



national science week 2014

Amy Edwards

Zoologist

“Why? Why? Why?” This is the question that my parents heard every day. And “Why” led to “How?” and “How come?” and “Why not?”

I wanted answers. I still have that passion, that desire to find the answer. That is why I became a scientist.

I enjoyed high school, in particular chemistry, physics and mathematics. But I lived in a rural area in Far North Queensland and it was a difficult decision to move to Brisbane to attend the University of Queensland to undertake a Bachelor of Science, majoring in zoology and ecology. While it was a hard decision to make, it is one that neither I nor my family regret in any way, because it was the start of my science career.



Before I knew it, graduation came and there was only one thing left to do- enrol in an Honours project in zoology. I spent the next year, living with 250 eastern grey kangaroos in South-western Queensland. I undertook an investigation into how and when these fantastic animals look for predators. When the hard work and fun times had again come to the end at the completion of my honours year I was left wondering where my next adventure might be. I spent the next two years working as a research assistant in a genetics laboratory and teaching first year biology at the University of Queensland and this was when I realised that I had a passion for breeding captive animals and for conservation.



The hard yards that I put in during my undergraduate and honours degrees paid off when I was offered an Elite scholarship to undertake my PhD project at the University of Tasmania. I am now researching sex allocation, which can simply be described as the factors that influence whether a baby becomes a boy or a girl. This has great implications for captive breeding

and conservation programs, as often there is a sex bias in the captive population and we need to understand the reasons behind this so we can correct it. I work with mice and sugar gliders in Tasmania, and also with Damaraland mole rats in South Africa. I enjoy overseas travel and exploring new places and cannot wait for the never-ending opportunities that a career in science offers.

For more information: www.utas.edu.au/zoology

www.YoungTassieScientists.com