



What did you do at the Lighthouse ?

I studied the foraging range of shags using radio telemetry for my BSc Zoology Honours project in 1993/94. It involved long happy days sitting on cliff tops overlooking the Moray Firth with an antenna and launched a life-long love for seabirds and conservation inspired by Professor Sarah Wanless who supervised me with Paul Thompson. I also helped others on the Lighthouse team with seal and dolphin fieldwork. My honours project and experiences at the lighthouse set me on an exciting and diverse career path although as a woman I had some hurdles to jump along the way.

In my final years at Uni I was interested in jobs at the British Antarctic Survey (BAS), but was incredulous to see they still stipulated that applicants must be “single, under 35 and male”. But I was so determined to work for BAS, that I took a year off after graduating to gain more experience and hoped things would change. Thanks to my project at the Lighthouse, I secured a highly competitive position with the Point Reyes Bird Observatory in California, working on the Farallon Islands, followed by a masters at Durham Uni with a thesis on Manx Shearwaters at Skomer Island. In the meantime one of my fellow Lighthouse honours students, Robbie, who had been able to get a job at BAS, advised me that the rules were changing. I applied and landed a dream job studying penguins. Without my experiences at the Lighthouse I doubt the stars would have aligned.

What are you doing now ?

I'm Director of Environment and Science Coordination at the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO). I support IAATO in meeting environmental obligations arising from its mission for safe, responsible travel and the Antarctic Treaty System. My Antarctic career began in 1996 studying penguins for BAS which sparked a passion for understanding how human activity in Antarctica is managed. In 2002, I was stationed on a tiny island that received visitors from IAATO vessels, my first experience of tourism. I was so struck by IAATO's careful management of operations, the reverence shown for Antarctica and the infectious enthusiasm of everyone involved that, well, here I am today!

What was the most valuable thing you learnt at the Lighthouse ?

Asking for help. The Lighthouse was my first experience of working in a small, diverse team. Although our individual goals differed, we all relied on each other for success. But I also learned that timing is important; If you don't ask or accept an offer of help at the right time opportunities can be lost.



Amanda Lynnes
Honours Student • 1994

