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

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Stellingen behorende bij het proefschrift
Pelagic fish and harbour porpoise at North Sea wind farms
Acoustic investigation and science communication

1. Atlantic herring consistently react to sound stimuli in a controlled environment, yet pelagic fish have not shown spatial avoidance yet to sounds generated to deter and displace at sea (chapters 2, 3 & 4)
2. There is no evidence yet for the hypothesis that pelagic fish respond to sound with increasing amplitude and accelerating pulse rate as a looming threat (chapters 2 & 4)
3. In operational offshore wind farms (OWFs) at the Dutch-Belgian border, pelagic fish abundance is lower, while harbour porpoise presence is higher than outside OWFs (chapter 5)
4. Average ambient noise levels are lower inside the OWFs at the Dutch-Belgian border than outside, likely due to the larger distance to shipping traffic routes (chapter 5)
5. The use of signage is an effective method to reduce visitor noise in a public aquarium, an outcome that may benefit both fellow visitors and the animals in exhibits (chapter 6)
6. There are advantages and disadvantages to both lab and in-situ field experiments, but the combination of both can generate synergy and a more complete understanding
7. Anthropogenic noise has become a prevalent pollutant to the underwater environment and deserves attention in research and management of aquatic ecosystems, alongside and in combination with other global environmental stressors
8. A sound can contain meaningful information or can be perceived as disruptive noise, as its significance is species- and context-specific
9. Negative results should be regarded positively: they can challenge hypotheses or highlight methodological shortcomings, but either way, we gain insight from which we can learn
10. Growing up near the sea can foster a lasting curiosity to understand it, and a sense of responsibility to protect it
11. Productivity and personal well-being go hand in hand, and both benefit from a supportive community
12. We are the composers of our own lives: to hear the music, reduce the noise (inspired by a Yogi Tea quote)

Fien Demuynck
Leiden, 13 maart 2026