
The 2025 ZoosHiring.com Jobs Report

Trends, Salaries, and Hiring Data from 1,106 Job Postings

1,106

Jobs Tracked

147

Facilities

Dec

Peak Hiring Month

1,106 jobs tracked across 147 facilities in 2025

California and Texas tied for top hiring with 185 openings each

Peak hiring month: Dec with 139 new postings

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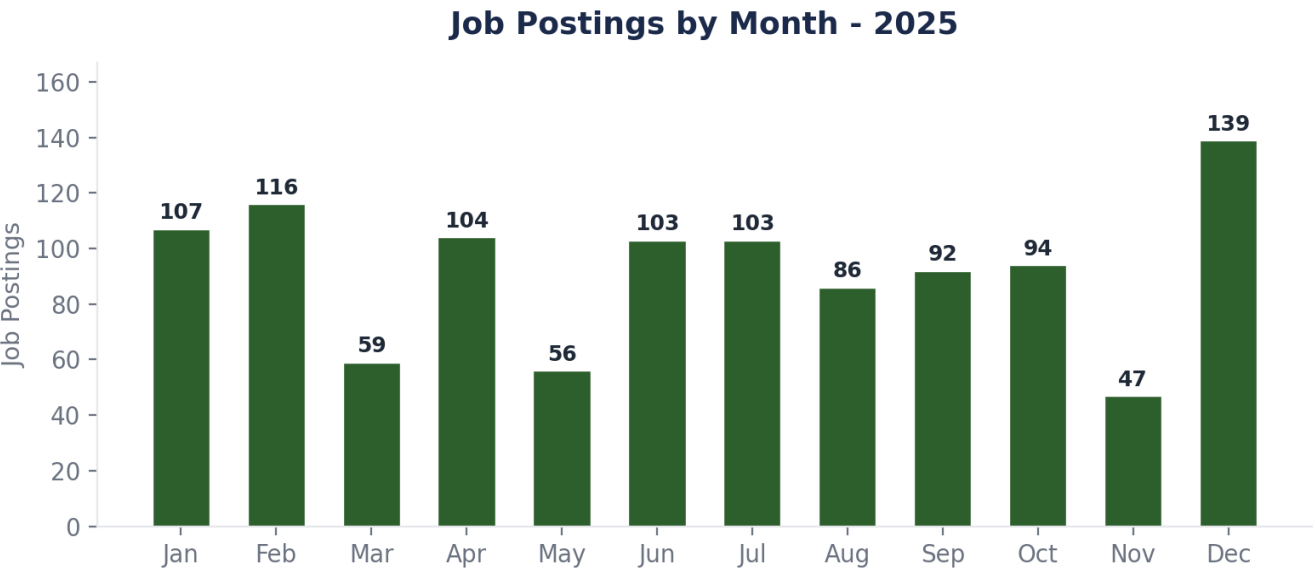
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Key Findings at a Glance

- We tracked **1,106 job postings** across **147 zoos and wildlife facilities** in 2025.
- **Zookeeper / Animal Keeper** roles were the most popular positions, with **387 postings** in 2025.
- **Dec** was the busiest hiring month with **139** new postings.
- **California, Texas, Florida** accounted for **45.0%** of all zoo job openings.
- **83 Director, Assistant Director, and VP-level roles** were posted across **34 facilities**, a sign of significant leadership transition across the industry.
- **17 C-suite postings** (CFOs, COOs, Executive Directors) suggest a generational changing of the guard at many institutions.
- The majority of positions are **full-time roles**. Part-time opportunities are more common in non-direct animal care departments such as education, guest services, and retail.

Section 1: Hiring Volume & Seasonality

In 2025, ZoosHiring.com tracked **1,106 job postings** across the zoo and wildlife industry. Hiring activity showed notable variation throughout the year, with clear seasonal patterns that job seekers and employers alike can use to their advantage.



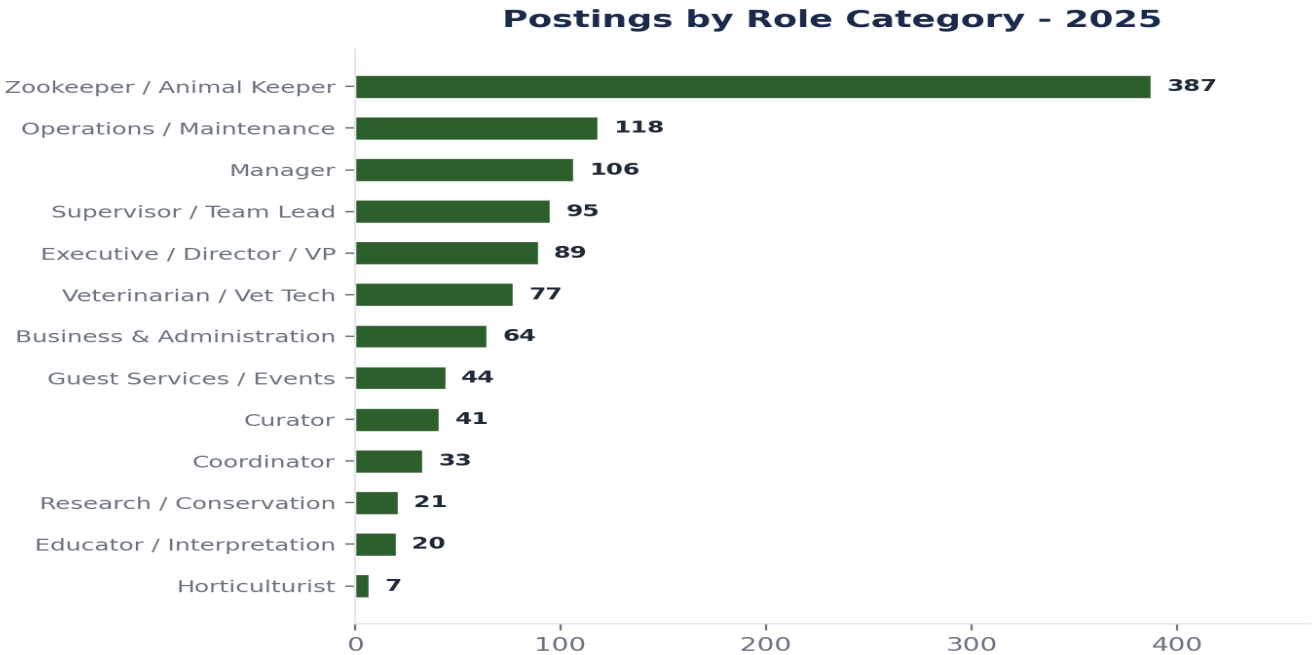
Dec saw the highest volume of new postings (139), while **Nov** had the fewest (47). The data shows that hiring tends to peak in Q1 and Q4 as institutions prepare for the new year and seasonal openings. Consistent posting through mid-year months (June–August) suggests year-round demand for permanent staff.

Actionable Insights

- For Job Seekers:** Start applying in January and February to catch the early-year surge. By spring, many positions are already filled or deep in the interview process. December also shows a surge as institutions post for upcoming year positions.
- For Employers:** Posting early in the cycle gives you access to the strongest candidate pool. Listings posted in off-peak months like Nov face less competition for candidate attention.

Section 2: Most In-Demand Roles

We categorized all 1,106 job postings into role categories based on title keywords. Note that some jobs may fall into multiple categories, and roles without clear keyword matches are not categorized below.



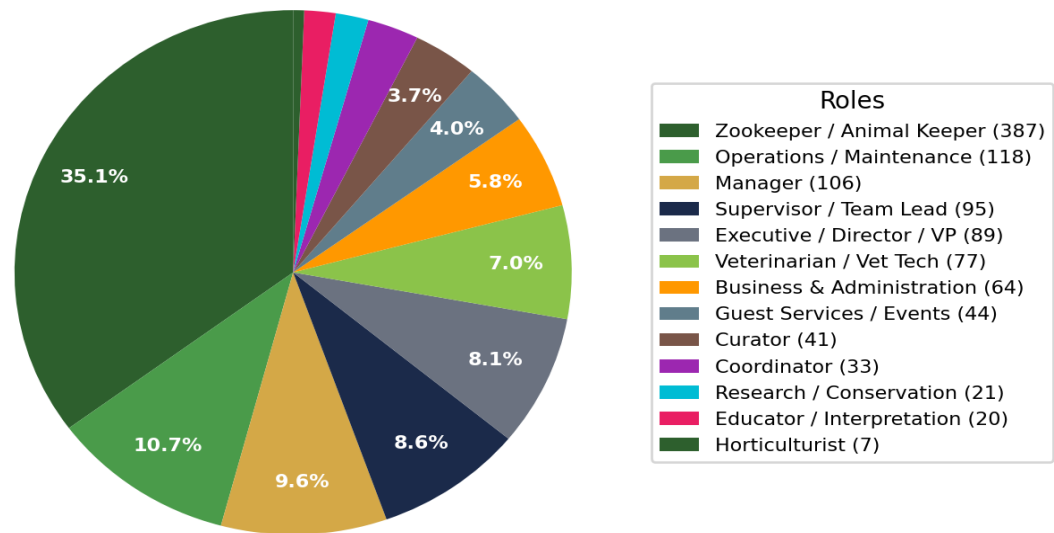
Role Category	Postings	% of Total
Zookeeper / Animal Keeper	387	35.0%
Operations / Maintenance	118	10.7%
Manager	106	9.6%
Supervisor / Team Lead	95	8.6%
Executive / Director / VP	89	8.0%
Veterinarian / Vet Tech	77	7.0%
Business & Administration	64	5.8%
Guest Services / Events	44	4.0%
Curator	41	3.7%
Coordinator	33	3.0%
Research / Conservation	21	1.9%
Educator / Interpretation	20	1.8%
Horticulturist	7	0.6%

Leadership and organizational roles span multiple tiers: **Executive / Director / VP** (89), **Managers** (106), **Supervisors / Team Leads** (95), and **Coordinators** (33), totaling 323 postings across these categories. **Zookeeper / Animal Keeper**, the most popular role in the field, came in with 387 postings.

***Insight:** If you're flexible on role type, operations, maintenance, and guest services roles often serve as entry points into zoo careers with pathways to animal care positions.*

Role Distribution

Role Category Breakdown - 2025



Leadership in Transition: Director, Assistant Director & VP-Level Hiring

One of the most striking findings in our 2025 data is the volume of senior leadership hiring. We tracked **83 Director, Assistant Director, and VP-level postings** across **34 facilities**, a signal that the zoo industry is undergoing significant leadership transition, driven by retirements, institutional growth, and organizational restructuring.

At the very top, **17 C-suite and executive roles** were posted in 2025, including Chief Financial Officers, Chief Operating Officers, Chief Philanthropy Officers, and Executive Directors. This level of executive turnover across the industry is notable and suggests a generational changing of the guard at many institutions.

Director, Assistant Director & VP Openings by Department

Department	Postings
Animal Care / Veterinary / Conservation	25
Facilities / Operations / Security	10
Other	8
Marketing / PR / Communications	8
Events / Guest Services / Revenue	8
Development / Fundraising	8

Department	Postings
Finance / Accounting	5
Executive / Operations	5
Human Resources	3
Horticulture / Grounds	3

Animal Care, Veterinary, and Conservation departments led the way with 25 director-level openings, reflecting the critical importance of these roles and the difficulty of filling them with qualified candidates. Meanwhile, business-side leadership (Marketing, Development, Finance, HR) collectively accounted for a significant share of openings, underscoring that modern zoos operate as complex nonprofit enterprises requiring diverse professional expertise.

States with the Most Leadership Openings

State	Postings
Florida	14
Texas	11
Pennsylvania	10
Illinois	8
Indiana	8
California	7
Tennessee	5
Georgia	3
Missouri	3
Virginia	3

Insight for Job Seekers: Senior professionals looking to move into zoo leadership should take note: the industry is actively seeking experienced leaders, and not just in animal care. Expertise in fundraising, marketing, finance, and operations is in high demand at major institutions.

Insight for Employers: With this many facilities competing for leadership talent simultaneously, institutions that offer competitive compensation, clear mission alignment, and professional development opportunities will have an edge in attracting top candidates.

Employment Type Overview

The vast majority of zoo industry postings (**95.1%**) are full-time positions. This includes roles across the spectrum: zookeepers and animal care specialists, veterinarians and vet techs, curators and directors, maintenance and operations staff, horticulturists, educators, and administrative professionals.

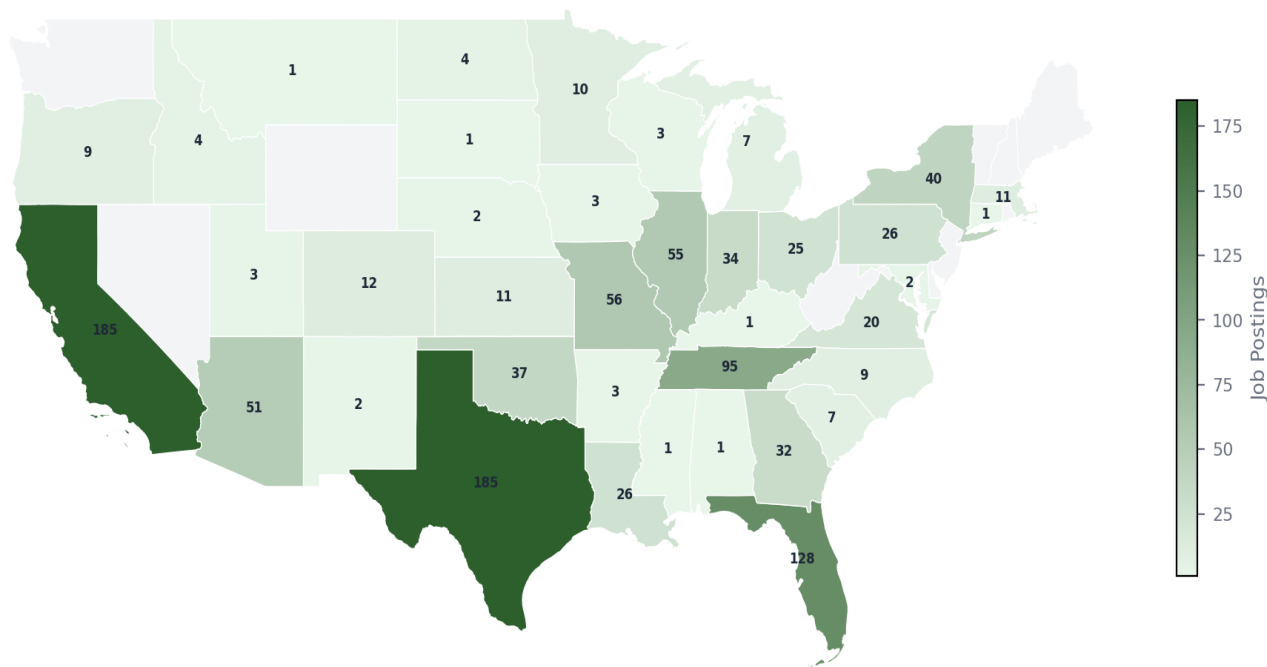
Part-time roles appear most often in guest-facing and education departments, including positions such as educator guides, tour interpreters, wild encounter teams, and reservation staff. These roles can serve as valuable entry points for candidates looking to break into the zoo field.

Seasonal positions peak around summer programming, particularly camp counselor and camp lead roles, as well as animal care extern positions tied to the busy visitor season (typically May through October). Internship and fellowship opportunities, while fewer in number, tend to be posted in Q4 for the following summer, primarily by larger accredited institutions.

Section 3: Where the Jobs Are

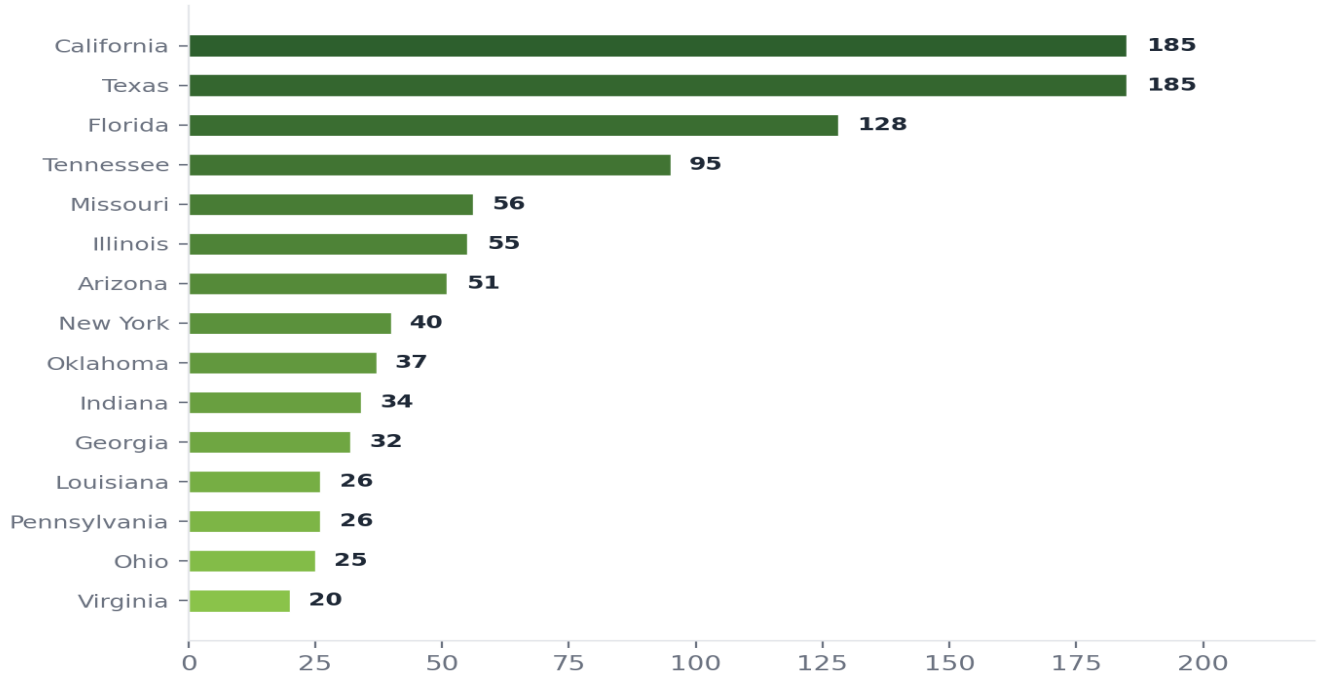
Zoo jobs are concentrated in states with large metropolitan areas and established zoological institutions. **California** and **Texas** tied for the lead, followed by **Florida**.

Zoo Job Postings by State - 2025



Note: Map shows continental US only. Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico are excluded for display purposes; no job postings were recorded in those regions in 2025.

Top 15 States by Job Volume - 2025



Top 15 States by Job Volume

Rank	State	Jobs Posted
1	California	185
2	Texas	185
3	Florida	128
4	Tennessee	95
5	Missouri	56
6	Illinois	55
7	Arizona	51
8	New York	40
9	Oklahoma	37
10	Indiana	34
11	Georgia	32
12	Louisiana	26
13	Pennsylvania	26
14	Ohio	25

Rank	State	Jobs Posted
15	Virginia	20

For Job Seekers: Don't sleep on the Midwest. States like **Missouri** and **Illinois** had significant openings, and facilities in these regions are home to some of the most respected conservation programs in the country. If you're open to relocating, expanding your search geographically is one of the easiest ways to find more opportunity.

For Employers: Facilities outside major metro areas often offer something larger zoos can't: more hands-on animal time, faster career growth, and the chance to work across multiple departments. Leading with these in your job postings can help attract candidates who might otherwise default to bigger-name facilities.

Section 4: Salary Snapshot

We extracted salary information from **523 postings** that included compensation data in their descriptions. The table below shows salary ranges by role category, normalized to annual figures (hourly rates converted at 2,080 hours/year).

Role	Sample Size	Low End	High End	Avg. Midpoint
Zookeeper / Animal Keeper	189	\$22,000	\$115,283	\$45,239
Operations / Maintenance	54	\$27,040	\$114,046	\$53,776
Executive / Director / VP	40	\$60,000	\$260,000	\$116,116
Supervisor / Team Lead	40	\$34,270	\$100,983	\$55,810
Manager	39	\$45,000	\$175,310	\$75,200
Business & Administration	32	\$29,120	\$108,162	\$59,269
Veterinarian / Vet Tech	31	\$36,774	\$215,289	\$80,401
Coordinator	24	\$33,280	\$98,155	\$54,947
Curator	24	\$50,633	\$138,010	\$74,873
Educator / Interpretation	14	\$27,040	\$66,689	\$40,707
Guest Services / Events	13	\$29,120	\$53,373	\$36,799

Hourly Rate Samples

Of the 523 postings with salary data, **312** listed hourly rates. Hourly rates ranged from **\$11.00/hr** to **\$125.00/hr**.

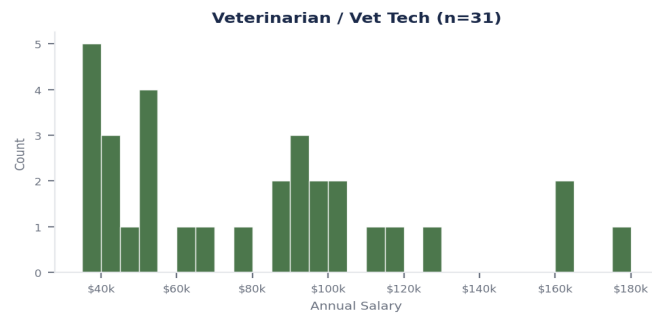
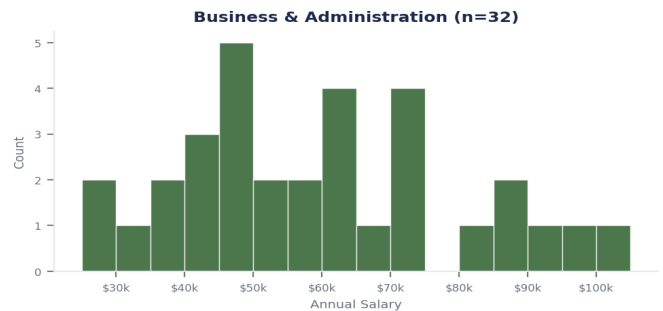
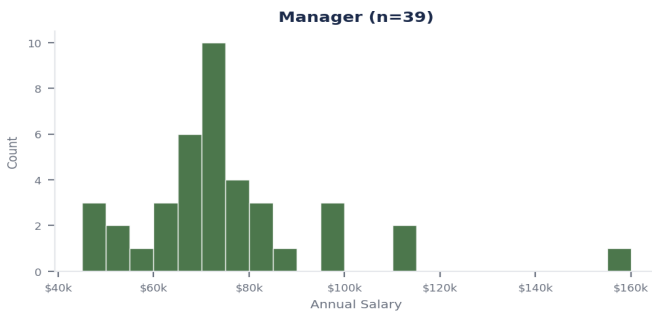
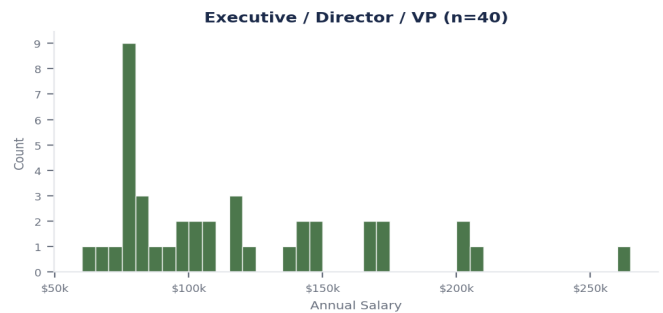
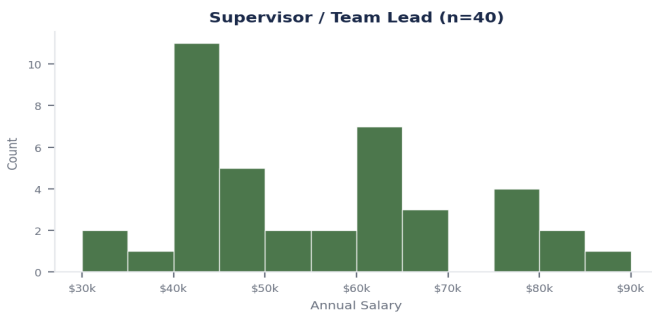
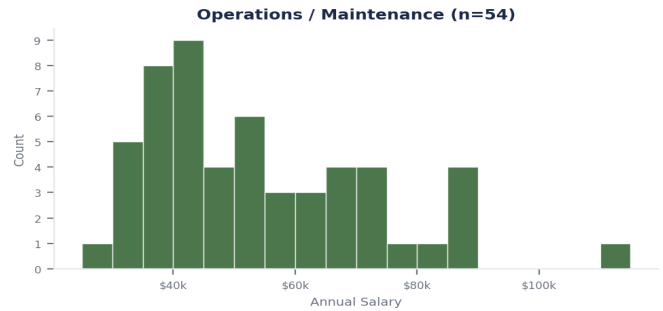
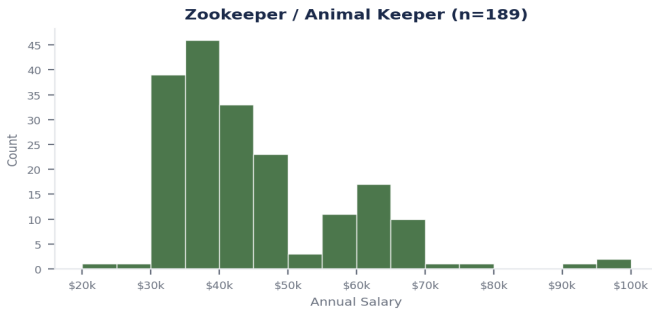
Role	Postings	Hourly Range	Avg. Hourly
Zookeeper / Animal Keeper	155	\$11.00 - \$41.36	\$20.83
Operations / Maintenance	46	\$13.00 - \$54.83	\$25.23
Coordinator	17	\$16.00 - \$37.13	\$25.25
Veterinarian / Vet Tech	17	\$17.68 - \$45.50	\$25.67
Supervisor / Team Lead	16	\$16.50 - \$33.22	\$24.03
Guest Services / Events	13	\$14.00 - \$25.66	\$17.69
Educator / Interpretation	12	\$13.00 - \$30.12	\$18.42
Business & Administration	11	\$14.00 - \$29.99	\$19.77
Manager	6	\$23.35 - \$60.00	\$32.48

Role	Postings	Hourly Range	Avg. Hourly
Executive / Director / VP	3	\$70.00 - \$125.00	\$92.67

Note: Salary data is based on postings that included compensation information in their descriptions. Many postings do not list salary, so these figures represent a subset of the market. Actual compensation may vary based on experience, location, and institution type.

Salary Distributions by Role

The charts below show the distribution of salary midpoints (average of posted min and max) in \$5,000 buckets for roles with 30 or more salary data points. Hourly rates are annualized at 2,080 hours/year.



How to Read These Charts

Each histogram shows how many job postings fall into each \$5,000 salary bucket. Taller bars mean more postings at that pay level. A tight cluster means most employers are offering similar compensation; a wide spread suggests the role varies significantly by institution size, location, or seniority level.

Zookeeper / Animal Keeper

The largest dataset in the report (n=189). Salaries cluster heavily between **\$30,000 and \$50,000**, with the median at **\$41,226**. The middle 50% of postings fall between **\$35,880 and \$49,379**. A secondary cluster appears around \$55,000 to \$70,000, likely representing senior keeper positions or facilities in higher cost-of-living areas. Outliers above \$90,000 are rare and typically reflect broad pay bands (e.g. Keeper I through III posted as a single listing).

Operations / Maintenance

A broad distribution reflecting the wide variety of roles in this category (n=54), from custodians and groundskeepers to HVAC technicians and life support specialists. The median is **\$48,885**, but the spread is wide: the middle 50% ranges from **\$39,900 to \$66,238**. Specialized technical roles (life support systems, facilities engineers) command significantly higher pay than general maintenance positions.

Supervisor / Team Lead

Supervisors show two distinct clusters (n=40): one around **\$40,000 to \$50,000** and another around **\$60,000 to \$70,000**. The median is **\$54,413**. The lower cluster likely represents team leads at smaller facilities or in guest services, while the upper cluster reflects supervisors at larger institutions or in specialized departments like animal care.

Executive / Director / VP

The widest salary range of any category (n=40), spanning from **\$60,000 to over \$260,000**. The median is **\$102,488**, but this number masks enormous variation. A notable cluster sits around **\$75,000 to \$85,000**, representing directors at smaller or mid-sized facilities. At the upper end, VP and C-suite roles at major metropolitan zoos regularly exceed \$150,000. This reflects the gap between a director at a small regional zoo and a vice president at a large urban institution.

Manager

Managers show a relatively tight distribution (n=39), with most salaries concentrated between **\$65,000 and \$80,000**. The median is **\$72,320** and the middle 50% falls between **\$65,260 and \$80,375**. This is the most predictable salary category in the report, suggesting that manager-level compensation is relatively standardized across the industry.

Business & Administration

A wide and fairly flat distribution (n=32), reflecting the diversity of roles captured in this category: administrative assistants, HR specialists, IT professionals, and accounting staff. The median is **\$57,095**, but salaries range from under \$30,000 for entry-level administrative support to over \$100,000 for senior business professionals.

Veterinarian / Vet Tech

This category shows a clear bimodal distribution (n=31), with one cluster around **\$35,000 to \$55,000** (vet techs) and another around **\$85,000 to \$130,000** (veterinarians). The median is **\$76,565**, but that number is misleading because it falls between the two groups. This is really two distinct salary tiers: vet techs earning roughly \$35,000 to \$55,000, and veterinarians earning \$85,000 and up. The highest postings (above \$150,000) represent senior or head veterinarian positions at major facilities.

Section 5: Predictions for 2026

Based on the trends observed in 2025, here are our predictions for the zoo hiring landscape in 2026:

1. Leadership turnover will create ripple effects

With 83 director/VP roles and 17 C-suite positions posted in 2025, the industry is in the midst of a generational leadership transition. New leaders will bring fresh perspectives on conservation strategy, revenue models, and visitor engagement, but institutions will need strong succession planning to maintain momentum through these transitions.

2. Animal care roles will remain highly competitive

With 387 keeper-related postings in 2025, demand for qualified animal care professionals shows no signs of slowing. We expect continued strong posting volume, particularly from major accredited facilities expanding their collections and programs.

3. Texas and California will continue to lead in zoo hiring

Both states tied at 185 postings in 2025 and show no signs of declining. With multiple large accredited institutions driving demand, these states will remain the top markets for zoo professionals.

4. Salary transparency will increase

Of our 1,106 postings, 523 included salary information. As competition for talent intensifies and state pay transparency laws expand, we expect more facilities to include compensation ranges in their listings, a trend that benefits both job seekers and employers.

5. Business-side talent will be in higher demand

Zoo leadership openings in 2025 spanned far beyond animal care. Marketing, fundraising, finance, and HR roles all saw significant director-level hiring. As zoos evolve into complex nonprofit enterprises, professionals from outside the traditional zoo pipeline will find growing opportunities to contribute their expertise.

This report was produced by **ZoosHiring.com** using data from **1,106+** job postings tracked across **147+** facilities in 2025.

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