

A day in the life...

Name: Ben Jones,

Job title: Aquarist, The Deep

Responsibilities:

There are a huge range of responsibilities within an aquarists role with plenty of scope to specialise in a certain area should you wish. In no particular order our jobs may include:

- Diving and supervising dives both in the aquarium and for research projects elsewhere. A dive may include hand feeding large sharks, or simply scrubbing a wall.
- Ensuring the water quality of our exhibits by means of water testing and then acting upon the results.
- Ensuring the health of all animals in our care through daily monitoring, nutrition and enrichment.
- Keeping the exhibits clean.
- Maintaining the life support systems. eg. tasks such as probe calibration, filter cleaning and plumbing.
- Educational talks. From time to time we may give talks to school groups, college and Uni students on any number of different marine subjects.

Daily routine:

8:30 - Start, coffee.....More coffee
8:40 - Clean all display windows and fill in a daily health diary for all animals
9:00 - Clean inside all smaller tanks
9:30 - Prepare food for all exhibits
10:00 - Meeting with all aquarists to discuss any problems and sort out the daily dive team.
10:30- Feed all exhibits (happens throughout the day)
14:00- Dive show for the public in the larger exhibits (3.5million litres) and feed the larger animals.
15:00- Maintenance dive to clean larger exhibits
16:00- Maintenance of life support systems.
17:30- Home

Every day is different so the above is just an idea..

How I got here:

GCSE's
A levels in sciences
Degree in Marine biology
Experience of diving
Voluntary experience in a public aquarium

Best bits:

The diving I think is the most rewarding, I don't think I could ever get tired of swimming with and feeding the sharks, no denying it's a bit of a buzz. Tank design, its rewarding when you can theme a tank and for it to look good, after all people are paying to see the fruits of your work.

Worst bits:

As with any animal care there are less attractive and sometimes very dirty jobs. A daily cleaning routine can sometimes become tedious but then the good bits out way the bad. Don't expect to

earn loads of cash being an aquarist; it's a fun, physical, hands on kind of job but not one that's going to make you rich.

Additional information:

This is a very competitive industry and as a result it is extremely difficult to get into. Don't be put off by the assumption that you are going to need a list of scientific qualifications as long as your arm. Everyone and their dog has got a degree now so it's probably just as much use to make sure you have a good skill set, e.g. Get your dive qualifications up and do voluntary work for an aquarium, as they may offer you a position if one becomes available.