There are many avenues to choose from among marine careers: animal training, education, research, veterinary care, stranding networks, conservation groups and wildlife studies to mention just a few. As you explore your opportunities to work in one of these marine fields, you may find that working with marine animals becomes your ambition and goal.

A career as a marine mammal trainer is both challenging and rewarding. Like many other professions, it is a very competitive field, requiring a great deal of persistence and dedication. Here is some information that will help you discover what further skills and education you should pursue should you choose to follow this career path.

Prior animal experience is another attribute that is definitely a plus when applying for a training position with marine mammals. This doesn't necessarily mean previous marine mammal work, but may include such things as dog or horse training, volunteer work at a zoo or aquarium, or veterinary assistant experience.

If you live near an ocean coast, call your local marine mammal stranding network and volunteer to assist with marine mammal strandings. All these activities can familiarize a person with aspects of caring for animals.
**Good Physical Health**

Marine mammal training is a physically active job and the moving and handling of marine mammals and their food is strenuous work. A good physical health and athletic ability are essential. Additional certifications in scuba diving, lifesaving, or other physical activities are assets to include on your resume.

**Public Speaking**

The ability to address the public is a valuable tool to acquire. Trainers are responsible for narrating various presentations to the public, such as educational lectures or encounter programs. They also deal a great amount directly with the guests, answering questions, assisting with problems and most of all, always being courteous and friendly. Many times trainers take part in special presentations for school children, individuals with special needs or VIP guests.

**Relocation**

Depending upon the facility to which you apply, the flexibility to relocate may be preferred. Some facilities have several parks and may transfer trainers periodically.

Also, because of the limited number of marine facilities, position openings at any given facility will be rare and infrequent. Thus, it may be to your advantage to consider applying to facilities beyond your local area, even internationally.

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**What organizations are recommended to join for more information?**

Depending on your interests, there are a number of organizations that offer information helpful for a marine career.

Membership to the International Marine Animal Trainers Association (IMATA) includes four periodicals called “Soundings” with articles on animal training, education, conservation issues and listing of available internships and job openings.

IMATA also hosts an annual conference in which trainers and educators from all over the world gather to present papers on topics relevant to the training and care of their marine mammals. Proceedings listing the topics covered at the conference are available to all members.

Other organizations that may prove helpful for career opportunities would include the National Marine Educators Association (NMEA), the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks & Aquariums (AMMPA), the American Zoological Association (AZA), and the Internation Association of Aquatic Animal Medicine (IAAAM).

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**What other considerations are important in pursuing a marine mammal career?**

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**The Internet:**

**Interested In A Career In Marine Sciences? You’re In The Right Place!**

The website of marinecareers.net will introduce you to a wide range of marine career fields and to people working in those fields. In addition, it will give those men and women a chance to tell you what they like and dislike about their careers, what they see in the future in their fields, and much more. This site will also provide you with some experts’ views on what the future holds for marine science careers.

**www.marinecareers.net**

In recent years, the Internet has developed into a valuable resource for education and career information. Take the plunge and surf the Web through the trusted websites we have listed below!

**www.marinemammalogy.org**

**www.marine-ed.org**

**www.ammpa.org**

**www.iaaam.org**

**www.imata.org**

**www.aza.org**

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**Are you ready for the challenge?**

A career in marine mammal training offers an exciting and unique opportunity to work with some of the world's most fascinating and intelligent creatures. With a limited number of positions available world-wide, a person should also explore other careers that offer opportunities to work with these animals — such as veterinary care or conservation management of wild marine mammals in their natural habitat. Good luck in all your efforts!!!

Dolphin Encounters
Education Department
Email: education@dolphinencounters.com