



Animal Care - Seasonal Volunteer Opportunities

Marine Mammal Care Center Los Angeles (MMCC) is the only year-round organization authorized by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) dedicated to the rescue, rehabilitation, and release of sick and injured marine mammals in Los Angeles County. Since 1992, MMCC has treated over 10,000 patients suffering from malnutrition, entanglement, domoic acid poisoning, and other human and environmental threats.

In addition to lifesaving care, MMCC serves as a hub for ocean conservation education, offering immersive programs to inspire the next generation of environmental stewards. MMCC's work is grounded in science, compassion, and community engagement, and it plays a vital role in protecting marine life along Southern California's coastline.

By addressing the urgent needs of stranded animals and sharing their stories with the public, MMCC connects people to the ocean and empowers them to take action for a more sustainable future.

MISSION AND VISION: The mission of the Marine Mammal Care Center Los Angeles is to inspire ocean conservation through marine mammal rescue and rehabilitation, education, and research. Our vision is of a healthy ocean ecosystem where people and marine life thrive together.

Role Description:

The Animal Care Seasonal Volunteer position offers individuals an opportunity to learn how our wildlife hospital provides medical care, housing, and nutrition to seals and sea lions in distress and to participate in their rehabilitation. These volunteers will assist in the care necessary to support our marine mammal hospital for a weekly 3-4 hour shift during the busy stranding season. The position is estimated to start in March and last up to 6 months, but may be shorter or longer depending on team needs. This position requires standing for up to three hours, bending over a sink, bending down to retrieve dishes from the ground, working in hot soapy water, using a garbage disposal, and contact with fish, gruel, and disinfectants. This position does not involve animal contact or direct care and is a supportive position only for the busy season. Animal Care volunteers report to the lead staff member on their scheduled shift and will be on-site at the hospital in San Pedro.



Duties include:

Fish Preparation

Responsibilities include:

- Thawing and sorting frozen fish
- Preparing gruel for patients unable to eat whole fish
- Organizing fish shipments (volunteer must be able to lift 25 lbs or more)
- Accurately calculating the appropriate amount of fish for each patient pen
- Ensuring cleanliness of fish prep area

Dishes

Responsibilities include:

- Cleaning and sanitizing dishes used for feeding and providing animal care at MMCC. This may include bowls, buckets, feeding tubes, blenders, etc.
- Ensure the kitchen area remains clean and sanitized throughout the shift
- Keeping dishes organized and easily accessible

Auxiliary Cleaning

Responsibilities include:

- Cleaning and sanitizing resources used to transport and care for our patients (kennels, pools, etc.)
- Laundry to ensure our patients and staff have access to clean towels and other materials pertinent to animal care
- Ensuring the main “staging area” where we prep for incoming patients, coordinate feeds or medical attention remains clean and sanitized at all times

Commitment:

Animal Care Seasonal Volunteers will commit to one shift at the same time each week for the length of the busy season. The shift will be selected during the onboarding process based on the volunteer's availability and MMCC's shift needs. Volunteers will work alongside Animal Care staff, interns, and other volunteers.

Shift times are as follows and includes the following duties:



- Morning Shift: Fish preparation, Dishes, Auxiliary Cleaning; 7:30 am – 11:00 am
- Midday Shift: Dishes; 11:00 am – 2:00 pm
- Afternoon Shift: Dishes, Auxiliary Cleaning; 3:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Exact shift times may vary based on patient load.

Requirements:

The Animal Care Volunteer must be 18 years or older. Participants must have their own medical insurance and reliable transportation. A background check will be required upon acceptance into the program. Volunteers should be competent in the following areas:

- A willingness to collaborate and communicate with other volunteers and staff
- Able to manage time effectively
- Quick learner with a drive to take initiative
- Able to handle potentially stressful situations with composure and professionalism
- Follow instructions and ability to take initiative
- Basic math skills (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and unit conversions)
- Must effectively communicate in written and spoken English
- Volunteers are encouraged to purchase personal protective equipment (disposable gloves, fishing bibs, and slip-proof boots)

Contact:

If you are interested in the Animal Care - Seasonal Volunteer position, please contact the Volunteer Services Manager at kwong@marinemammalcare.org.