

## **An interview with ANSC Major Jessica Barry regarding her Beardsley Zoo Internship**

*(Connecticut, Summer 2013)*



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

I interned at Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo in Bridgeport, CT from May to August of 2013. Internships are offered both during the summer and during the school year, however summer applications are much more competitive.

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

The internships offered at the zoo are unpaid. When applying, you choose to be considered as an animal care, veterinary science, or education intern. I applied and was chosen as an animal care intern. As such, you are placed with two zookeepers in one of two rotations in the animal care department. You can either be put into the rainforest/hoofstock combination or the barnyard/predator combination. Both combinations are full of unique, exotic animals and amazing experiences.

I was put into the rainforest and hoofstock rotation. As an intern, I worked alongside the zookeepers to care for the animals in our specific section daily. This ranged from chopping up all sorts of fruits and vegetables and preparing feed for the animals' diets to creating bright, colorful "enrichment" feeders made out of children's toys for the monkeys to eat out of. I got to clean exhibits daily and educate the public about what exactly these animals eat, where they are from, and whatever other questions that were asked. I got to do things such as teach little kids how to feed the peccary their vegetables by throwing them over the exhibit wall and watching the animals search their exhibit. I also got to assist in taking animals to the veterinary clinic for their yearly physicals, feeding the wolves ice blocks made from blood, taking some of the reptiles outside for enrichment and public viewing, and even hand feeding bison sweet potato. Every single day was interesting, rewarding, and extremely educational. Animals I worked with included Howler monkeys, Saki monkeys, Red Footed Tortoise, Golden Lion Tamarins, agouti, white-bellied caique, vampire bats, ibis, toucans, pygmy marmosets, ocelots, a variety of reptiles and frogs from South America, caiman, peacocks, sloths, white-tailed deer, bison, prairie dogs, llamas, owls, pronghorns, peccary, Mexican wolves, maned wolves, and red wolves.





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

I applied for the internship in February of 2013.

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

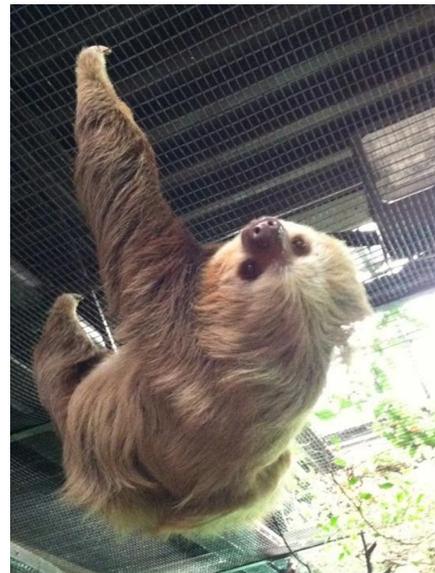
The internship lasted for ten weeks. It was four days a week (either Monday-Thursday or Tuesday-Friday) for approximately eight hours a day. It is split into five weeks in each of your assigned areas.

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

I had heard about this opportunity from the zoo's website.

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

I think it is important for potential applicants to know that this is not just cuddling with tigers and monkeys. There are safety measures in place (for good reason) and a lot of the internship is doing "behind the scenes" work caring for the animals rather than playing with them all day. With that said, there are tons of hands on opportunities (such as painting with the otters, a personal favorite of mine!) that are incredible. The experience and knowledge you get from your time at the zoo is amazing and completely worth applying.



I think it's also important for applicants to know that the staff is so friendly and supportive. The zoo has a very welcoming atmosphere and due to its small size, the staff is close-knit and friendly. It's very easy to get to know everyone and bond with your zookeepers. I keep finding myself going back!

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

I am very interested in the health care and nutrition of animals. Dogs and horses are my favorites!

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

Upon graduation I will be applying for UConn's Teaching Certification Program for College Graduates in which I will get my Master's in education and will be certified to teach agricultural education.

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

Of course. My email is [jessica.barry@uconn.edu](mailto:jessica.barry@uconn.edu). I am more than willing to answer questions and talk about what I did, as well as share some pictures. If you are interested in applying, contact Tracy Benham at the zoo and she will tell you what to do (<http://www.beardsleyzoo.org>)!

