



## Tessa van Heumen

Erasmus student • 2012



### What did you do at the Lighthouse ?

In 2012 I did my research internship abroad at the Lighthouse Field Station in Cromarty. I studied BSc Applied Biology. After 5 months on Texel, looking at otoliths in porpoise stomachs and a couple weeks on a research vessel in the North Sea, I thought some more practical marine research would suit me well. My project was about the seasonal occurrence of porpoises and dolphins in the Moray Firth. My internship also focussed on getting experience with various fieldwork; I got the chance to help with the photo-ID work with Barbara and the dolphins, had a look into Lucy's and Ewan's work on the fulmars and went with Becky to the seal haulouts (where we saw a seal pup being born!)! Paul and Ewan even took me on the fieldwork trip and I got to help for a couple of weeks with the fieldwork on Eynhallow! A once in a lifetime experience for me to work so closely and learn about those lovely Fulmars. I didn't mind they puked sometimes or that I waited for a bird to come back to the nest for a couple of hours in the rain. I loved everything, learned so much from all the lovely people at the Lighthouse. I learned that I very much enjoyed all of the fieldwork tasks, that I got energy from the people and the dogs at the Lighthouse; they were sort of a family and I was honoured to be part of it for a while.

### What are you doing now ?

Right now I run my own dog behaviour consultancy practice and I work for a charity where I train shelter dogs in cooperation with inmates in prisons, so the dogs get a better rehoming chance. After I got back from Cromarty, I knew for sure I had to work with people and animals in the future. I worked for a bit on a marine research vessel and got my postgraduate in applied animal behaviour in Belgium, focussing on solving problem behaviour in pets, using scientifically proven methods.

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

In the end, working at the Lighthouse Field Station, for me, was not really to accomplish or prove something. It taught me one of the greatest lessons that I could ever have about wonderful people, trust, learning so much from them, about working together and to be honest with yourself about what you want to do with your life; how you can make the world, or someone's world, a little bit better every day, with the help of science.

