



Nichole Shelmidine

*Supervisor of Animals
Animal Department, Prospect Park Zoo*

Nichole oversees the work of all the keepers at the Prospect Park Zoo. She also conducts research and manages several breeding programs.

Education: Four years of college. Two more years of schooling to get a Master's degree to become a supervisor of animals.

About me

I started out as a volunteer with the Bronx Zoo mammal department in 1997 and was hired as a wild animal keeper that same year. I have always been drawn towards the research aspects of the work. I helped to facilitate, through perseverance and hard work, the first breeding of Chinese big headed turtles in an Association of Zoos and Aquariums facility. Now, as a Supervisor of Animals, my team's research on big headed turtle continues to focus on their reproduction, courtship behaviors, and growth. We have expanded our turtle focus to not only continue to include the Chinese big headed turtles but also to branch out to leaf turtles and Rote Island snake necked turtles with future plans to incorporate other species into the project. It is very important to me and my team to play a role in the conservation of this group of animals and to share all the information we learn with others (zoological institutions, field staff, and the public) in the hopes of creating awareness and inspiring people to care and help make choices for the betterment of these species' futures.

Typical Day

On a day-to-day basis, part of my job is desk work, doing payroll, creating a schedule, completing a daily report, answering emails, writing protocols, generating agendas, and running meetings among other things. The other part of my job is out in the zoo, talking to my team about how to improve animal care and welfare, assisting the veterinarian, sometimes training animals like the sea lions, introducing turtle's pairs for breeding purposes, incubating reptile and bird eggs along with caring for the offspring, and exhibit work and design. Prospect Park Zoo participates in a number of species survival plans and I help us to play our part in helping to create and maintain North American assurance colonies.

Fun Facts

Bingeworthy Show: Murder mysteries and watching the NY Yankees

Favorite Meme: Cat memes

Hobby: Cross-stich, watercolors, quilling, birdwatching, hiking, and photography