



From wild cats to wildcats

The Dutch fauna now has officially been enriched by a new member: the wildcat. This issue presents a full article on the first officially acknowledged wildcats in the Netherlands. Several of these elusive animals seem to have reached the country by themselves, probably from Germany, possibly from Belgium, either way they are an unintentional present from our neighbours. Reintroduction schemes for the wildcat, which many a zoologist may have dreamt about, might not be needed anymore. This should save time and money, and much discussion, although wolf, lynx, and even brown bear may still be in the running for reintroduction some day as top-predators in Dutch nature areas. An important recommendation to emerge from this paper is that, due to the resemblance of wildcats to feral domestic cats, control of feral cats should now be done by live-trapping rather than by shooting.

Reintroductions may or may not be successful. They should at least be well-prepared and comply with a number of international guidelines. From 1988 onwards, beavers were released along Dutch rivers. Almost two decades after its release, the beaver now thrives well in increasing numbers. The otter became extinct in the Netherlands in 1988 and it was only in 2002 that the first otters were released in the north of our country. The reintroduction of the otter has been more problematic. Some argue that the reintroduction did not fully comply with IUCN guidelines, others claim that these were sufficiently

met. Two discussion papers on this subject are presented in our Comments section.

In October 2004, Anne van Wijngaarden, a prominent Dutch mammalogist, and one of the founders of the Dutch Society for the Study and Conservation of Mammals, passed away. An overview of his long career in national mammal research and international mammal protection is given in this issue. *Lutra* is grateful to Alterra, for financially supporting the memorial of Anne van Wijngaarden.

This edition of *Lutra* hosts one more full article. The authors study the influence of landscape variables on the use of wildlife underpasses by mustelids. Unfortunately, our densely populated country needs many such crossing structures to mitigate the effects of habitat fragmentation by roads and railroads. Fortunately, these underpasses are frequently used by a number of species.

Furthermore, there are reviews of two PhD theses, both on seed dispersal by large mammals. The authors discuss each others thesis.

From this volume (48) on, *Lutra* is also digitally available. The board of our society has agreed to publish *Lutra* on the VZZ-website, in addition to the printed version. An increasing number of mammal researchers are using internet to gather information and present theirs. Articles that are readily accessible are likely be read and cited

more often. A journal that facilitates such accessibility will therefore be more attractive, both for (potential) authors and for readers. Furthermore, authors from other countries will become more familiar with *Lutra*, and those that are already in touch with us, will find that their compatriots will be more able to trace and access their articles. No doubt, easy access to information on descriptive research or special but anecdotal observations will improve opportunities for these to merge

with related work, increasing the chance to reveal functional problems or generate questions that can be tested experimentally. Easily accessible information about European mammals will enhance the knowledge about them and hence, last but not least, improve mammal protection.

Steve Geelhoed has recently left our board, due to other commitments. We thank Steve for his work as editorial assistant, and wish him all the best.

