



MATT LOUGEE | PHOTO

### What did you do at the Lighthouse ?

At the Lighthouse, I studied the reproductive strategies of aquatic mating harbour seals. This means that I used underwater acoustics to figure out where males were displaying and how they set up their territories to attract females to them. We also tagged seals to look at their movements during and outside the breeding season. I also helped on lots of other research projects and fieldwork like collecting photo-IDs of bottlenose dolphins, picking up seal scat (poo), making observations of harbour seal mother pup pairs and more.

### What are you doing now ?

I run the passive acoustics research program at the NOAA's Northeast Fisheries Science Center in Woods Hole, USA. We mostly work on protected species, which are all the large whales, but we also study dolphins, fish and other species that make sounds in the ocean. We use passive acoustic technology to understand underwater soundscapes of different areas and their long term health, we track movements of large whales, identify spawning fish aggregations, study ocean noise and its impacts and use autonomous underwater gliders to find endangered right whales and put in place slow zones to decrease vessel strikes.

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

I learned so much at the Lighthouse and had so many diverse opportunities. I learned cartography, got my masters boat license, drove the land rover in all sorts of conditions and learned to solder and make my own acoustic equipment. I worked on all sorts of different projects and travelled all over Scotland for fieldwork. It was a really rich and fun time. I am still connected with the people I worked with at the Lighthouse. Even though we are all over the world, we check in with each other and I am even still working on research projects together with some.



# Dr Sofie Van Parijs

PhD • 1995 - 1998

