

## Careers in Water Callie Nickolai

From tracking bilbies in Roxby Downs to wetland monitoring in the Riverland, Callie's career has opened the door to some of the best sites of South Australia.

With a passion for the environment and a desire to work outdoors, Callie has cultivated her dream career in wetland management. After completing Year 12 at Loxton High School, Callie enrolled into a Bachelor of Natural Resource Management through the University of Adelaide, graduating in 2006. "I got my first job in the sector just after I finished my degree. I had three weeks to study for two exams, so felt I had time to do a week's work experience somewhere. I had already done work experience at Banrock Station, the Department for Environment and bilby tracking with at Roxby Downs, so I felt that Natural Resources SAMDB was the next place to go".

An initial short-term contract role at Natural Resources SAMDB, lead to a more permanent move and nine years later Callie still holds the position of Wetlands Project Officer.

"My role is highly variable week to week, month to month; which is what I love about the job.



### Career pathway fast facts

**Position:** Wetlands Project Officer – Natural Resources SAMDB

**Schooling:** Completed Year 12 at Loxton High School .

**Qualifications:** Bachelor of Natural Resource Management and Certificate IV in Ecotourism.

**Pathway:** From school, Callie completed a Degree in Natural Resources Management and relevant industry work-experience.

**Future plans:** Continuing to have hands-on involvement in wetland management and engagement with the community.



# NRM Education

Supporting environmental sustainability in schools.

The majority of our fieldwork is conducted between September and March, which includes monitoring fish, frogs, vegetation, birds, water quality and groundwater. The fieldwork can often involve long days, either starting early to avoid the heat of the day, or working nights to conduct frog surveys”.

“A large component of the job is also engaging with community groups and landholders with this monitoring. Working with the community groups is an aspect I really love, as it is great to work with volunteers who are as passionate about the wetlands as I am.

“I have seen many things in my job. I have literally seen the wetlands go through drought and flooding rains, which has been both hard and amazing processes to witness. The flood in 2011 was particularly incredible to see! We saw large numbers of water birds breeding in flooded wetlands; a sight we don’t see in managed wetlands or the river. And a memory that will always stick with me was witnessing the cannibalistic nature of the southern bell frog.

Prior to the floods, we would get excited about hearing one southern bell frog calling (as it is a nationally threatened species). During the floods we saw hundreds of them across many wetlands! At Overland Corner in particular, the flood water was up to the road and the southern bell frogs were crossing the road in their hundreds, and as some frogs got squashed on the road, others would come out to eat them!”

In fact, Callie loves her job so much, she wants to stay working in a similar role into the future. “When I first got the job, I always thought I would be a project officer for a few years and then work my way up the corporate ladder. However as time has gone on, I have come to realise that if I did that, I would not be out in the field as much as I am or have the connections with my wetland groups anymore. Therefore I would always see myself in a job that involves the environment (preferably wetlands) and community groups as that is where my passion lies.

For those considering a similar career, Callie thinks that work experience is a valuable asset. “When you are competing for jobs with other students straight out of university, the experience gained from work experience can be all the difference when applying for your first job in the sector.



Callie with a replica of Yatco Lagoon.



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