



### What did you do at the Lighthouse ?

I was a research assistant for 2 years from 1993 to 1995. I worked on a SOAEFD funded project to study the common seal population in the inner Moray Firth. I was mainly responsible for VHF radio tracking and TDR deployment on common seal adults. Using these techniques we were able to determine the seal activity patterns and use of specific areas within the Moray Firth. I worked as part of a team studying various aspects of common seal population biology including diet, pupping and breeding activity. I had just returned from a radio tracking study of sea otters in the Aleutian Islands and Paul used to joke I just walked in off the street and he gave me a job!

### What are you doing now ?

I am now the operations officer for Strategic and Partnership Working for NatureScot covering Caithness, Sutherland, Orkney and Shetland. This means I am implementing Biodiversity Action Plans and taking forward Scotland's Climate Challenge Programme. I have always been interested in applied ecology and nature conservation and this job combines my ecological experience with my education work in a beautiful part of the world I know well. I am very lucky!!

### What was your best experience at the Lighthouse ?

(Without sounding like a sook!!!) My best experience at the Lighthouse was working with Paul because I always liked the way he was interested in applied ecology. Through working with Paul I learned early on in my career about the importance of using high quality research to inform management decisions in relation to conservation aims. Paul always understood the importance of education and working with local communities to progress nature conservation objectives and that has inspired my working practise ever since. Of course catching wild seals, cruising about on boats, watching bottlenose dolphins and wandering over remote sand banks were pretty good life experiences too!!



## Ann Mackay

Research Assistant • 1993 - 1995

