

## The Scientists



### Virginia Goff Andrews

From the age of 7, I knew that I wanted to become a scientist. At first I was only interested in rocks (and thinking of becoming a geologist one day) but a trip to Western Australia soon changed my mind. Hanging out with all the critters along the WA coastline (snorkelling along the reef, feeding the dolphins at Monkey Mia and heading out in boats) convinced me that I wanted to be a marine biologist and from that day, I didn't consider being anything else.

I studied Marine, Freshwater and Antarctic Biology at the University of Tasmania, which allowed me to study and develop an interest in all areas of marine biology. I finished my degree with an honours year working on Little penguins and Short-tailed shearwaters on an island off the Tasmanian coast. My degree had sparked my interest in all things Antarctic and developed a passion for field work, so when the opportunity came up to do some work on the Aurora Australis for 10 weeks, I leaped at the chance.

My first trip to Antarctica affirmed that I wanted to be an Antarctic Biologist so I explored the possibility of doing a PhD. I now study Weddell seals at two locations in the Antarctic- the Australian station Davis and the French station Dumont d'Urville. In particular, I study the winter foraging range of Weddell seals- an aspect of Weddell seal behaviour that there is currently little knowledge of.

I hope in the future to continue research within the field of marine biology, studying the foraging ecology of a whole range of species. I find this work stimulating and exciting- continuously learning new and surprising things about the animals you

work on coupled with the opportunity to work in amazing places (such as Antarctica) and on issues that are important to society today (such as global climate change) makes my occupation one that I will never be bored of.