



What did you do at the Lighthouse ?

I was lucky enough to undertake my MSc thesis at the Lighthouse and afterwards work as a Research Assistant. My thesis investigated the link between seal declines and killer whales in Shetland (i.e. were the killer whales eating them all!). Afterwards, we secured funding to continue our research into the killer whales in the same area. One of my roles was to photograph individual killer whales for identification purposes and deploy hydrophones to collect acoustic recordings. This allowed us to discover which populations the killer whales had come from and why they had travelled to the area.

What are you doing now ?

Currently I'm the senior marine biologist at the UK Hydrographic Office, which is part of the Ministry of Defence. My work here is very varied and covers all aspects of marine biology, but I still have a speciality in cetaceans. My role is to provide information to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines on the marine environment. A large part of this has a conservation focus, to ensure any vulnerable species and habitats are protected. I also provide information and data on species which could be harmful to Navy personnel. In a nutshell I work with and contribute to research, analysis and environmental policy and interpret these for non-biologists.

What advice would you give someone who wants to follow in your footsteps ?

It's worth remembering that there are a lot of different types of job roles requiring marine science expertise. One of the things you are often told when considering a career in this area is that competition for jobs is high. This can be true, as it is for many other sectors, but there are roles for marine scientists in conservation, private industry and developing laws and policy as well as the more traditional academia and research. These roles all require different personality types and skills, so if you have a passion to learn, you should find something to suit you.



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