

# **An Interview with ANSC Undergraduate Student Gabriella Vinci on Her Internship Experience at the Central Park Zoo**



**Q: Where did you intern, and when?**

I interned at the Central Park Zoo, which is run and operated under The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). I interned there summer 2018.

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

It was not a paid internship. While at the zoo I worked in the tropical rainforest and polar circle. I worked with tropical birds, reptiles, penguins, harbor seals, sea lions, and puffins. I basically shadowed and assisted the zookeepers in their daily tasks. This included various aspects of animal care and husbandry such as diet prep, feeding, and cleaning.

**Q: When did you apply for this internship?**

I came across The Wildlife Conservation Society and noticed that they operate a few of the big zoos and aquariums in New York City, such as the Bronx Zoo. Central Park was the most convenient commute for me so I decided to apply there. I contacted the curator of the zoo in January and went for my interview during spring break in March.

**Q: How long did the internship last?**

The internship lasted from the middle of May until the middle of August. In total it was three months.

**Q: How did you learn about this opportunity?**

I knew I wanted to intern at another AZA operated zoo or aquarium in the summer. I began researching about facilities in New York City and came across Central Park Zoo. Their animal collection was so diverse and I liked the idea that it was a small zoo, which made it easy to get to know everyone.

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

While interning I was able to participate in some really fun and exciting opportunities. During the summer season the zoo participates in their annual penguin breeding program which is a part of WCS's global wildlife conservation campaign. As a polar intern I assisted in feeding and caring for the newly hatched penguin chicks. I also shadowed and watched as the keepers monitored and checked the status of the other eggs in their incubation rooms. As a tropic intern I was able to shadow and assist in training sessions with some of the tropical birds. I also expressed that I was interested in animal nutrition so along with doing diet prep for the tropic animals I also was asked to teach a few exotic animal nutrition classes to the Central Park Zoo camp kids.

My experience at the zoo helped me make valuable networking connections with the zookeepers, managers, and the curator of the zoo. It was also so much fun working in the city for the summer!

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

I came into UConn being pre-vet. Now I am concentrating on animal nutrition and food science.

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

After graduation I plan to apply to jobs at zoos and aquariums in the New York City area. I also am interested in applying to various positions in city, state, and federal jobs as well as private companies such as pharmaceuticals. I'm going to keep my options open and apply to as many jobs as I can!

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

Of course!!! I would be more than happy to talk to someone if they would like to learn more about my internship experience. They may email me at: [gabriella.n.vinci@uconn.edu](mailto:gabriella.n.vinci@uconn.edu)

