

Trainee Keeper at Auckland Zoo

We're *bringing*
the Zoo to you!



Watch this video to learn about
the training in this workbook.
You can print off this pack or use
it as a digital guide for the tasks.





Learn more
about this
task here!

Have you ever wanted to work at Auckland Zoo as one of our amazing zookeepers?



Read about the
Science of Care here

Well, here is your opportunity to become a keeper for the day!

The hardworking team of keepers at Auckland Zoo are always considering what our different animal species need to be healthy.

We use the Science of Care approach to ensure that we cover all aspects of health for our animals - from their diet, environment and even behaviour.

Go through the stages of our at-home Keeper Training Camp and learn more about each of these areas to become a Trainee Keeper at Auckland Zoo - you can then share what you have learnt with us or your friends and whānau.

Inside are different tasks to be completed as you practice becoming a part of the ectotherm* team at Auckland Zoo.

You will get to know the honu whenua nui (Galápagos tortoise) and learn how to care for these gentle giants!

*Ectotherm species need help from their external environment to regulate their body temperature.



Start your training off by *learning* more about Galápagos tortoises



Learn more
about this
task here!



Watch the start of our video to learn more
about Galápagos tortoises or read about the
species on our website

Welcome to the ectotherm team! Are you as excited as we are?

To start off with, you will gather information about the Galápagos tortoises to help improve your understanding of this ectotherm species.

Watch our keeper talk to learn more about the species and how we use the Science of Care to look after them. You can also read more about Galápagos tortoises by using the QR code to visit our website.

Think about what information you may need to do your job as a keeper, caring for these animals each day.

You might ask questions such as:

What do they eat? Where do they live?
What adaptations* do they have to thrive
in their environment?

Fill in the KWL (*Know - Wonder - Learn*)
below, or make your own chart, to let
us know what you learn along the way.



What I already KNOW	What I WANT to know/ What I am WONDERING about	What I have LEARNT

***Adaptations** a body part, feature or behaviour that helps an animal or plant succeed in it's environment.



Learn more
about this
task here!

Next, get creative and try *drawing* the Galápagos tortoises to learn about their different *body parts*

Now that we know a lot more about Galápagos tortoises and their adaptations, we need to learn what they look like to be able to do their daily health checks (following the Science of Care “health” aspect).

Every day as keepers, we need to make sure we carefully observe the animals to see if they require any extra attention or maybe even vet care. As keepers we look at how they are moving, eating and even look at their feet and shell!

Complete this activity and learn about important physical features of the Galápagos tortoise

There are two different shell shapes of Galapagos tortoises, and this is based on the food they have access to in their habitat on different islands.

Those with domed shells find their food down low near or on the ground, while those with saddleback shells find their food up higher. The Galapagos tortoises at Auckland Zoo have a domed shell.

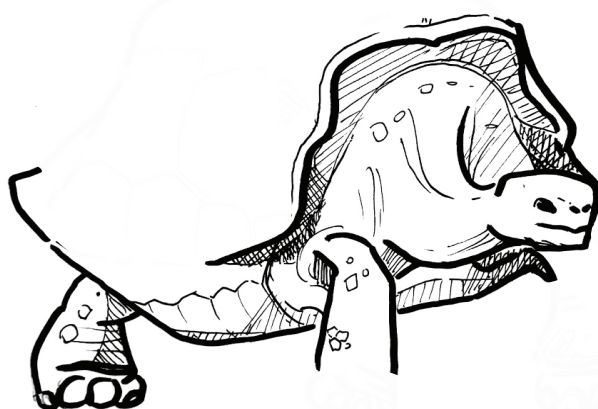
Draw the big, rounded shell on your Galápagos tortoise.

The shell of a Galápagos tortoise forms part of their skeleton, is a similar texture to honeycomb and is sensitive to touch. Tortoise shells are made up specialised, bony plates called “scutes”.

Draw the scales on the body and scutes on the shell of the Galapagos tortoise shell.

Galápagos tortoises are a similar colour to their surrounding habitat (camouflage).

Observe the Galápagos tortoises in our video and colour your Galápagos tortoise in the same colours.



Tortoises have four feet (and not flippers) as they are land based. Galápagos tortoises’ feet turn inwards slightly to help support their weight.

Draw the remaining legs and feet of your Galápagos tortoise.



Learn more
about this
task here!

Keep that zookeeper creativity flowing and *create* a Galápagos tortoise habitat of your own!



Watch our keeper cam of the Galápagos tortoise habitat to help you with this task

Now we are going to design a new habitat for the Galápagos tortoise group at Auckland Zoo!

We will have to make sure it has everything they need as part of the “environment” aspect of Science of Care.

Follow our design brief outlined below to make your model habitat- you could draw it,

use items from around your house to build it or make it out of recycled products (get creative!). Make sure you explain all of the features you include in the habitat too.

To get some ideas, you can watch the keeper cam of the baby Galápagos tortoises at the zoo to see how they move in their current habitat.

Design Brief:

- You need to design a space for our four adult Galápagos tortoises as well as our four young Galápagos tortoises
- Galápagos tortoises are the largest tortoise species so they need room to manoeuvre around their habitat
- They need sandy areas to lay their eggs
- As ectotherms, they need to have a constant heat source to regulate their body temperature as well as areas to cool down on hot days
- They need areas to sleep (they can do this for up to 16 hours a day), eat and take shelter.

Draw a sketch of your design here:



Learn more
about this
task here!

Now it is time to *develop* a Galápagos tortoise conditioning exercise

Well done on getting this far through your training!

Next we have to work on getting our Galápagos tortoises ready for a weigh in. This ties into our “behaviour” and “health” aspects of our Science of Care.

Our Galápagos tortoises weigh between 140-250 kilograms! This means we cannot pick them up to place them on the scales. Your job is to design something to help get the Galápagos tortoises onto the scales or create a training activity to condition the Galápagos tortoises to move onto the scales on their own.

Design Brief:

- Needs to be safe for the animals and keepers
- Consider the use of their favourite food (flowers/fruit) as encouragement
- Make sure it can be done in their habitat
- Consider their size and movement

Draw a sketch of your design here:



Watch this video to see how our ectotherm keeper solved the problem of x-raying one of our Galápagos tortoises.



Learn more
about this
task here!

Finally, spend some time *thinking* about some conservation actions you could take to help our ectotherms in Aotearoa



Follow the QR code for an explanation of how to create your tracking tunnel and to work out the different animal tracks

Now for a really important part of your job as a keeper: *Protecting* ectotherms in Aotearoa with some Wild Work action!

Many ectotherms in Aotearoa, such as skinks, geckos and tuatara, have similar threats to wild Galápagos tortoises.

Introduced pests, such as rats, possums and stoats destroy their natural habitat as well as preying on them.

As part of your keeper training, you are going to monitor what species you have in your own local environment. By creating a tracking tunnel, you will assess whether you have endemic species that you need to protect (pal/friend) or introduced species that you need to monitor (pest/foe).

Use this table to track your findings!

Pests	Pals	Other/unidentified tracks

TRAINEE KEEPER EXPERIENCE

Congratulations

*You have completed your training
and are now well-equipped to be a Trainee Keeper
for Galápagos tortoises at Auckland Zoo!*

Share what you have learnt with your whānau
as well as with us at Auckland Zoo!

[#createwithaucklandzoo](#)



Write or draw any important thoughts you have below.

What was your favourite part of your training? What important information did you learn? What animal would you like to study next?

Video links:

Trainee Keeper for Galápagos tortoise <https://bit.ly/3JLIKZs>

Galápagos tortoise <https://bit.ly/3rlUwDF>

Galápagos tortoise keeper cam <https://bit.ly/3uiA5cl>

Galápagos tortoise x-ray <https://bit.ly/3glbXOh>

Make your own tracking tunnels <https://bit.ly/3HvIDly>

