



Dr Kim Parsons
PhD & Teaching Research Fellow • 1998 - 2002

What did you do at the Lighthouse ?

My first visit to the Lighthouse was shortly after arriving in Scotland; I was up at the Sutors catching my first glimpse of Moray Firth dolphins when Paul arrived with a group of students. I spent the next several years working on my PhD on bottlenose dolphin molecular ecology and splitting my time between field work in the Bahamas and lab work in Aberdeen. After completing my lab work, I relocated to Cromarty full-time to finish analysing data and writing my thesis. Living in Cromarty, cycling into the Lighthouse and working alongside the Lighthouse team was a fantastic experience! I had the good fortune to stay on at the Lighthouse for an additional year as a teaching and research fellow and share these opportunities through summer field courses with both undergraduate and MSc students from the University of Aberdeen.

What are you doing now ?

I have been working in Seattle, WA (USA) since early 2003 with the Marine Mammal Laboratory and the Conservation Genetics program in the NOAA Science Centers. I am a research geneticist at the Northwest Fisheries Science Center and lead a variety of projects focused on developing new molecular genetic technologies and putting them into practice to address questions relevant to the conservation and management of cetacean populations in the eastern North Pacific. My ties to the Lighthouse and the friendships that I created there are still strong, and I am always on the lookout for opportunities to collaborate and re-connect at conferences or in the field!

What's the best advice you have been given ?

The best pieces of advice that I received while working at the Lighthouse wasn't so much direct advice, as it was encouragement. On more than one occasion, I was encouraged to push beyond what I perceived as my limits in knowledge or ability to learn new skills and tackle academic and scientific challenges. That encouragement and support helped me hone my skills in molecular genetics and carve my own niche combining expertise in both the field and the lab. Encouragement to accept a teaching fellowship also helped develop my presentation skills and revealed how much I enjoy engaging with students; something that I continue to enjoy through guest seminars, hosting summer interns and scientific outreach activities.

