

WORK EXPERIENCE AT PARADISE PARK, CORNWALL

WHAT TO EXPECT

This text is intended as a brief guide to anybody considering work experience at Paradise Park, Hayle, either as part of a college course, school work experience programme, or as a volunteer. The aim of this is to give you, the applicant, a rough idea of what to expect from your work experience, and more importantly, a chance to decide whether the work is suitable for you!

WHAT WILL I DO AT THE PARK?

Paradise Park is a bird garden that breeds rare and endangered species of birds, with an emphasis on parrot-like species. The Park has an excellent local and international reputation, and over the years has achieved many breeding successes amongst its stock. In addition to the birds there are also Red Squirrels, Red Pandas, Harvest Mice and a farm area where there are domesticated farm animals and small pets.

The Keepers at the Park operate from two sections, although both sections operate from one, large kitchen. During your work experience you will be rotated from one section to the other as the occasion demands. Working on the 'Parrot' section means you will help with all the tasks related just to the Parrots, and on the 'Softbilled' section you will undertake tasks with the other livestock within the Park (for us that includes birds like penguins, flamingos, touracos, pheasants, finches etc plus birds of prey and all mammal species).

Whichever section you work on your duties will be routine, that is shadowing a more experienced or 'senior' keeper, and helping to feed, clean and water the livestock. You will be expected to wash up bird dishes, clean cages and aviaries, sort fruit and stack food, and help to keep the kitchen area clean and tidy. ALL work at the Park is 'hands-on'; there is no simulation. However, you will not, as a trainee, be expected to feed or water any species that is aggressive, liable to abandon young through disturbance, or escape! You will be constantly supervised whilst you work, and you will NOT be allowed to work alone until you have satisfied Keeping staff that you are capable of performing, in a safe and reliable manner, all tasks given to you.

WHAT WILL THE PARK LOOK FOR IN ME?

The staff at the park are very busy people, and it is their job to look after the birds and animals. They are not paid to train or teach, and therefore it is up to each individual trainee to work to the best of their ability, listen to instructions carefully, and if unsure ask their supervisor. Bearing in mind the rarity of our birds and animals the job carries a high degree of responsibility, and this must be borne in mind at all times when entering and exiting enclosures.

Paradise Park is on a large site, and usually involves a great deal of walking during a normal days work. Please make sure you are reasonably fit, and if you have health problems, i.e., back problems, asthma etc., please be honest and discuss this before taking up the post. There are some jobs at the Park, which could seriously aggravate such problems if we do not know about them beforehand.

Some of the routine feedings tasks at the Park will involve handling meat, dead day old chicks, rats and mice, and live insects. Again please be honest; if you are a vegetarian and cannot bear the thought of handling meat, or dead animals, then think again regarding your work

experience! Likewise if you are terrified of insects then our food room might not be the place for you. You may be asked to handle or cut up fish. How would you feel about that?

Whilst working at the Park you will always be in close contact with the general public who may well ask you questions about your work. The public will watch you working in and around our stock; how do you feel about your every move being watched? Do you feel comfortable talking to complete strangers? This may seem like huge challenge, but can be very rewarding and excellent for building confidence over a period of time. Remember that all our Keepers who do the shows had to start somewhere!

Finally there are the birds and animals themselves to contend with. Very few of our animals and birds are 'domesticated', or 'pets', and even the quietest of birds and animals are capable of biting, scratching, kicking etc. Obviously this job is not for you if you are phobic about birds flapping around your head – this may seem silly but we have had people come to work for us who are afraid of birds! We need work experience students who are genuinely interested in the welfare of birds and animals, and not worried about working in and around them to a high standard.

Please also note that if you are intending to work as a volunteer we need to have **TWO** references provided and we will check these references before agreeing a placement.

Please also make sure that you are fully vaccinated against Tetanus.

As a final note the work at the Park is hard, but rewarding. Most work experience volunteers find they enjoy their time with us, and gain a vast amount of valuable experience from it. Remember you only get out of anything what you put into it, and whilst we do our bit to ensure you have an enjoyable time, you must also play your part. At this point, please appraise yourself honestly, and if any of the previous points mentioned have raised doubts in your mind, then perhaps another type of work experience situation would be best for you.

I'VE DECIDED TO GO ON! WHAT DO I DO NEXT?

If the 'job description' has not put you off, and you are still keen, then please book an interview with our Work Experience Co-ordinator. Most interviews are informal, and during this time you will be given advice on Health and Safety issues, clothing, and Park rules and regulations to keep you, and our livestock safe! If you are successful and are accepted for a work experience/voluntary position you will be given a 'work experience package' for further reading before you commence work. This package will act as a guide to you to make sure you get the most out of your time with us, which we hope will be an enjoyable and fulfilling time.

To get in touch with the Work Experience Co-ordinator at Paradise Park please initially email admin@paradisepark.org.uk