

WHO ARE THE PEOPLE

INVOLVED IN MARINE ANIMAL RESEARCH?



Michele Thums

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PROFESSIONAL

PERSONAL

Top-level responsibilities

Scientific research into the movement and distribution of important marine megafauna (eg marine mammals, sea turtles and sharks), including threats to them, in northern Australia.

Day-to-day work and skills

Some work takes me into the field, where I work on boats and on shore to survey the animals, using satellite tracking devices. Mostly I am at my desk, analysing the data I and others collect. I use my statistics and data analysis skills to model, map and plot the data for environmental managers. They use it to manage human activities in the areas where these animals live.

“ WHEN I GREW UP I KNEW I WANTED TO BE ...

A zookeeper! I used to be a zookeeper in the marine mammals section of Sydney's Taronga Zoo. After backpacking in Africa, I decided to become a zoologist.

Current location or community

I live in Perth now, but grew up in Sydney. My parents are from Austria.

My interests and hobbies

I love being out in nature, either bushwalking, kayaking or diving, and also gardening and growing my own food.


I am passionate about ...

Our world – respecting, understanding and protecting it.

What I would say to 16-year-old me

Be confident in who you are and don't let anyone drag you down. Also remember to make time for **your family, because it is so important.**

My PhD was on the foraging (food searching) strategies of southern elephant seals. To study them, I spent one year on a sub-Antarctic island.



I left school after Year 10 to work in a wildlife park, then worked at Taronga Zoo.

After realising that I wanted to be a zoologist, I did HSC at night school and then went to university.

I did a Bachelor of Science with Honours at university, then a PhD in zoology/ marine ecology.

To get a job like mine you need to have a PhD, as it teaches you all the skills you need, including the very important one of problem-solving.