



Marine Ecologist

Tess McGarry - Principal Consultant

● How long have you worked in the industry?

18 years.

● Which career path did you follow ?

I have a BSc honours degree in Applied Marine Biology, a Master's of Research in Marine Ecology and Environmental Management, and a PhD from the University of Cambridge. My academic background gave me a sound knowledge of the principles of ecological fieldwork, analyses and technical reporting and I would recommend to anyone who would like to pursue a career as a consultant ecologist to do a higher academic qualification in a relevant subject.

● How would you describe your job to people?

I work as the lead specialist in marine mammals in my team and therefore typically I would be involved in a number of projects at the same time. Week to week my work varies which makes it more interesting. I may be developing designs for marine mammal surveys, analysing marine mammal data and writing technical reports, undertaking environmental impact assessments (e.g. impacts of subsea noise from offshore construction), or presenting at project meetings with clients and stakeholders. I also regularly attend academic and industry workshops and seminars and lead a weekly marine ecology focus group to help train junior ecologists.

● What role can your profession play in the fight against climate change?

The generation of power from renewable sources is a key target in the fight against climate change. I support wind farm developers to navigate the consenting process and provide advice on how to manage risks associated with marine mammals so that the project can go ahead in an ecologically responsible way.

One of the aspects of our assessment is to consider the project in the context of a 'future baseline', in other words, what would the distribution and abundance of marine mammals look like because of factors such as climate change? It's important to recognise these shifts in ecology and present the information in a scientifically robust way.

● What exciting projects have you worked on?

I was the lead on a project looking at the effectiveness of acoustic deterrent devices (ADD) as a mitigation tool to deter minke whale from injury zones which can occur during piling at offshore wind farms. We collaborated with Marine Conservation Research and undertook fieldwork in Iceland using a series of controlled exposure experiments to measure responses of animals to ADDs. I presented the work at several conferences and it has also now been published in scientific literature.



Marine ecologists are integral to managing risks to marine life when developing offshore infrastructure. And it's diverse work - from week to week I enjoy working with different specialists across different countries. I'm currently working with colleagues in Australia to provide support for an environmental impact assessment for a wind farm project in South Korea!

