

Avian Husbandry & Management Program



Sylvan Heights
Waterfowl Park

SCOTLAND NECK, NORTH CAROLINA
www.shwpark.com

Program Design:

The Sylvan Heights Avian Husbandry & Management Program is an internship designed for zoo and wildlife management professionals (or equivalent experiences) who desire to increase their knowledge and proficiency in aviculture. In some cases, college level students, who have demonstrated a genuine desire to enter into a career centered on wildlife care or research, may be accepted into the program.

The program is designed to be beneficial to zoo and wildlife professionals who desire to receive continuing education, advanced avicultural training or seek to broaden their career experience. The program is conducted at the Sylvan Heights Waterfowl Center in Scotland Neck, North Carolina, and was designed by the Center's Director, Mike Lubbock, incorporating his innovative and highly successful techniques in avian breeding and care.

Upon successful completion of the program, participants will receive a Certificate of Proficiency in Avian Husbandry & Management from the Sylvan Heights Waterfowl Center.

Program Schedule:

The program duration is a minimum of one week and a maximum of two weeks, between April and July when waterfowl breeding is at the highest level. The basic curriculum, described below, is conducted in sessions scheduled by Sylvan Heights Waterfowl Center. (The Session Schedule is available at www.shwpark.com.)

Space in the program is limited.

Although Anseriformes are a specialty, other birds such as cranes, parrots and pheasants also reside at the Avian Breeding Center and may be included in the curriculum when requested in advance by the applicant or the institution the applicant represents. Specific time frames may be required if certain species have been selected to be studied. Additional study topics may also include specific research or aviculture techniques.

Program Requirements:

- ❑ 18 years of age
- ❑ Capable of lifting 50 lbs.
- ❑ Able to work outdoors in a rustic environment
- ❑ Assist staff with the morning care and maintenance routine at the Center
- ❑ Must have your own health insurance
- ❑ Minimum one-week stay is required
- ❑ Must apply and be accepted into the program

Tuition and Costs:

Tuition for the one-week program is \$1,000. The two-week program is \$1,500.

Housing and meals will be provided in Scotland Neck, NC for those who have been accepted in the program and who continue to meet the program requirements. As an alternative (or during times when space in the program is limited), interns may seek accommodations at local motels, and would then be responsible for their own lodging and transportation.

A non-refundable deposit of \$100 is required within 30 days of acceptance in the program. The balance of the tuition payment must be received prior to the arrival of the intern at the Center. If the intern must leave the program for any reason, the tuition, minus the \$100 deposit, will be refunded on a prorated basis, within 30 days.

Program Description:

Interns are given intensive, hands-on training in all aspects of captive breeding and management of Anseriformes. The curriculum is centered on topics emphasized in the manual which is provided to all program interns. Curriculum topics are discussed and demonstrated on an informal basis at the preserve. For each topic, the intern is provided extensive time to shadow staff instructors as they work, and where possible, engages in direct application of the techniques learned. There is no classroom work or formal lectures.

During a portion of each day, interns help in maintaining bird-related facilities at the main preserve. These functions may include, but are not limited to, food preparation and distribution, aviary cleaning and horticultural maintenance. This is part of the curriculum and serves to help the student become oriented and receive an extensive husbandry-related background.

Upon successful completion of the program, participants will receive a Certificate of Proficiency in Avian Husbandry & Management from the Sylvan Heights Waterfowl Center, a copy of Frank S. Todd's *Handbook of Waterfowl Identification*, and a copy of Mike Lubbock's *Avian Husbandry & Management Manual*.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Bird Identification / Behavior / Conservation

- Sylvan Height's large collection of waterfowl is ideal for basic identification
- Behavioral observations and sub-species cross comparison
- Receive copy of Frank S. Todd's *Handbook of Waterfowl Identification*
- Waterfowl conservation through captive management

Nutritional Requirements

- Seasonal differences
- Continental differences
- Breeding vs. non-breeding requirements
- Size of feeding bowls

Nesting Habitat

- Species variation
- Genetic management
- Full-winged vs. pinioned
- Nesting box designs and placement
- Pair vs. flock breeding
- Selection of birds for breeding
- Landscape requirements
- Aviary design

Egg Handling

- Substitution (dummy) eggs
- Sterile conditions
- Collection techniques
- Time of day consideration
- Outdoor candling in aviaries

Incubation Techniques

- Utilizing brooding hens
- Egg candling
- Use of artificial incubators
- Incubator types and manufacturers

Sexing Waterfowl

- Juveniles and adults
- Vent sexing

- ❑ DNA sexing through blood sample

Rearing Techniques

- ❑ Species-specific issues
- ❑ Hand raising vs. parent raising
- ❑ Feeding preferences
- ❑ Seasonal considerations
- ❑ Brooder (Rearing Unit) capacity
- ❑ Maintenance and cleaning of brooders (rearing units)
- ❑ Introduction to water
- ❑ Preening for waterproofing
- ❑ Temperature considerations

Veterinary Care

- ❑ Basic care
- ❑ Antibiotics
- ❑ Worming medication
- ❑ Bio-security program

Aviary Requirements

- ❑ Building ponds
- ❑ Pond sizes and depths
- ❑ Well water
- ❑ River water
- ❑ Cleaning ponds

Avicultural Management

- ❑ Selecting birds to maintain flock compatibility
- ❑ Selecting birds to be kept alone as pairs
- ❑ Pair bonding
- ❑ Adolescents to adults
- ❑ Breeding age
- ❑ Hybridization and mutation

ABOUT THE STAFF

The staff at Sylvan Heights Waterfowl Center conducts the training for the Avian Husbandry & Management Program. Many zoological and wildlife professionals as well as students travel to the Center to take advantage of the vast amount of avicultural experience assembled here. A short career biography for each staff member involved in training interns is provided below.

MIKE LUBBOCK is the Director of the Sylvan Heights Waterfowl Center and Program Director for the Avian Husbandry & Management Program.

Mike's professional career with birds began at the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) in Slimbridge, England, where he held the positions of Assistant Curator and Director of Aviculture. While at the WWT, Mike continually refined and improved waterfowl propagation techniques and did a considerable amount of fieldwork. The ultimate goal of establishing his own collection became a reality upon arriving in North Carolina and founding Sylvan Heights Waterfowl Center.

Mike is currently on the Board of Directors of the International Wild Waterfowl Association and Vice President of the Carolina/Virginia Pheasant & Waterfowl Society. He is also the Executive Director of the Sylvan Heights Waterfowl Society, which operates in association with the North Carolina Zoological Society. In addition to many World and North American First Breeding Awards, Mike has also been honored with the Jean DeLacour Avicultural Award and, was inducted into the International Wild Waterfowl Association's Hall of Fame.

Mike's passion is the preservation of threatened waterfowl on a global basis. In addition to his involvement with the previously mentioned groups and societies, he is active in many conservation efforts worldwide. He helped in founding the Venezuelan Waterfowl Foundation, which provides fieldwork and educational support for the preservation of the Torrent Duck, Orinoco Goose and Merida Teal. He is a member of the Brazilian Merganser Recovery Team, developed under the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust Threatened Waterfowl Specialist Group to preserve the critically endangered Brazilian Merganser. Also, in 2003, in conjunction with the NC Zoological Society, Mike founded the Sylvan Heights Rare & Endangered Species Breeding Fund, designed to provide financial support to obtain and breed the world's most critically threatened avian species.

ALI LUBBOCK is the Assistant Director of Sylvan Heights and oversees many of the administrative duties for the Center. Over the many years of working at her husband's side, she has developed considerable avicultural skills of her own. Ali serves as Secretary for the International Wild Waterfowl Association and was inducted into the International Wild Waterfowl Association's Hall of Fame. Ali has also been honored with the prestigious Jean DeLacour Avicultural Award

NICK HILL, the Curator of Aviculture at Sylvan Heights Waterfowl Center, is responsible for the general husbandry of the world's largest waterfowl collection, as well as other birds, such as cranes, pheasants, curassows and parrots. Nick came to Sylvan Heights from the United Kingdom with 20 years of avicultural experience, during which time he interned and volunteered at the Center many times. He has a variety of experience in designing aviaries, breeding and rearing birds, field expeditions and consulting for animal-related television and movie productions.

Nick's lifetime of experience with birds from all parts of the globe is remarkable—from cold climate penguins and sea ducks to tropical birds. He has achieved First Breeding Awards for some extremely rare psittacines (parrot types) and is very experienced in

incubator and egg hatching skills, for which he received the prestigious Southwick Memorial Award from the International Wild Waterfowl Association.

Highlights of Nick's previous experience include:

- ❑ Assistant Curator at Birdland Zoo Gardens in the U.K.
- ❑ Made 3 expeditions to Falkland Islands to collect penguin, seabird and waterfowl eggs for captive research projects
- ❑ Accomplished European First Breedings of the Black Browed Albatross and Palm Cockatoo
- ❑ Helped to train Snow Geese for the BBC nature documentary, "*Flight of the Snow Geese*" and trained King Penguins for Universal Studio's movie, "*Batman Returns*"

DUSTIN FOOTE is the General Curator at Sylvan Heights Bird Park. He came to Sylvan Heights from Ithaca, New York with an interest in birds instilled from an early age. His initial introduction to Sylvan Heights was as an Avian Husbandry & Management Program intern from Cornell University, where he graduated with a degree in Animal Science.

NOTE:

Questions regarding the Avian Program or the application process should be directed through email to ali@shwpark.com, or call Ali Lubbock at (252) 826-3186.