

For Creative Minds

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Aquarium Jobs



There are many jobs in an aquarium! An aquarium needs lots of different experts and volunteers.

Experts who feed, clean, and care for aquatic animals that live in tanks are called **aquarists**.

Aquariums are not just for animals that live in the water! Many aquariums have an aviary, a place that houses birds. The experts who care for these birds are **aviculturists**.

Biologists study all kinds of living beings. They examine how living things grow, reproduce, and relate to their environment. There are many different kinds of specialties

in biology. A biologist who studies reptiles and amphibians is a **herpetologist**. A biologist who studies fish is an **ichthyologist**.

A person who manages the exhibits is a **curator**. Curators create spaces where people can learn about and connect with the creatures in the aquarium.

Animals get sick sometimes and need a doctor. **Veterinarians** are medical doctors who take care of animals.

Aquariums often have lots of **volunteers**. People do not have to be scientists to volunteer at an aquarium. But for people who do want to become scientists or work at an aquarium, volunteering is a great place to start! Volunteers greet and educate guests, prepare food and feed the animals. They also help maintain the tanks and sometimes even dive in the tanks to feed the fish or assist with cleaning.



Match the Animal

1. This endangered **bird** cannot fly in the air. Instead, it dives, swims, and waddles to get around. Chicks are covered in gray fluff that turns into sleek, black-and-white feathers by adulthood. This bird is named for the continent on which it is found.
2. These playful and intelligent **mammals** have four flipper feet that allow them to move easily in the water and on land. They live mostly along the Pacific coast from southern Canada all the way to Mexico. A separate group lives in the Galapagos Islands. These animals live in large groups and rest by making a raft where they gather together and float on their backs.
3. This giant **mollusk** has eight legs and a lifespan of only 3 to 5 years. It is one of the most intelligent species of animals in the world and its brain is the largest of all invertebrates (animals without a backbone or spinal cord). It lives in the coastal waters of the northern Pacific Ocean and grows to about 16 feet (5m) in length.
4. This **reptile** has a hard shell and can weigh up to 100 pounds (45kg). It lives near the coast in the western Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. Due to pollution and hunting, this animal is critically endangered.
5. This giant animal is the world's largest **fish**. It lives in tropical and temperate water all around the world. It is a filter-feeder that eats mostly plankton. This fish is a slow mover and swims about as fast as a human walks—roughly 3 miles (5km) per hour!



A. Giant Pacific Octopus



B. Whale shark



C. African penguin, also called black-footed penguin



D. Kemp's ridley sea turtle



E. California sea lion

True or False

1. Aquariums work to conserve and protect species that are at risk or endangered.
2. Dolphins and whales are a type of fish.
3. There are many different jobs in an aquarium.
4. The blue whale is the world's largest fish.
5. Beluga whales are one of the smallest species of whale in the world.
6. All sharks live in salt water.
7. The fastest fish in the world can swim nearly as fast as a cheetah can run.
8. Ocean sunfish can lay more than three million eggs each spawning season.
9. In order to volunteer at an aquarium, you need a college degree in science.
10. All aquarium animals live in water.



Answers: 1-True. 2-False: Dolphins and whales breathe air and are mammals, not fish. 3-True. 4-False. The blue whale is a mammal, not a fish. The largest fish in the world is the whale shark. The biggest whale shark ever measured was 40 feet (12.2 meters) long. 5-True. 6-False. Most sharks live in salty oceans and seas, but there are five freshwater shark species in Southeast Asia and Australia. 7-True. The Atlantic sailfish can reach speeds of 70 miles (110km) per hour. 8-True. 9-False. 10-False. Aquariums also keep birds, snakes, and animals from many different habitats all around the world.

Animal Fun Facts

Beluga whales live in the arctic and subarctic in groups called pods. When born, belugas are dark grey. As they get older, their color lightens. By the time they are adults, they are completely white.



Sea otters have the thickest fur of all animals. Their dense fur coat keeps them warm even in icy water. Sea otters are endangered and live in the northern Pacific Ocean.



Manta rays are the biggest of all rays. They can weigh as much as 3,000 pounds (1360 kg) and have up to a 29 foot (9 meter) wingspan. Mantas live alone and swim in tropical seas and oceans around the world.



Moray eels live around the world in tropical and temperate waters. They are shy animals and hide in rocky crevices and reefs. Morays hide in rocks and wait for their prey to come near enough for them to grab.



American alligators are native to the southeastern United States. Albino alligators are very rare and are known as “ghosts of the swamp.” Albino American alligators cannot survive in the wild because they are very sensitive to direct sunlight.

