

national science week 2015

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I was actually a country kid growing up and it was not until my family moved to Sydney that I was able to learn about the marine environment. My favourite classes were Marine Studies and Biology where I scored high marks and found that dissecting specimens and running experiments was my passion. I was accepted into a marine environment degree at the Australian Maritime College in Launceston, and my love of all things 'fish' grew.



As I explored the different avenues, such as policy, management and research, I discovered that all I wanted to do was conduct experiments and be out on a boat collecting samples.

The main person who nurtured this was my Honours research supervisor, David Maynard (now Curator of Natural Sciences at the QVMAG). His enthusiasm and passion for fisheries research showed me that the sky is the limit. I also discovered the one thing that surprised me the most, which is a serious love of conducting statistical analyses. Once I completed my honours year, I received two awards from the University of Tasmania, and was offered a chance to continue into postgraduate research my dream come true!



I am currently in the final stages of completing my PhD project in Fisheries Research where I have examined the use of artificial light as a bycatch reduction device (BRD) in commercial prawn trawl fisheries. Bycatch are the fish that are returned to the ocean after getting caught. I have also studied what factors influence whether a fish can escape a trawl net (fish vision and maximum swim speed). My research has been multidisciplinary and allowed me to develop techniques in the lab, on fishing vessels and with live fish in tanks. The issue of discarding bycatch species is a global issue and I hope to take the skills I have developed in Tasmania and help commercial fisheries to become more sustainable. Once I have completed my PhD, I hope that my qualifications allow me to travel and see the world.

Pursuing a life of science is the best choice I have ever made.

For further information: www.imas.utas.edu.au