

Who are the women involved in STEM?

“ The most rewarding part of my job is knowing that I am contributing to the better management of endangered and invasive species.

Professional

Top-level responsibilities

Conduct environmental DNA (eDNA) monitoring of invasive and endangered species in northern Australia.

Day-to-day work and skills

Carry out fieldwork in tropical remote Australia; conduct laboratory work (extract eDNA from water samples and screen for different target species); analyse data; write scientific publications and reports; engage with stakeholders; present my work at conferences and meetings.

Personal

Current location and community

I live in Townsville, in Tropical North Queensland.

My interests and hobbies

I love bike-riding and going to the beach with my family.

I am passionate about

I am passionate about using genetics to answer real-life questions that can help resource management.

What I would say to 16-year-old me

Follow your heart and dream big, because everything is possible.



Cecilia Villacorta-Rath

Research Officer

James Cook University

I learnt to scuba-dive on a family holiday and instantly knew I wanted to work on something related to the ocean.

In Peru I studied a Bachelor of Science, majoring in fisheries. Then I travelled to Australia to study a Master in Marine Biology.

I monitored seagrass in central and north Queensland, riding in helicopters to do aerial seagrass surveys.

I did a PhD on genetic connectivity of the Southern rock lobster in southeast Australia.

In the future I would like to keep motivating people to take care of the environment and help manage resources sustainably.