



Managing animal husbandry globally

By: Robin James, Senior Curator

Institution: Merlin Entertainments, SEA LIFE, UK

Good animal husbandry is essential to the health and longevity of aquarium animals. It results in fewer issues, the need to collect fewer animals, and a better chance that animals may breed and help to sustain captive populations. To ensure good husbandry it is vital to invest in the training and development of curatorial staff.

The number of aquariums in the SEA LIFE group has increased from 27 in 2008 to about 40 in 2012. These aquariums are no longer just based in Europe but are spread around the world. How can we ensure best practice in animal husbandry across the entire group? This presentation will describe the early stages of developing a system to enable curatorial staff in all SEA LIFE aquariums to share best practices and resources relating to animal care. Topics range from disease control to data analysis, training, development of manuals and collection plans, supplier choices and sustainability. A wide variety of communications approaches are being employed to ensure that resources are available at every site. These range from distributing hard copies of materials to making specialist expertise available via Skype and web-based instruction/training.