



MITCHELL GOODKNECHT



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ACCO Website & Mission Statements

Professional Profile

Dedicated and passionate Zoology graduate equipped with 8 years of extensive experience in various husbandry fields, servicing a diversity of animal taxons through professional welfare strategies. Demonstrated expertise comprising 8 years of educational outreach advocating for topics of natural history, zoological sciences, and wildlife conservation. Specialized focus on the conservation, applied welfare, and education of globally recognized least concern & threatened species.

Education

Masters of Professional Sciences in Wildlife Conservation & Management – Professional Wildlife Biologist

Unity Environmental University, New Gloucester ME - 2025

Bachelors of Science in Zoology

Olivet Nazarene University, Bourbonnais IL - 2022

Associates of Science

Kankakee Community College, Kankakee IL - 2019

Relevant Coursework

Undergraduate Courses: Biology I & II, Research in Biology, Biology Seminars II & III, Chemistry I & II, Organic Chemistry, Statistics, Microbiology, Genetics, Animal Science, Vertebrate Natural History, Animal Behaviour, Invertebrate Zoology, Comparative Vertebrate Anatomy, Ornithology, Ecology, Environmental Science & Society. Post-Undergraduate trip to Namibia, Africa 2022 to observe real-world applications in speciation, ecology, conservation.

Graduate Courses: Climate Dynamics, Communication for Environmental Professionals, Quantitative Reasoning & Scientific Thought, Landscape Ecology, Human Dimensions of Wildlife Management, Conservation Ecology, Ethical Practice & Policy, Strategic Development & Management.

Undergraduate Research Projects

- ❖ Biology Seminar III – *The Science of Animal Training*
- ❖ Animal Behaviour – *Roles of Predation seen in the Harpy Eagle (H. harpyja) and other related and non-related raptor species*
- ❖ Research in Biology – Observational study with a specific captive Rhesus Macaque population, recording the cognitive understanding of their environmental stimuli through sensory experience (vision, auditory, etc.).

Graduate Research Project

- ❖ Capstone - *Natural Sciences Learning through Collaboration of Community-level Educational Outreach & Holistic Conservation Practices: ACCO X Imire Rhino & Wildlife Conservancy*
 - Utilizing Informal Science Education, representative non-living specimens or replicas, and wildlife photography of resident animal species found at Imire Conservancy in Zimbabwe-Africa, to teach the public about international species' conservation through holistic practices.

Certification

- ❖ **Assistant Laboratory Animal Technician (ALAT)**
AALAS - November 2025
- ❖ **Dino 101: Dinosaur Paleobiology** ❖ **Paleontology: Theropod Dinosaurs and the Origin of Birds**
University of Alberta Canada, Coursera Online – May 2019
- ❖ **Service Dog in Training Program with American Veterans Service Dog Academy - Formerly 1Pet1Vet Inc. NFP**
Kankakee Community College, Kankakee IL – May 2019

Core Skills & Talents

- Animal care/husbandry, restraint, and safe handling (8 years)
- Documenting & recording animal behaviour (8 years)
- Administering medications (immunizations, oral, topical)
- Operant conditioning/training of domestic/exotic species
- ID of native/exotic animal species
- Wildlife Photography & Videography
- Science Communication & Educational Outreach (9 years)
- Expertise of Natural History & Evolutionary Biology
- Non-living specimen curation and handling
- Laboratory Experience (academic & employment)
- Organizing Demonstrations, Events, and Public Talks
- Customer Service Representation (8 years)
- Supervisory and/or Leadership Roles (8 years)

International Vocational Services

Imire Rhino & Wildlife Conservancy

Wedza District-Zimbabwe, Africa September 2024

Outline: Volunteer work serving holistic conservation efforts provided by the *Imire Rhino & Wildlife Conservancy*. Actively supported real-world applications in speciation, ecology, conservation & sustainability, and local community support efforts.

Responsibilities:

- ❖ Husbandry services provided to resident Savanna Elephants through outdoor paddock cleaning and food stocking. Respectful hand-feeding of resident Savanna Elephant & Hook-lipped Rhino populations.
- ❖ Building of outdoor bomas (feeding stations) for Hook-lipped Rhino population utilizing naturalistic materials (stones, logs, etc.). These bomas are used for respectful Ecotourism strategies like feeding and

observation.

- ❖ Learning about Imire's mission of specialized conservation efforts through the selective breeding and translocation of the critically endangered hook-lipped rhino to accredited national park sites. Learned about the sustainable conservation of other species and/or projects onsite.
- ❖ Localized Community services such as distributing feminine pads for teen girls at local schools with the partnered *Mother's Support Group* and visiting the *Numwa schoolhouse* to help primary school students with reading English.

Career Profiles

Charles River Laboratories – AAALAC International accredited Organization

Animal Care Technician University of Chicago Medicine – Carlson Dept., Chicago, IL. June 2023 to Present

Outline: Contracted through *Charles River Laboratories* international corporation while stationed at *University of Chicago Biomedical Dept.* Responsible for the professional welfare and care of model taxons utilized within the biomedical research industry, ensuring the best care standards through husbandry services and enrichment.

Responsibilities

- ❖ Providing daily maintenance and welfare for diverse resident animal taxons: rat & mice colonies, aquatic frog (*Xenopus tropicalis*) colonies, zebra finch colonies, ferrets, rabbits, coon hound dog breeds, pigs, sheep, large troops of common marmosets (*C. jacchus*) & rhesus macaques (*M. mulatta*).
 - Cage changes and transferring of colonial species, regular feedings and watering, maintaining scheduled water restrictions and/or specialized diets, changing of bedding material, dumping soiled bedding in trash units, adding enrichment.**Primate responsibilities** entail prepping sterile cages w/ bedding & enrichment, securing sliding doors w/ locks, the systematic transferring of individual primates through partnered-dual safety control from previous dirty cage units to sterilized & prepped cage units.
 - Performing physical and behavioural health checks to monitor animals, maintaining written health charts.
 - Hand-washing & sanitizing indoor Macaque enclosures | Power washing & sanitizing large mammal stall rooms.
 - Humane CO2 chambered euthanasias (rodents)-verified by immediate cervical dislocation using tongs.
 - Practicing aseptic technique in a controlled laboratory setting (wearing PPE, utilizing chemicals such as Clidox to sanitize work stations), restocking lab rooms with necessary supplies for researchers, custodial sanitation of lab rooms.
 - Working through chambered isolators housing mice colonies utilizing one-way sleeves w/ gloves in the Quarantine sector.
 - Assisted in the receiving of new arrival NHP (Non-Human Primate) & large mammal deliveries from other biomedical facilities, and following quarantine procedures for new resident NHPs.
 - Fully trained under the department's NHP behaviourist in practices on operant conditioning & positive reinforcement training for macaques to shift from larger enclosure to smaller containment unit in order to receive clinical treatments.

Black Pine Animal Sanctuary – GFAS International accredited Organization

Lead Exotic Animal Keeper Nobel County 4-H Park – Albion, IN. January 2023 to May 2023

Outline: Providing first-class welfare strategies under the mission and direction from one of the leading GFAS (Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries) accredited sanctuaries in the nation. Responsible for the welfare of a diversity of rescued and/or relinquished resident animals. Concentrated animal taxons: small-large reptiles (lizards, snakes, tortoises, American alligator) small-large psittaciformes bird species (parrots, macaws, and cockatoos), medium-sized mammals (agoutis, kinkajous, coatimundis, Patagonian cavies), and small-large Primates (cotton-headed & golden-handed tamarins, hamadryas baboon).

Responsibilities:

- ❖ Performing daily maintenance in pristine animal welfare and care.
 - Demonstrating proper safety protocols for capture/handling/restraint/distancing/shifting, and ensuring secondary containment protocols of various species.
 - Indoor/outdoor habitat cleanings/disinfection & refurbishment, refreshing of food/water/bedding sources.
 - Preparation of daily diets and oral supplements/pharmaceutical medication mixed w/in food bowls.
 - Providing positive reinforcement to resident animals, and adding new habitat enrichment on daily regiment.
 - Performing physical and behavioural health checks to monitor animals, maintaining written & digital health charts via computer file database.
 - Assisted and briefly trained under the supervision of veteran keepers in the welfare and management of white bengal tigers & lioness.
 - Trained in utilizing *Bobcat Skid Steer* bulldozer, for composting waste from commissary & resident animal enclosures.

Achievements:

- ❖ Received introductory firearm (semi-automatic pistols, shotgun, rifle) training at *Two Bear Arms Gun Shop* in Warsaw, IN for preparation of hypothetical level 4/ level 5 dangerous predator escape scenarios.
- ❖ Designing/creation of Educational Banners for exotic species' habitat exhibits which specialize in the communication/interpretation of conservation & wildlife science topics. Requested to provide advisory role in wildlife education strategies for the newly hired Education Coordinator of *Black Pine Animal Sanctuary* as of 2024.

Additional Careers in Exotic Species Welfare & Husbandry

Aikman Wildlife Adventure

Volunteer Intern Exotic Keeper Arcola, IL Terms: July 2021 to February 2022; August 2023 to January 2024

Outline: Monthly position during Fall-Winter seasons providing animal care maintenance through welfare and husbandry services of various

small-large exotic animal taxons. Concentration in all resident animal groups including: Red Kangaroos & Wallaby, medium-large Predators (Foxes, Servals, Caracals, Wolf-Dog Hybrids, Striped & Spotted Hyenas) & large native/exotic Hoofstock (various deer & antelope species).

PetSmart

Pet Care Specialist & Sales Associate Bourbonnais, IL August 2021 to December 2022

Outline: Responsible for the welfare of a diversity of various animal taxons featured in the pet industry, and sold for adoption through the PetSmart store. Performing daily maintenance and welfare for a diversity of sales floor pets. Concentrated animal taxons: invertebrates (tarantulas & scorpions), aquatic frog & freshwater fish species, reptiles (lizards, snakes, turtles, tortoises), psittaciformes birds (parakeets, cockatiels, conures) and passeriformes birds (finches & canaries), small rodent species (mice & hamster breeds, guinea pigs, and chinchillas), cat breeds.

Reed Hall of Science

Animal Care Department & Greenhouse Technician Olivet Nazarene University - Bourbonnais, IL

March 2020 to April 2022

Outline: Seasonal/full-time position providing management & daily maintenance for ONU's Animal Care Dept. (freshwater & marine aquariums included) and Greenhouse during academic breaks (fall, winter, spring, summer). Responsible for the welfare and husbandry of a diversity of various animal taxons featured within ONU's Animal Care Dept. that are utilized as ambassador animals. Concentrated animal taxons: small-large herpetological species (frogs, salamanders, axolotls, turtles & tortoises, lizards, and snakes), marine & freshwater fish species, and exotic invertebrate species (scorpions, whip-tailed scorpions, tarantulas, assassin bugs, millipedes, leaf insects, cockroach species).

Freelance Exotic Animal Rescue

Volunteer Exotic Animal Care Intern Beecher, IL August 2018 to November 2020

Outline: Weekly volunteer position providing animal care maintenance through welfare and husbandry services of various small-large exotic animal taxons. Concentration in Reptile House (iguana and tortoises), Emus, and small-large exotic mammals (Dromedary Camels, African porcupines, Coatimundis, Kinkajous, and Foxes) including NHP species (Rhesus & Bonnet macaques, Common marmosets).

Natural History & Wildlife Educational Outreach through Community Engagement

ACCO - Animal-Care-Conservation-Outreach

Founder-Director-Educator Kankakee County, IL August 2024 to Present

Outline: Independent vocation spreading educational outreach on topics in Natural History, and native & exotic wildlife species. This program is based upon personally accredited cumulative educational background, and the philosophies of previous educator and husbandry experiences. Organizing local demonstrations, utilizing ethically collected non-living specimens & replicas of wildlife species for sensory engagement and learning with the general public. Contracted independently through the *Bourbonnais Township Park District*

ONU Animal Outreach (OAO Program)

Volunteer Educator & President elect Olivet Nazarene University - Bourbonnais, IL October 2019 to July 2022

Outline: Providing educational outreach to the communities of ONU & Kankakee County, utilizing live animal ambassadors from Olivet's Animal Care Department.

Responsibilities:

- ❖ Elected as President-Directed the program from May 2021 – July 2022.
- ❖ Designed & organized materials for facilitation.
- ❖ Maintained safety protocols for both live ambassador animals and the general public.
- ❖ Scheduled and organized both small demonstrations & large-scale events.
- ❖ Trained students in techniques for public speaking, practices in scientific communication, and professional handling of live animals and non-living specimens.

Dinosaur Docent & Discovery Squad Volunteer Educator

Field Museum of Natural History – Chicago, IL

September 2016 to Present

Outline: Volunteer educator under the Learning Center Dept. of the Field Museum. Serving two distinct positions with Informal Science Education and Public Floor Facilitation (Discovery Squad & Docent/Tour Guide) within *Stanley Field Hall* and educational outreach to the community of Chicago residents and global visitors to the museum.

Responsibilities:

- ❖ Science communication through informal facilitation utilizing themed carts featuring non-living specimens & artifacts that relate to particular exhibits and/or broader topics of understanding within the scientific fields of Natural History.
 - Elected as "Volunteer Captain": 2017-2018
 - Utilize Museum resources and specimens for informal facilitation strategies, and educating groups of various ages, backgrounds, etc.,
 - supervisory position that helps the coordinators with tasks in scheduled rotation
 - training fellow *Discovery Squad* members in techniques for public speaking, practices in science communication, and professional handling of non-living specimens.

Achievements:

- ❖ Certified in 2018 for the *Dinosaur Hall*, *SUE the T.rex*, *Maximo the Titanosaur* & *Pterosaurs* - based on accredited knowledge and facilitation of particular exhibits through elaborate tours or informal facilitation.
 - Organizing educational material based on accredited background and museum resources
 - Leading self-guided tours for groups of various ages, backgrounds, etc.,