

# LEILA FOUDA

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I am an early career ecologist who uses multifarious technology including telemetry, genetic analysis, and stable isotopes to answer questions on species behaviour and range, population dynamics, feeding ecology, and habitat use.

## EDUCATION

2021  
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2017

### ● **PhD. Candidate, Biology**

Queen Mary, University of London

- London NERC Doctoral Training Partnership Funding
- Investigating foraging ecology, movement ecology, and population dynamics of loggerhead sea turtles (*Caretta caretta*).
- Planned and coordinated multiple field seasons with lab members including equipment organisation, coordinated field assistant training, and remote fieldwork logistics.
- Coordinated and trained research assistants and colleagues in GPS and accelerometer tagging on three islands across two field seasons.
- Developed movement ecology analysis skills for GPS animal tracks and triaxial accelerometer data.
- Developed laboratory skills in stable isotope analysis (tissue and blood) and DNA extraction techniques.
- Assisted in training and development of MSc students.

2012  
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2011

### ● **MSc Conservation Science**

Imperial College London

- Topics covered included: Current Issues in Conservation, Sustainable Use and Resource Exploitation, Population Surveys, Conservation Management, Priority Setting and Implementation.
- *Thesis:* Noisy Neighbours - using Automatic Identification System (AIS) and passive acoustic monitoring data to measure individual vessel source levels in critical whale habitat.

2009  
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2005

### ● **BSc (Hons), Marine Biology**

University of St. Andrews

- Modules including: Biology of Marine Organisms, Animal Behaviour, Conservation Research Methods, Marine Mammals and Man, Scientific Diving.
- *Dissertation:* Echolocation clicks of cetaceans - variation due to cetacean size, social and prey preferences.

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

August  
2017  
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March  
2017

### ● **Faculty Research Assistant**

Chesapeake Biological Laboratory, The University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES)

- Passive acoustic monitoring study for marine mammals of Maryland in which I examined the effect of background noise levels on dolphin acoustics in particular key whistle characteristics.
- Setup, deployment, recovery, and maintenance of acoustic equipment offshore (Atlantic Ocean) and in the Chesapeake Bay.
- Whistle project development with Dr. Helen Bailey. Processed and analysed whistle structure and background noise leading to first author manuscript in Biology Letters.

March  
2017  
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October  
2016

### ● **Research Assistant**

The Ocean Cleanup Foundation

- Data cleaning, quality control, and post processing for plastic distribution over Great Pacific Garbage Patch.
- Writing of the final report and peer-reviewed publications with colleagues.

- October 2016 | September 2016
- **Research Assistant (Aerial Observer)**  
The Ocean Cleanup Foundation
    - Aerial observations (scanning for debris, angle measurements, classification, and photography) through paratrooper doors on C-130 Hercules aircraft for surveys over Great Pacific Garbage Patch to quantify ocean debris.
    - Onsite mission preparations and demobilisation of software and equipment.
- September 2016 | August 2016
- **Research Assistant**  
Centre for Marine and Renewable Energy ,University College Cork
    - Cliff-based surveys using theodolites to map the location of marine mammals. Involved scanning for marine mammals, theodolite tracking of marine mammals, weather observations, data entry, and analysis
- April 2016 | January 2015
- **Research Assistant**  
Centre for Marine Science and Technology (CMST), Curtin University
    - Developed a bioacoustics and population ecology study on Australian populations of killer whales (*Orcinus orca*).
    - Coordinated and led research trips to the Bremer Canyon and Exmouth field sites. Leading the photo identification and behavioural data collection.
    - Data analysis, management, and publication preparation utilising both MATLAB and Raven software.
    - Designed and formatted a photo identification catalogue using FinBase.
    - Supervised four year 10 students conducting analysis on our data.
- November 2013 | October 2013
- **Research Assistant**  
Centre for Marine Science and Technology (CMST), Curtin University
    - Analysed underwater spectrograms to identify principal soundscape features.
    - Utilised noise logger deployment reports to further understand the significant features of each soundscape.
    - This work fed into a broader study looking at temporal and geographical variability in underwater soundscapes.
- October 2013 | September 2013
- **Research Assistant**  
Behavioural Response of Australian Humpback whales to Seismic Surveys (BRAHSS). Joint Industry Partners (JIP)
    - Marine mammal observer and research assistant on a multi-year project examining the effect of seismic surveys on humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*).
    - This role involved consistent and careful scanning for humpback whales to facilitate small vessel focal follows.
    - During seismic trials ensure mitigations on animal and vessel distances were met by continuous monitoring.
    - Efficient communication to lead monitoring operator across seismic trial period.
    - Proprietary programme set up, operations for scan surveys, data management.
- September 2013 | April 2013
- **Research Assistant**  
Oceans Initiative - Science for the Sea
    - I undertook boat-based photo-ID photography, image quality and distinctiveness scoring, data management, and matching of a Pacific white-sided dolphin (*Lagenorhynchus obliquidens*) photo identification catalogue spanning 30-years.
    - Small vessel data collection for the development of a marine conservation toolkit. Including, multi-species marine mammal line transects utilising CyberTracker for data collection on encounters. Hydrophone deployment and recovery.
- July 2010 | April 2010
- **Research Assistant**  
Sperm Whale Research Project, Pinniped and Cetacean Ecology - New Zealand Research Partnership. University of Canterbury
    - As part of a four person team I undertook boat and land based surveying focusing on sperm whales (*Physeter macrocephalus*) in the Kaikoura Canyon.
    - Boat Based: Cetacean spotting, focal follows, directional and omni-directional hydrophone deployment, acoustic tracking, blow rate sampling photo identification image capture and matching.
    - Land Based: Scanning for marine mammals theodolite operation and individual focal follows, monitoring tourist vessel locations.

October  
2009  
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August  
2009

- **Intern**

Research Department, Pacific Whale Foundation.

- I carried out photo identification for a long-term humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) catalogue.
- I independently conducted snorkel reef surveys to investigate frequency of reef contact by the general public and during eco-tours I ensured accurate cetacean logs were maintained during vessel encounters.

August  
2008  
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June  
2008

- **Intern**

Marine Research Internship Program - Society for Ecological and Coastal Research. University of Victoria Whale Lab

- Conducted boat based cetacean and avian research. Primarily focused on gray whales (*Eschrichtius robustus*) and involved: line transects surveys, focal follows, and prey sampling in areas of foraging whales.
- Data input and photo identification of fluke and dorsal images.

August  
2007  
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June  
2007

- **Research Assistant**

Sediment Ecology Research Group. University of St. Andrews.

- Independently conducted sediment sample collecting and processing. Assisted PhD students in the laboratory and field to process and analyse samples and input data.

## SKILLS

- **Fieldwork Skills**

- Animal Tagging (Sea Turtle); Tissue Sample and Morphometry Data Collection; Sample Processing and Preservation; Marine Mammal Observations (Boat and Land based); Line-Transect Surveys and Focal Follows; Cetacean Photo-ID; Hydrophone and Acoustic Recorder Operation and Deployment; Aerial observations; Theodolite Operation and Use; Marine Prey Sampling; Data Management; Binocular use.

- **Laboratory Skills**

- DNA Extraction; PCR; Stable Isotope Sample Preparation and Processing; Mass Spectrometer set up (calibration, liner and column changes).

- **Software Skills**

- Data Analysis, Visualization, and Modelling (R, R Markdown); DNA Alignment (UGENE, DNAsp); Movement and Spatial Analysis (R, ArcGIS, QGIS); Acoustic Analysis (Raven, Pamguard, Audacity, R, MATLAB), Academic writing (MS Office, Rmarkdown, LaTeX); High Performance Computing (HPC) Cluster (Command Line, Bash, basic Linux); Fieldwork Software (CyberTracker, VADAR); Web Design (Rmarkdown, GitHub, Netlify, WordPress); Data Management.

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2021  
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2018

- **Assisting with supervision of MSc Students**

- Providing guidance and support to MSc students conducting thesis research in my PhD lab.
- Teaching laboratory skills including stable isotope analysis.

2020

- **Teaching Assistant on virtual MSc Ecology and Evolution field course**

- I developed and delivered a workshop on marine mammal whistle analysis.
- Delivered a lecture on CV presentation development.
- Panel member for a discussion group on scientific opportunities in and outside of academia.

2019  
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2018

- **Teaching Assistant on MSc Ecology and Evolution field course**

- Based in Cabo Verde over a two week period. I wrote and delivered lectures, guided small discussion groups, supervised and assisted student work and led logistical management.

2019  
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2018

- **Demonstrator for undergraduate modules**

- Taught practical laboratory skills in the bio-sciences. Engaged and encouraged students to learn and develop new skills (e.g. pipetting, microscope use, scientific drawing).
  - Marking and providing feedback on submitted work both in the lab and on submitted work.

## PUBLICATIONS

2020

- **Long-term survey of sea turtles (*Caretta caretta*) reveals correlations between parasite infection, feeding ecology, reproductive success and population dynamics.**

[Scientific Reports \(1\)](#)

- Emma C. Lockley, **Leila Fouda**, Sandra M. Correia, Albert Taxonera, Liam N. Nash, Kirsten Fairweather, Thomas Reischig, Jandira Durao, Herculano Dinis, Silvana Monteiro Roque, Joao Pina Lomba, Leno dos Passos, Sahmorie J. K. Cameron, Victor A. Stiebens, Christophe Eizaguirre

2020

- **Seasonal productivity drives aggregations of killer whales and other cetaceans over submarine canyons of the Bremer Sub-Basin, south-western Australia.**

[Australian Mammalogy](#)

- Chandra Salgado Kent, Phil Bouchet, Rebecca Wellard, Iain Parnum, **Leila Fouda**, Christine Erbe

2019

- **Cetacean sightings within the Great Pacific Garbage Patch.**

[Marine Biodiversity \(4\)](#)

- Susan E. Gibbs, Chandra P. Salgado Kent, Boyan Slat, Damien Morales, **Leila Fouda**, Julia Reisser

2018

- **Dolphins simplify their vocal calls in response to increased ambient noise.**

[Biology Letters \(14\)](#)

- **Leila Fouda**, Jessica E. Wingfield, Amber D. Fandel, Aran Garrod, Kristin B. Hodge, Aaron N. Rice, Helen Bailey

2018

- **Validating automated click detector dolphin detection rates and investigating factors affecting performance.**

[The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America \(2\)](#)

- Aran Garrod, Amber D. Fandel, Jessica E. Wingfield, **Leila Fouda**, Aaron N. Rice, Helen Bailey

2016

- **Killer Whale (*Orcinus orca*) Predation on Beaked Whales (*Mesoplodon spp.*) in the Bremer Sub-Basin, Western Australia.**

[PLOS ONE \(11\)](#)

- Rebecca Wellard, Keith Lightbody, **Leila Fouda**, Michelle Blewitt, David Riggs, Christine Erbe.

2015

- **Vocalisations of Killer Whales (*Orcinus orca*) in the Bremer Canyon, Western Australia.**

[PLOS ONE \(10\)](#)

- Rebecca Wellard, Christine Erbe, **Leila Fouda**, Michelle Blewitt.

## POSTERS AND TALKS

2021

- **Feeding ecology and maternal effects impact reproductive success in loggerhead sea turtles (*Caretta caretta*).**

Ecological Society of America - Annual Meeting

- Contributed Poster. **Leila Fouda**, Stuart Negus, Emma C. Lockley, Albert Taxonera, Kirsten Fairweather, Gail Schofield, Christophe Eizaguirre

2020

- **Evaluating the use of marine protected areas by sea turtles in the Cabo Verde.**  
SBCS Symposium
  - Contributed Talk. **Leila Fouda**, Stuart Negus, Emma C. Lockley, Adrienne Kerley, Albert Taxonera, Christophe Eizaguirre
- **Local feeding and its influence on reproductive investment in a highly migratory species.**  
SBCS Symposium
  - Contributed Poster. **Leila Fouda**, Stuart Negus, Emma C. Lockley, Albert Taxonera, Kirsten Fairweather, Christophe Eizaguirre
- **Fitness impact of local feeding in loggerhead sea turtles (*Caretta caretta*).**  
Dynamic Earth: The Joint-DTP Conference
  - Contributed Talk. **Leila Fouda**, Stuart Negus, Kirsten Fairweather, Albert Taxonera, Gail Schofield, Christophe Eizaguirre

2021  
|  
2017

## RESEARCH GRANTS

- **London NERC DTP studentships**  
PhD Studentship in the natural sciences
  - London NERC Doctoral Training Partnership Funding. UKRI studentship for doctoral research which covers university tuition fees and stipend.
- **SeaWorld and Busch Gardens Conservation Fund (USD \$25,000)**  
Bremer Canyon Killer Whales - Bioacoustic and population study.
  - Grant Recipient with Dr. Christine Erbe at the Centre for Marine Science and Technology.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

April 2019

- **Ten Turtle Years – the past, present and future of sea turtle conservation**  
Pint of Science
  - A public talk with fellow PhD student Emma Lockley about how a community-based approach to conservation has contributed to exciting scientific research and conservation decisions for endangered sea turtles, and increasing opportunities for people across the Cabo Verde archipelago.

November 2018

- **Meet the Scientist talk**  
Westcliff High School for Girls
  - A talk to A Level students about studying and working in the marine sciences.

October 2018

- **New Study Reveals Effects of Boat Noise on Dolphins**  
Cheddar News
  - Project: *Passive Acoustic Monitoring Of Marine Mammals*. A [short interview](#) discussing the results of my publication - “Dolphins simplify their vocal calls in response to increased ambient noise”

August 2017

- **Dolphin sightings on the rise in the Chesapeake Bay**  
WUSA9 Washington DC
  - Project: *Chesapeake Bay DolphinWatch*. A [short article](#) and news segment on #OffScriptOn9 about why dolphins may be in the Chesapeake Bay a pink dolphin sighting in Louisiana.

July 2017

- **Dolphin Watchers Wanted: Researchers Ask For Help Tracking Sightings In The Chesapeake**  
DCist
  - Project: *Chesapeake Bay DolphinWatch*. A [short article](#) on why the DolphinWatch public sightings database is important and how the public is helping our research.

July  
2017

- **Dolphin sightings in the Chesapeake Bay becoming more frequent**

ABC7 Washington DC

- Project: *Chesapeake Bay DolphinWatch*. An [article and short news segment](#) on the DolphinWatch project.

October  
2016

- **Researchers at Moffett Field aim to clean Great Pacific Garbage Patch**

ABC7 San Francisco

- Project: *The Ocean Clean Up*. An [article and short news segment](#) on the The Ocean Clean Up Aerial Expedition over the Great Pacific Garbage Patch and the first flight on Ocean Force One.

September  
2015

- **Curtin orca-strates vital killer whale research**

Curtin University Media Release

- Project: *Bremer Canyon Killer Whale Research*. The [media release](#) on the Bremer Canyon killer whale acoustics paper published in PLOS ONE.

April  
2015

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January  
2015

- **On-board naturalist**

Naturaliste Charters

- Project: *Bremer Canyon Killer Whale Research*. During the Bremer Canyon research trip I took on the role of on-board naturalist for passengers, giving an introductory talk and answering questions during tours.

December  
2013

- **How to start out in marine biology?**

Conservation Careers

- This [article](#) for Conservation Careers talks about life as a marine biologist, how I got started and gives advice for future marine biologists.