

An Interview with ANSC Major Kaitlyn Sidman on Her Internship at West Place Animal Sanctuary Summer 2017



Q: Where did you intern, and when?

This summer, May-August 2017, I interned at West Place Animal Sanctuary in Tiverton, RI which is a non-profit organization that houses unwanted farm animals, farm animals from cruelty cases as well facilitates wildlife rehabilitation of waterfowl and game birds.

Q: Was it a paid internship? What did you do there?

The internship was unpaid. My focus at the internship began as wildlife rehabilitation. This part of the internship entailed learning how to handle, feed and care for waterfowl and gamebirds, mainly babies that would later be “soft-released” into the wild. A soft release is when the babies are deemed fit enough to survive

on their own and are released onto the property of West Place. They stick around as long as they please before they decide to take off on their own. Unfortunately, none of the birds I helped rehabilitate left before I finished the internship. Although, the round of baby geese I started the summer with are fully grown and have flew a few laps around the property; they will most likely leave come time for migration this fall. Besides the wildlife rehabilitation aspect, I also found interest in caring for the farm animals at the sanctuary as well. These animals are at the sanctuary to live out the rest of their lives but require attention just as much as the wildlife rehabilitation pals I made. The farm animals included alpaca, sheep, horses, and goats. Caring for the farm animals included enrichment, feeding, and cleaning. In addition to caring directly for the animals, I also was involved with building maintenance, taking care of the greenhouses/gardens on the property in which we grew food for the animals as well as maintaining the sanctuary property.

Q: When did you apply for this internship?

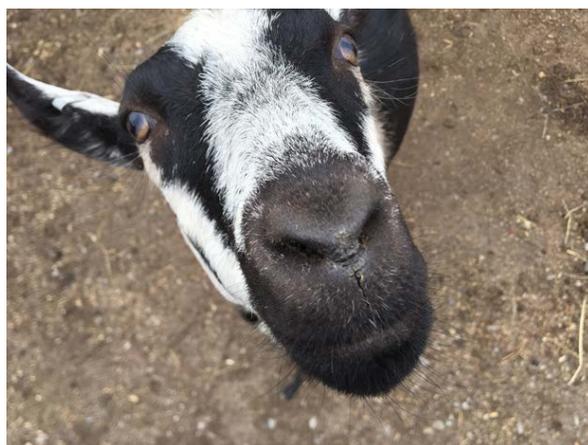
I applied for this internship in the beginning of April and we easily set up a start date and the hours I would dedicate to the internship.

Q: How long did the internship last?

The internship lasted from the middle of May to the middle of August, so about 3 months total.

Q: How did you learn about this opportunity?

I researched wildlife rehabilitation facilities in Connecticut as well as Rhode Island and West Place was one of the first to pop up. The mission of the sanctuary sounded wonderful, and the



site had photos of all the animals at the sanctuary with a short biography about each. I felt connected to the animals just from visiting the website.

Q: Anything else you'd like to add about your experience?

The internship was great in terms of learning about handling not only wildlife, but large animals as well. I feel as if I got more comfortable handling and caring for two completely different groups of animals and feel much more well-rounded in animal care/handling of different species. In addition to the wildlife and large animals, domestic ducks, as well as injured wildlife who could not be released into the wild over the years, also roamed the sanctuary. I learned about their special needs and how their care differed from the rest. They required much more attention than the other animals. I also gained up-close and personal experience with exotic peacocks at the sanctuary. I couldn't have received a more well-rounded experience anywhere else!



Q: What is your area of interest as an ANSC major?

My areas of interest as an ANSC major include animal care of exotic animals, wildlife rehabilitation/conservation as well as veterinary medicine.

Q: So, what are your plans when you graduate?

I plan to start off working in a veterinary office as a veterinary assistant while earning my veterinary technician certification. From there, I'd love to work as a veterinary technician or zookeeper at a zoo. Even as an incoming senior, I'm still undecided as to exactly what career in the animal science field I'll go into so we'll see what the future holds!

Q: If someone has questions, can they contact you regarding your internship experience?

Please do! Kaitlyn.Sidman@UConn.edu