



Keeper Placement Opportunity 2026-2027

Organisation's Contact Details:

Dartmoor Zoological Society
Sparkwell, Plymouth, PL7 5DG
01752 837645
www.dartmoorzoo.org.uk

Name and Job Title of Main Contact:

Ella Hooper – Keeper

Organisation's main activity:

Hidden on the borders of the Dartmoor National Park, Dartmoor Zoo boasts a wonderful 33 acres of woodland, celebrating a wide range of exotic and native animals, including the biggest variety of Big Cats in the Southwest of England. Dartmoor Zoological Society is a charity which aims to promote the conservation, care and breeding of wildlife and endangered species. We encourage and develop the public interest and awareness of the importance of ensuring the survival of species and diversity of life.

We achieve this through operating the zoo in a unique way. Not only do we educate public visitors through talks and educational literature, but we have an extensive education programme for schools, colleges and placements for children ranging from pre-school age through to university undergraduates. We are continuously undertaking research onsite to improve our animal welfare, whilst also sharing this knowledge with other animal charities and organisations around the country.

We promote the charity through our social media channels, of which we have over 100,000 followers. We also host a range of events from fundraising days to corporate away days and weddings.

Brief Job Description – duties and responsibilities:

Dartmoor Zoo is seeking placement students for the role of 'Keeper Assistant' for the 2026-2027 academic year. Ideally candidates will be undertaking an animal or zoo-related degree/ environmental science degree.

In return you will gain experience within an award winning BIAZA accredited and WAZA zoo animal department, learning from professional zoo staff.

Placements will help with daily husbandry routines of the animal collection under the direction of the Keepers, Senior Keeper and Animal Manager. You will assist the keepers with some of their daily duties, working with a wide range of mammal, bird and reptile species.

We ask for a minimum of 3 days a week for 6 months. However we can accept up to full time (5 days a week) for up to 12 months.

Duties:

- Preparing and distributing food and water to the animals, following prescribed diets
- Washing of dishes, cleaning of kitchens, keeper yard, equipment and enrichment items
- Sorting food, invertebrate, hay and straw deliveries
- Maintaining high standards of cleanliness in all animal enclosures, public viewing and off-view areas
- Monitoring the animals carefully for any behavioral, reproductive or medical problems
- Providing enrichment specific to the species requirements to fulfil their natural behaviours
- Basic DIY, small fixes and repairs
- Assisting with the capture and restraint of animals when needed, whilst minimising the stress on the animal
- Adhering to all prescribed safety and emergency procedures to ensure the safety of animals, staff and the visiting public

We'd expect you to:

- Be enthusiastic and hardworking
- Ideally have a level 2 or above animal care qualification, or be in the process of completing an animal related 'sandwich' degree
- Be able to work in extreme outdoor weather conditions
- Be physically fit due to the nature of the role
- Have good verbal and written communication skills
- Be a good listener and keen to acquire knowledge
- Be able to work within a department team, both as a team player and using one's own initiative
- Be comfortable speaking to, and interacting with our guests
- Ideally have a driving license and your own vehicle, due to the isolated location

Salary / Remuneration – Living / Travel allowance:

Reimbursement for work expenses only. Volunteers are provided with uniform (polo tops and fleece) and a package of benefits including 40% discount on our catering provision.

How many placement slots are available: Depends on the length of placements

Length of placements available: 6-12 months and a choice of 3-5 days a week placement.

Start Date: September 2026

Application Procedure:

Please submit a CV and covering letter to ella.hooper@dartmoorzoo.co.uk

Closing Date for applications:

7th December 2025

Proposed Interview Date

Week beginning 12th January (flexible dates) – the keeper role will include a half day practical interview on site.