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Pelagic fish and harbour porpoise at North Sea wind farms: acoustic investigation and science communication

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Curriculum vitae



Jozefien (Fien for short) Demuynck was born in Ostend, Belgium, on May 26th 1996 to parents Hilde Dhont and Geert Demuynck.

She completed a bachelor's degree in Biology (cum laude) in 2017 at KULAK (KU Leuven department in Kortrijk). Her bachelor's end project titled 'hypoxia- and *Mycrocystis*-induced EMT in *Daphnia magna*' focused on studying a cell transition process and its associated genes in a small aquatic crustacean. She then continued her education at KU Leuven and obtained a master's degree in Biology (cum laude) in Leuven in 2019, with the specialisation Ecology, Evolution and Conservation Biology. For her master thesis titled 'life history traits and competition along an altitudinal gradient in three Scottish damselfly species', she did a 6 months Erasmus traineeship at Aberdeen University in Scotland. From the field, at various altitudes in northern Scotland, she caught adult female damselflies of three different species and brought them back to the lab for measuring and breeding. She simulated climate warming with laboratory experiments and investigated its effect on the within- and among-species competition behaviour in the larvae.

After her studies, Fien worked from October 2019 to February 2021 as experimental manager in a research group of Ghent University located in Ostend, working on chronic stress physiology in carp (*Cyprinus carpio*). At that time, the interest to start a PhD grew. Fien was especially interested in effects of human activities on animal welfare, and has always been drawn to the sea ever since she had been living near it for most of her life. In March of 2021 she started her PhD at Leiden University at the Institute of Biology Leiden (IBL), for which she also moved to Leiden (the Netherlands). During her PhD (2021-2025), she conducted several studies, in the field as well as in the lab, on the effects of anthropogenic noise on pelagic fish and harbour porpoise behaviour in relation to offshore wind farms. During the fourth and final year of her PhD, Fien conducted a study in the aquarium facility of a zoo to investigate ways to reduce visitor noise. In order to get more familiar with this topic, she took the master's course 'research in science communication' and took part in a summer school on science communication. Apart from conducting research, she also participated in the teaching of behavioural biology courses and supervised various student internships. During her PhD, Fien has also received a prize at a conference for the best PhD talk in 2023.

Since her PhD, Fien has moved back to Belgium in 2025. Her passion for marine biology and animal behaviour has strengthened over the years, but she has also developed a strong interest in the communication of science to diverse audiences. Her future career path will very likely reflect this.

Publications

Submitted

Demuynck, J.M., de Bruijn, J.A.C., Bergès, B., Debusschere, E., Muñiz, C., Slabbekoorn, H., Hubert, J. Less pelagic fish and more harbour porpoise inside than outside offshore wind farms in the Belgian-Dutch North Sea

Demuynck, J.M., Smeets, I., Lugthart, S., Kuhne, D., Slabbekoorn, H., Russo, P. Did you know fish can hear too? Signage test to reduce visitor sound levels in a public aquarium

Published

Demuynck, J.M., Slabbekoorn, H., Hubert, J. (2024). Response Persistence to Repeated Sound Exposure During a Tank Study in Pelagic Fish. In: Popper, A.N., Sisneros, J.A., Hawkins, A.D., Thomsen, F. (eds) *The Effects of Noise on Aquatic Life*. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-50256-9_192

Hubert, J., **Demuynck, J. M.**, Rimmelzwaal, M. R., Muñiz, C., Debusschere, E., Berges, B., & Slabbekoorn, H. (2024). An experimental sound exposure study at sea: No spatial deterrence of free-ranging pelagic fish. *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, 155(2), 1151-1161. <https://doi.org/10.1121/10.0024720>

Demuynck, J.M., van Tilburg, T., Mirck, D., Slabbekoorn, H., Doksæter Sivle, L., Hubert, J. (2025) Response triggering potential of pulse train variants in pelagic fish: a behavioural test using wild-caught herring. *Behaviour*, 162(5), 391-413. <https://doi.org/10.1163/1568539X-bja10309>

Hubert, J., Bergès, B., Parcerisas, C., Debusschere, E., de Bruijn, J.A.C., **Demuynck, J.M.**, Muñiz, C., Slabbekoorn, H. (2026). Echosounders for fish detection disturb harbour porpoises. *Environmental Pollution*, 127569 (391), 0269-7491, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envpol.2025.127569>