



Darwin

As dedicated naturalists, involved either professionally or on a voluntary basis, we are all acquainted with Charles Darwin's extremely important insights, recorded 150 years ago in his famous publication 'On the origin of species'. This anniversary is being commemorated all over the world this year – together with the 200th anniversary of his birthday. When looking at mammal species and populations from an evolutionary biological viewpoint, we still meet Darwin everywhere. Some species maintain themselves in our changing landscapes and biological communities without much difficulty, others are 'struggling for their lives' because the environment is changing faster than they can adapt. The Society for the Study and Conservation of Mammals contributes to the understanding of these processes. In fact, all of the topics handled in our journal can be linked, directly or indirectly, to aspects of evolutionary biology. Building this knowledge is the first step, the second step is to apply it to the management of mammal species for the benefit of their conservation. These are two main purposes of our society.

In the current issue, two papers deal with methodological aspects of carrying out bat studies. Although all our indigenous bat species, to a certain extent, have a similar ecology, the specialisations of individual species imply that we adopt different methods for studying them. So, investigators have to face this biological differentiation in a Darwinian way and

find the best solution for each research problem. In their papers on pond bats, Haarsma and her co-authors are helping to show us the way. Equally, Bunnell's paper on the European hedgehog provides us with an excellent example of an important and remarkable adaptation in the growth rates of young born to early and late litters. Second or late litters have to gain weight faster than early litters, as they have less time to build up the body mass required to survive hibernation. In this respect, this paper can be considered as a classic example of the physiological possibilities of adaptation, or "the survival of the fittest", and illustrates the logic of the underlying mechanism. Another good example of adaptive behaviour is illustrated in the paper by Kleef and Tydeman, dealing with the natal den activity of pine marten. As one of the rarest mammal species in the Netherlands and Flanders, pine martens have been the focus of research for some years now. Maintaining or creating favourable circumstances for this species is proving to be a real challenge. Gaining a clear insight into the ecology of pine marten is one of the necessary conditions for its survival and conservation.

On a different note the contribution of Thissen et al. provides in a useful document for policy makers. It explores the technical issues that surrounded the publication of the forthcoming Red List of the Mammals of the Netherlands, such as the differences between the Dutch national criteria and the IUCN Categories and

Criteria – and what the Red Lists reveal about the changing conservation status of different mammal species. Such documentation is of growing importance in formulating nature conservation policies at both the national and European level.

While studying or handling species, we have to know exactly which species we are speaking about. Yet, the nomenclature of individual species can never be completely rigidly defined. New insights and findings, can lead specialists in nomenclature to argue the case for changing names or splitting what was formerly one single species into two or more ‘new’ species. The editorial board strongly advises authors to use the scientific nomenclature used in Wilson & Reeder’s (2005) publication ‘Mammal Species of the World’. However, exceptions to these protocols remain inevitable. For example the almost never ending debate on whether the proper name for the sperm whale should be *Physeter catodon* or *Physeter macrocephalus*. While Thomas proposed *Physeter catodon* as early as 1911, several Dutch scientists have repeatedly argued for the use of *Physeter macrocephalus* and after almost a century this debate has not yet been settled. Guidance as to the nomenclature of vernacular names to be used in Lutra can be found in Mitchell-Jones et al. (1999). The editorial board of Lutra is hesitant to advise authors to strictly follow the new vernacular names proposed in the last edition of Wilson & Reeder (2005), especially when writing about European *Myotis* species. At this moment, using Daubenton’s myotis for *Myotis daubentonii* or Natterer’s myotis for *Myotis nattereri* seems to be a bridge too far for non-specialists who may not be able to easily distinguish between *Myotis* species and non-*Myotis* species.

Finally we have a few organisational changes to announce. After several years of dedicated work as editorial secretary our colleague, Jasja Dekker, has decided to retire from this post. We are all grateful for the important work he has done in this role. He will continue to act as a member of the editorial board. From now on, Edgar A. van der Grift will take over as secretary of Lutra’s editorial board. Edgar is an experienced member of our board, and has done excellent work as a managing editor (in recent years in close cooperation with Ben Verboom), for which we thank him. Ben Verboom will fully take over this role from now on.

Meanwhile, Lutra is no longer printed by Ponsen & Looijen in Wageningen. Over a period of 13 years some 27 issues of Lutra were printed by this company, but due to a recent takeover by GVO-drukkers in Ede, we decided to compare possible candidates to take over their role. From now on Lutra will be printed by Drukkerij Wilco in Amersfoort. Image Realize in Ommeren will be taking care of the layout. We thank the management and coworkers of Ponsen & Looijen for the quality and service provided over such a long time.

- Mitchell-Jones, A.J., G. Amori, W. Bogdanowicz, B. Kryštufek, P.J.H. Reijnders, F. Spitzenberger, M. Stubbe, J.B.M. Thissen, V. Vohralík & J. Zima (eds.) 1999. The Atlas of European Mammals. Poyser, London, UK.
- Thomas, I. 1911. The mammals of the tenth edition of Linnaeus; an attempt to fix the types of the genera and the exact bases and localities of the species. Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London: 120-158.
- Wilson D.E. & D.M. Reeder (eds.) 2005. Mammal Species of the World. A Taxonomic and Geographic Reference (3rd edition). Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, USA.