

**SESSION: Marine Mammals****MARS Themes:**

Ecosystems, biodiversity and biodiscovery

**Title:**

The conveyor belt of Ross seals in the Lazarev Sea and their behaviour

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**Abstract:**

Ross seals (*Ommatophoca rossii*) are the least studied Antarctic seal, there are only a handful of publications on them and few Antarctic scientists have ever seen one. Ross seals also behave unlike any of the other pack-ice seals and travel away from the Antarctic continent to forage in the open ocean most of the year. When they haul out on the pack-ice, they prefer dense, consolidated ice, adding to the difficulties of finding and studying them. They are the only species listed as “Specially Protected Species” in the Antarctic Treaty System, mainly due to the lack of data about their abundance and biology. Over the last few years we have been collecting a steady stream of movement, diving, behavioural, diet and other data on this data deficient species. We are starting to tease out basic components of their ecology and physiology to understand how this species interacts with its environment. This talk will be an overview of the strides that we have made to date, the gaps and future perspectives on Ross seal research.

**Format:**

Oral Presentation (10 min)

**Keywords:** (add ; between keywords)

diving behaviour; sea ice; foraging behaviour; seal; diet