



MITCHELL GOODKNECHT



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Kankakee County, IL, U.S.A

Professional Profile

Dedicated and passionate Zoological/Wildlife sciences 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 10 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 - Conc. 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.

Graduate Capstone Research Project

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

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 at local schools with the partnered *Mother's Support Group* and visiting the *Numwa schoolhouse*.

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 caviés), 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: Summer 2021-Spring 2022; Fall 2023-Spring 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 Vivarium & 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 of educational outreach & science communication on topics in Natural History, native & international 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 sourced non-living specimens & replicas of wildlife species for sensory engagement and interactive learning with the general public. Contracted independently through the *Bourbonnais Township Park District*. Collaborative Ambassador partnerships w/ *Imire Rhino & Wildlife Conservancy*, *Black Pine Animal Sanctuary*, and *Aikman Wildlife* to advocate for their missions in professional animal welfare & conservation.

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.,