Office Suite and those currently supporting work performance).

C. Abilities
1. Ability to manage a diverse team of animal trainers and keepers.
2. Ability to lead and guide others in animal training techniques.
3. Ability to assess, initiate and manage research projects that advance the Aquarium’s standing in the professional community.
4. Ability to maintain detailed records.
5. Ability to follow directions and maintain effective working relationships with Aquarium staff and other groups or organizations with which the Aquarium has contact.
6. Ability to communicate effectively in public forums, conferences, professional gatherings and with the general public and aquarium guests.
7. Ability to develop and maintain a clean and organized work environment for the front and back of house displays.
8. Ability to work effectively with limited or no supervision.
9. Ability to maintain a work ethic supporting the Aquarium’s mission and goals.
10. Ability to effectively manage time and prioritize competing tasks.

Working Conditions

This description is intended to indicate the kinds of tasks and levels of work difficulty that will be required of positions that will be given this title and shall not be construed as declaring what the specific duties and responsibilities of any particular position shall be. It is not intended to limit or in any way modify the right of any supervisor to assign, direct, and control the work of employees under his or her supervision. The use of a particular expression or illustration describing duties shall not be held to exclude other duties not mentioned that are of similar kind or level of difficulty.
The below stated working conditions are intended to provide a general overview of the environmental conditions inherent in the job setting, as well as the physical, mental, and sensory requirements necessary to perform the essential functions of positions in the noted job title. A more detailed description will be made available at the position (PCN) level.

**NOTE:** Per HR Policy 6.19, Americans with Disabilities, the City follows the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in all hiring and employment decisions. The City shall not discriminate on the basis of disability in its hiring and employment practices. The City shall make reasonable accommodations for the known physical or mental limitations of a qualified applicant or employee with a disability upon request unless the accommodation would cause an undue hardship on the operation of the City’s business.

**Physical Requirements:** Physical refers to the requirement for physical exertion and coordination of limb and body movement.

Medium to heavy work that involves walking, standing, bending, stooping, climbing, lifting, pushing and raising objects, and involves exerting up to 75 pounds of force on a regular and reoccurring basis; may require exerting up to 100 pounds of force on occasions; occasional use of standard office equipment; considerable skill and adeptness in the use of the fingers, hands or limbs in tasks involving close tolerance or limits of accuracy.

**Mental Requirements:** Mental refers to the degree that the job involves cognitive activities, and use of mental processes

Performs professional level work requiring the application of principles and practices of a wide range of administrative, technical, or managerial methods in the solution of administrative or technical problems; applies general understanding of operating policies and procedures to solve complex administrative problems; requires continuous, close attention for accurate results or frequent exposure to unusual pressure.

**Environmental Conditions:** Environmental refers to job conditions inherent to the job setting, including those that may lead to injury or health hazards even though precautions have been taken.

May risk exposure to animals/wildlife to include exposure to animal bites, scratches, and diseases; may be exposed to venomous and non-venomous animals, insects, fishes, amphibians, arthropods and other species of organisms; work may be performed outdoors, indoors, in or under water, under all types of weather conditions with exposure bright/dim light, dusts and pollen, extreme heat and/or cold, wet or humid conditions, noise, vibration, fumes, odors, traffic, moving machinery, electrical shock, toxic or caustic chemicals, and height.

**Sensory Requirements:** Sensory refers to hearing, sight, touch, taste, and smell required by the job.

This job requires normal visual acuity, and field of vision, hearing, and speaking.