



IN THE CHILL OF THE NIGHT: 2009 Antarctic Weddell Seal Winter Expedition

<http://antarctica.ucsc.edu>

Notes from a remote Polar field site
(from Terrie M. Williams, PhD)

*Funded by the National Science Foundation -Division of Polar Program
Wings Worldquest Expedition Flag #23
Video, Photos and Text: Terrie Williams, Beau Richter, David Williams*

In 2001, under the constant sunlight of the Antarctic summer our research team explored the underwater world of Weddell seals as they hunted for fish below the polar ice. (see Related Links listed at end)



That discovery lead to an even larger question:

Using cameras worn by diving seals we discovered that the crafty seals took advantage of the sun to backlight fish and other seals, as well as find breathing holes as they hunted from the depths below.



A seal's eye view below the Antarctic sea ice. A Weddell seal wearing a camera (nose and whiskers at the bottom) looks up at another seal blocking a breathing hole in the ice. White sunlight at the hole backlights the other seal. The grey area is the under surface of the frozen sea near McMurdo, Antarctica. (Photo by Shaquille O'Seal)

If Weddell seals need light for seeing fish in the summer,

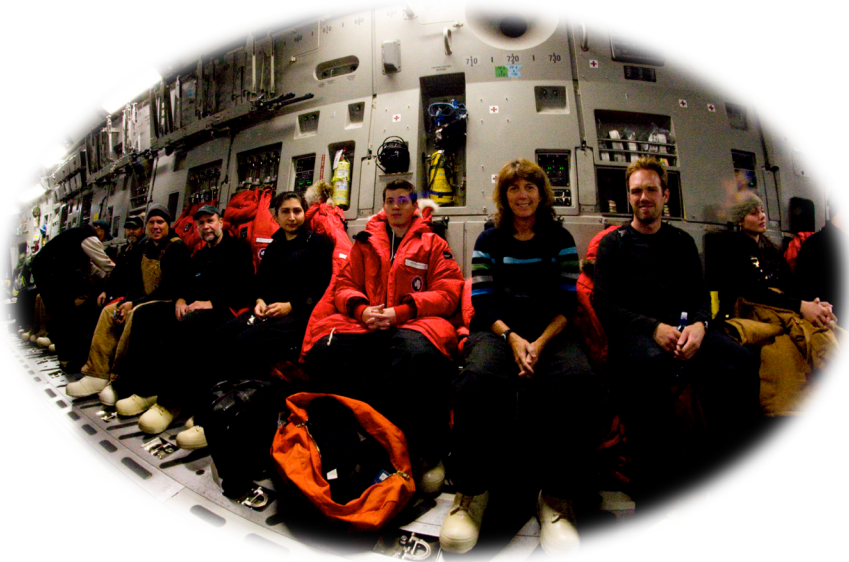


SUMMER



WINTER

how do they find fish to eat during the long, cold, dark winter months in Antarctica?



Our expedition members on the plane to Antarctica.

After eight years of planning, our research team is back on the ice to try to answer this question. Our goal is to discover how Weddell seals survive the most challenging season in one of the harshest environments on the planet.

Join us on our journey as we travel into the world of the Weddell seal in winter. Each week we will post our discoveries as the science unfolds on the polar sea ice. There is no predicting what will happen. From bone chilling temperatures and blinding snow to the eerie underwater calls and wild chases of diving seals - that is the thrill of Antarctic exploration you will experience with us.

Links and Contact Information

2009 Antarctic Weddell Seal Winter Expedition

Web Site: <http://antarctica.ucsc.edu>

Questions to our Antarctic research team on the ice: Contact Terrie Williams at williams@biology.ucsc.edu

Expedition funded by the National Science Foundation - Division of Polar Program
Video, Photos, and Text by Terrie Williams, Beau Richter, and David Williams

Previous Antarctic Expedition 2001

Web Site: <http://bio.research.ucsc.edu/people/williams/antarctic>

Book: The Hunters Breath by Terrie M. Williams, PhD
<http://www.amazon.com/Hunters-Breath-Expedition-Weddell-Antarctic/dp/1590770285>

All research/pictures on website and associated links and downloads are authorized under NMFS Permit No. 984-1814-02.