

GEORGIA AQUARIUM

Career Information



What department is this position in?

Aquatic Sustainability

What is the position's official job title?

Aquarist

Does this position require a college degree?

Depending on the position, a bachelor's degree may be required.

Do you need any certifications outside of a degree for this position?

Open water scuba certification, if no degree than equivalent experience in the field.

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What does the average day look like for this position?

In the Aquatic Sustainability department, we start our days doing water sampling for all of the habitats in the building, morning checks on all the animals, and checking on any of our new animals going through the quarantine process. If we have new animals going through quarantine, they may have medical exams or prescription treatments we need to do. If there aren't, we proceed with confirming the completion of all water quality testing and ensuring the animals are well. After, we roll into food prep to prepare the appropriate diet for the animals that reside at our facility. Once we finish and clean up, we head to do morning maintenance and feeds. Maintenance usually entails siphoning waste, cleaning protein skimmers, and rinsing out the filter mats and bags.

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Once everything is clean, we give the animals their first feeds of the day. In our department, we have a large variance in our animals, ranging from tiny jellies to large sharks and rays. Therefore, the feeds have equal variance and can range from a simple broadcast/scatter feed to a complex, in-depth feed that requires training sessions.

This brings us to mid-day, where we get water quality results and perform any water changes or chemical dosing as needed. We also scuba dive to clean our systems a few times a week to ensure the larger exhibits are clean. After lunch, we perform more feeds, exhibit maintenance and cleaning, and documenting our day.



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Are there any internships that help to get this position?

Yes, most aquariums have internships for this position, including Georgia Aquarium.

Is there any way to volunteer or shadow with this position?

Yes, we have volunteers almost every day of the week.

What path did you take to get to working at Georgia Aquarium?

I have a Bachelors of Science in General Biology, and a minor in chemistry. During the summers of my last two years in college, I did education internships at a zoological facility, and then in my last semester I was an intern as an aquarist at Georgia Aquarium. I then got hired as a temporary aquarist, then a part time aquarist before being hired full time.

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What is your favorite part about working at Georgia Aquarium?

I think that being so involved with the animals we care for is extremely rewarding. Working at the off-site facility I take pride in knowing I'm setting this animal up for success when it moves into its main exhibit at the Aquarium.

Is there anything else you want to share about this position?

This job is a lot more cleaning than most people expect. Probably half of my day is spent cleaning one thing or another, whether that's dishes, exhibits, filter media, or even just the floors and tables. It's hard work and can be very exhausting but worth it in the end!

