CONCEPT

Zoo and Wildlife Park Management Course: Animal Welfare, Breeding and Visitor Operations



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Introduction:

Zoo and wildlife park management covering animal welfare, breeding and visitor operations is a 1-week course for collection, animal care, veterinary and visitor operations managers that ends with an Animal Collection and Welfare Management Plan for a case zoo. New zoos, aquariums and breeding centres often acquire species before husbandry manuals, welfare audits, studbook records and dangerous animal protocols exist, leading to stereotypic behaviour, failed pairings and keeper incidents. Nominees already supervise animal sections or park services and learn through inspection walkthroughs of enclosures, records and keeper routines. CoreConcept Training Center delivers this zoo and wildlife park management course.

Course Objectives:

- Assess the welfare of individual animals and species groups with the Five Domains Model and record scores that guide husbandry changes
- Prepare an institutional collection plan that sets species priorities, space allocation, acquisition and disposition criteria for the zoo or breeding centre
- Manage conservation breeding with studbook data, pairing recommendations, contraception decisions and surplus animal policies that protect genetic diversity
- Run preventive veterinary care, quarantine, nutrition and enrichment schedules and evaluate them against behavioural and health indicators
- Apply keeper safety controls for dangerous animals, including protected contact rules, escape drills and recapture team arrangements
- Organise visitor flows, animal encounters and conservation education so that guest activity does not compromise animal welfare

Target Audience:

- Curators and collection managers responsible for species selection, animal transfers and population records
- Animal care section supervisors accountable for daily husbandry, keeper rosters and enclosure standards
- Veterinary and animal health leads who oversee quarantine, preventive medicine and clinical records
- Wildlife breeding centre managers responsible for pairing, rearing and release preparation of threatened species
- Visitor operations and education managers who run encounters, talks, shows and guest services around animal exhibits
- Project and development managers planning new zoos, aquariums or wildlife parks

Course Outline:

Day 1: Modern Zoos, Wildlife Parks and Animal Collections

- Ex-Situ Conservation Role of Zoos, Aquariums and Breeding Centres
- Facility Typology From Urban Zoo to Drive-Through Safari Park
- Animal Inventory Register With Individual Identification and Transponder Records
- Current-State Husbandry Audit of Enclosures and Keeper Routines
- Stakeholder Map for Owners, Curators, Veterinarians and Visitors

Day 2: Welfare Science, Collection Planning and Population Management

- Five Domains Model for Nutrition, Environment, Health and Behaviour
- Mental State Scoring and Quality of Life Review
- Institutional Collection Plan With Species Priority and Space Matrix
- Studbook Records, Pedigree Analysis and Founder Representation
- Acquisition, Transfer and Disposition Policy for Surplus Animals

Day 3: Husbandry, Veterinary Care, Enrichment and Keeper Practice

- Species Husbandry Manual With Diet Sheets and Daily Routines
- Quarantine Protocol and Preventive Medicine Calendar for Collections
- Enrichment Programme Using Food, Structural, Sensory and Social Items
- Operant Conditioning for Voluntary Husbandry and Veterinary Procedures
- Behaviour Observation Sheets for Detecting Stereotypies and Stress

Day 4: Keeper Safety, Breeding Problems and Visitor Operations

- Dangerous Animal Categories and Protected Contact Working Rules
- Animal Escape Response Drill and Recapture Team Roles
- Pairing Failure, Hand-Rearing and Inbreeding Risk Case Decisions
- Visitor Encounter Rules, Barrier Design and Feeding Talk Scripts
- Conservation Education Programme for Schools and Family Visitors

Day 5: Inspection Walkthrough and Animal Collection Plan Build

- Case Zoo Enclosure Walkthrough Against Five Domains Criteria
- Case Studbook Review and Breeding Recommendation Table
- Case Keeper Safety and Escape Readiness Checklist Review
- Welfare and Visitor Experience Indicator Dashboard for Directors
- Animal Collection and Welfare Management Plan Completion and Panel Review

Skills You Will Gain:

- Animal Welfare Assessment
- Collection Planning
- Studbook and Pedigree Analysis
- Husbandry Manual Writing
- Enrichment Evaluation
- Protected Contact Supervision
- Escape Response Coordination
- Conservation Education Design

Why Attend This Course:

- Deliver an Animal Collection and Welfare Management Plan for a case zoo to the zoo director, the animal welfare committee and the board
- Decide which species to hold, breed, transfer or phase out and when a pairing or hand-rearing case needs intervention
- Avoid keeper injuries, animal escapes, welfare complaints and failed breeding seasons by acting on welfare scores and safety checklists
- Share husbandry manuals, enrichment calendars, behaviour sheets and escape drill cards with keepers, veterinary staff and education teams

Conclusion:

Back at work, the participant hands the zoo director, the animal welfare committee and the curatorial team an Animal Collection and Welfare Management Plan. They use it to approve species acquisitions and transfers, set breeding recommendations, fund enclosure improvements, schedule veterinary and enrichment work and authorise keeper safety rules for dangerous species. After its first full season, the organisation should compare welfare scores, breeding outcomes, keeper incidents and visitor feedback with the plan and adjust species priorities and husbandry routines where results fall short.

Frequently Asked Questions FAQ:

What should participants know before the zoo and wildlife park management course?

Participants should already supervise an animal section, a veterinary unit, a breeding facility or visitor services in a zoo, aquarium or wildlife park. Bringing anonymised enclosure photographs, animal records or keeper rosters helps them apply the inspection walkthroughs to their own site.

How does zoo and wildlife park management differ from a protected area or theme park course?

It covers animals living in human care: welfare assessment, collection planning, studbook breeding, husbandry, keeper safety and visitor encounters. Protected area courses manage wild populations in reserves, and theme park courses focus on rides, queues and entertainment rather than animal care.

Why do zoo and wildlife park management teams use the Five Domains Model?

The Five Domains Model looks at nutrition, environment, health and behaviour and how they shape the mental state of an animal. It moves welfare work beyond preventing suffering towards giving each animal positive experiences, and gives teams a shared way to score and compare animals.

What do participants take back from the zoo and wildlife park management course?

Participants take back an Animal Collection and Welfare Management Plan for a case zoo, with a welfare scoring sheet, a collection priority matrix, a breeding recommendation table, an enrichment calendar and a keeper safety checklist ready to adapt to their own facility.