

MSc project available in the Marine Ecology Department at NIOZ, Texel

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Beginning: October 2016 **email:** eva.kok@nioz.nl

The project will be carried out at the experimental shorebird facility at the Royal NIOZ on Texel. Students interested in these projects should be prepared to live on Texel for the duration of their project. Information about accommodations available for students at the NIOZ can be found here (<http://www.nioz.nl/accommodation-en/articles/campus-de-potvis>). The project will be largely lab based, but will also involve field work to collect food to be used during the experiments.

Project: The ontogeny of behaviour

A growing sub-discipline in behavioural and evolutionary ecology is the study of consistent among individual differences in behaviour, called animal personality. Although several studies have proposed that behavioural differences among adults may be the consequence of cumulative differences in experience throughout the lifetime of an organism, few studies have explicitly addressed the ontogeny of animal personality. This project will investigate how among-individual differences in behaviour develop over time in red knots (*Calidris canutus*). This project will focus on exploration behaviour, a standardized behavioural assay in animal personality research. Specifically, this project will investigate how exploration behaviour varies with age: 1) does mean exploration differ with age, 2) does among-individual variance in exploration differ across age classes, and 3) do individuals become more fixed in their behaviours as they age. This project is part of a larger project that started in 2015 and the student will be working in a team with other (Master-) students.

