50 Volumes of Lutra (2)

This year Lutra celebrates its 50th Volume. This provides a good moment to both look back at what has happened on the pages of our journal and ahead and try to recognise the challenges facing Lutra and possible new directions that it may take in the near future. In the editorial of Lutra 50-1 we provided an overview of the establishment and organisation of Lutra and its editorial history. Here we take a closer look at what has been published and identify key trends in the origin or content of the articles that we have published. Over the following pages we present some statistics on Lutra that provide a symbolic closure of roughly half a century of Lutra but which we hope will also inspire all of us, authors and editors, to continue producing interesting papers on the study and conservation of mammals.

The first 50 volumes of Lutra contained 1145 contributions, an average of almost 23 contributions per volume. 520 of them can be categorised as research papers, opinion papers or short notes, which are collectively referred to as 'articles' in this editorial (as opposed to other contributions such as announcements, bibliographies or book reviews). The first article printed in Lutra was a short note on the den system of moles, written in French by Van den Brink (Lutra 1, 1953). The first full research papers appeared in Lutra 2 (1960) with the contributions from Kortenbout van der Sluijs on fossil finds of pleistocene mammals and from Naaktgeboren on observations of brown rats giving birth in laboratories. However these three papers were not representative of the articles published in the following years. Although the mole was the focus of nine further articles, articles on insectivores in general form a relative small proportion of the articles published in Lutra. The same applies for articles on pleistocene mammals: until 1990 papers on giant deer, sabre-toothed cat and cave bears were only occasionally published and in the last seventeen years only one paper in this field, about the aurochs (van Vuure, Lutra 45, 2002) has been published. The brown rat made only one more appearance in the pages of Lutra since then, when Keijl discussed the development of brown rat populations on the islands of Vlieland and Terschelling (Lutra 43, 2000). The lengthiest of all contributions was the voluminous paper of Van Wijngaarden et al. on the occurrence and distribution of the Dutch mammal fauna (Lutra 13, 1971), which ran to 105 pages.

Figure 1 provides an overview of the general picture in terms of the species groups and species discussed in Lutra. Over the years carnivores have been the most written about group, followed by rodents and bats. Since 2000 these three mammal groups have accounted for 83% of all published papers. Special editions of Lutra, such as the ones on pine martens (Lutra 43-2), rodents (Lutra 45-2) and beavers (Lutra 46-2) in this period no doubt contributed to the high score of these mammal groups, but even in earlier periods these species drew much attention. Many articles have also been written about whales and dolphins over the years, but apart from recent

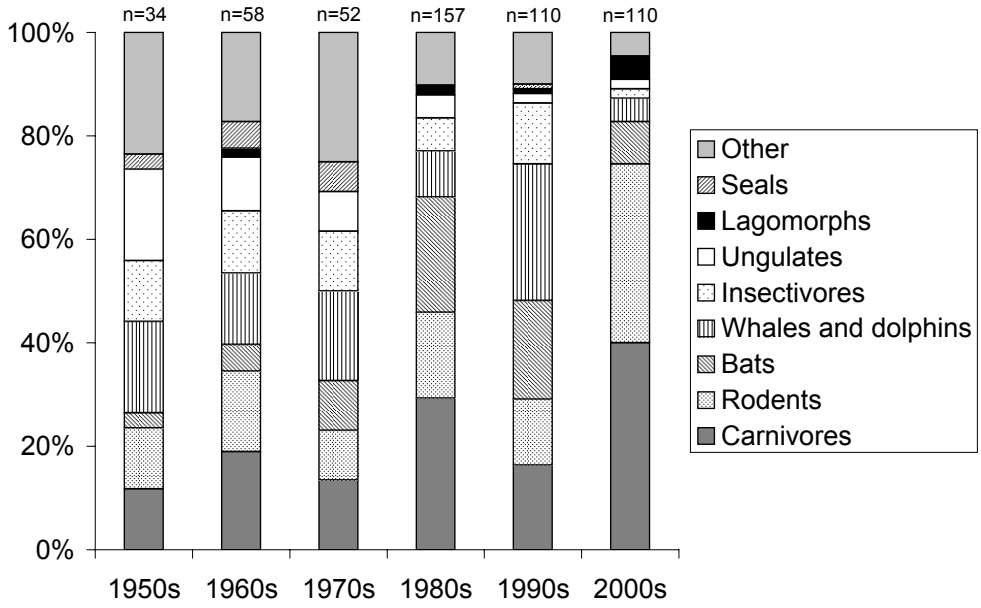

Figure 1. Shifts in the relative frequency of articles on different mammal groups published in the first 50 volumes of Lutra. The "Other" category includes cattle species, extinct hominid species and elephant species, as well as papers that discussed more than one species group.

contributions about stranding records on the Dutch and Belgian coasts, there have been fewer of these since 2000. The main years for articles on insectivores were the 1980s (10 papers) and 1990s (13 papers, including nine in the Lutra special on hedgehogs - Lutra 42, 1999). Ungulates drew most attention in the 1950s, 1960s and 1980s, but always in low numbers. Just two papers have been published on this mammal group in each of the last two decades, the most recent one by Groot Bruinderink on the possibilities of creating a trans-national ecological network for red deer (Lutra 45, 2002). Even fewer articles have been published on lagomorphs (10 papers over 50 volumes) and seals (8 papers over 50 volumes). This is not due to an absence of research on species within these groups. Rabbits and hares have been extensively studied over the last four decades, as illustrated by the recently published book "Wilde konijnen" ("Wild rabbits" - Drees et al. 2007) which describes some of the major research activities on rabbits and hares within the Netherlands. Equally much research has been done on seals within the Netherlands, although most of this research has been published elsewhere.

If we zoom in on the species themselves there is an obvious 'winner' in terms of number of articles: Fittingly, Lutra most often publishes articles about *Lutra lutra*! In total Lutra has published 40 articles about the otter, exactly twice the number of articles published on the second species in the ranking list, the beaver, with 20 papers over 50 volumes (figure 2). We will never know whether this is due to a providential choice of title when the journal was launched or whether the journal attracts papers on the species because of its title. It is clear that the otter is much loved as a subject of research and that Lutra has been one of the main avenues for communicating research results about this species. These articles are not limited to studies conducted in the Netherlands or Belgium, but also originate from many other European countries, including Luxembourg, Germany, the UK, Ireland, Denmark,

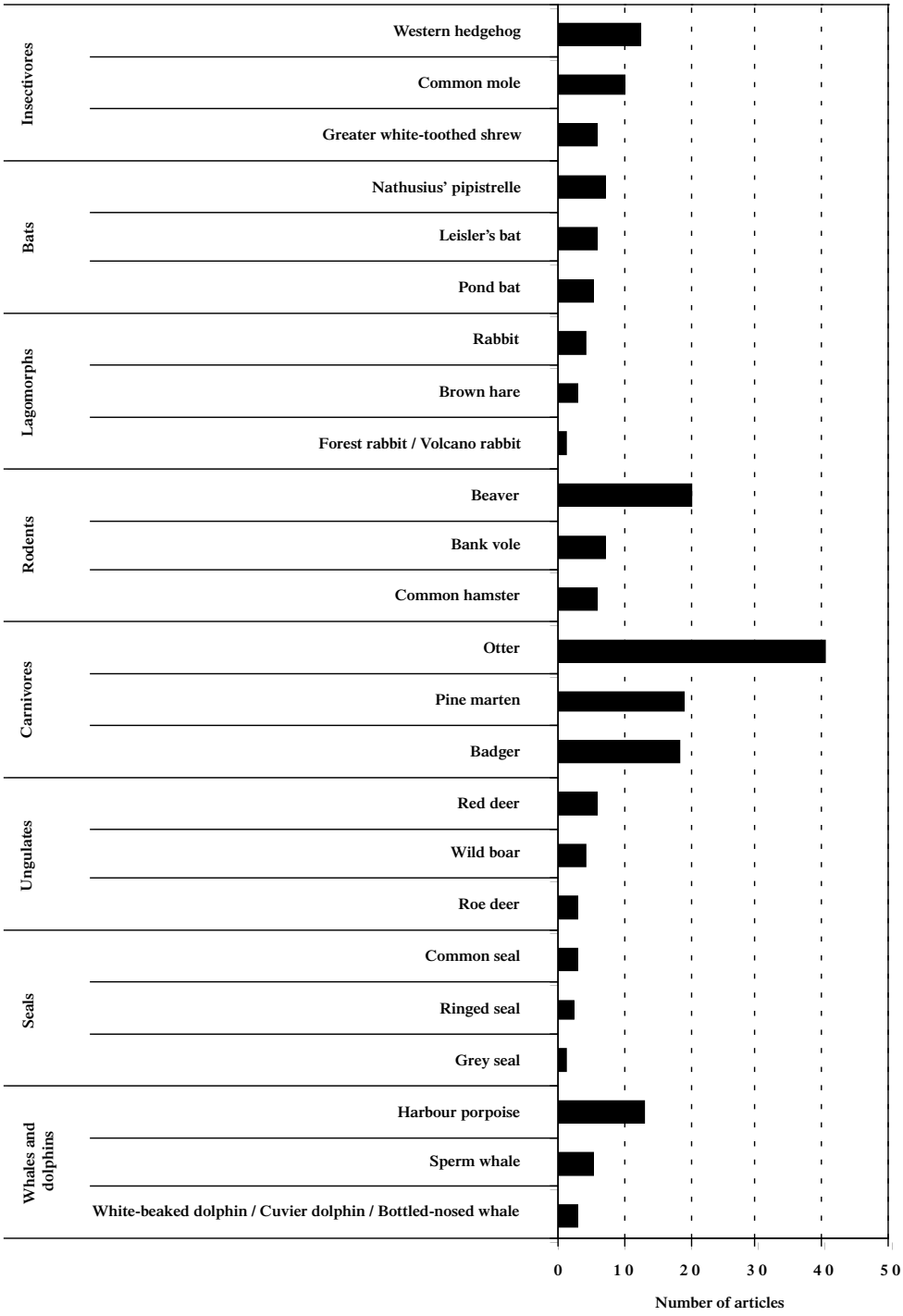

Figure 2. Number of articles in the first 50 volumes of Lutra about the three highest ranking species in each mammal group.

Finland, Austria, Spain, Poland, and Belarus. Although most of these papers fall within the fields of biogeography and ecology, others have been published from the fields of morphology, physiology, embryology, genetics, toxicology, palaeontology, population dynamics, policy and law, research techniques and nature management and nature conservation, including several papers on (re)introductions.

Besides otters, the carnivorous pine martens and badgers also rank highly in terms of published papers with 19 and 18 articles respectively published in the first 50 volumes of Lutra. For the pine marten this is mainly the result of the Lutra special (Lutra 43-2), which carried fifteen articles on this species. These included several in depth articles, such as the paper on sex-dependent dispersal by Broekhuizen and Müskens, one on natal den attendance of female pine martens by Kleef, and one on day-hides of a male pine marten by Müskens, Klees and Broekhuizen. The story for the badger is different. Publications about this species have been more or less evenly distributed over the years, with voluminous monographs about distribution and population trends in the Netherlands by Van Wijngaarden and Van de Peppel (Lutra 6, 1964), Wiertz and Vink (Lutra 29, 1986), Wiertz (Lutra 32, 1992) and Van Moll (Lutra 48, 2005) providing a "red thread" through the history of Lutra.

The beaver has been the most written about rodent species in Lutra articles. As with the pine marten this is mainly the result of the publication of a Lutra special in 2003, in which 14 of the total 20 articles on beavers were published. The bank vole and hamster are the second and third most written about rodent species, with most articles published since the 1980s. The harbour porpoise is the most commonly written about marine mammal, with 13 articles published over 50 volumes. These mostly address morphological aspects and the distribution/population trends of the species. Articles worthy of mention in this respect include those of Smeenk (Lutra 30, 1987), Camphuysen and Leopold (Lutra 36, 1993), Addink and Smeenk (Lutra 41, 1999),

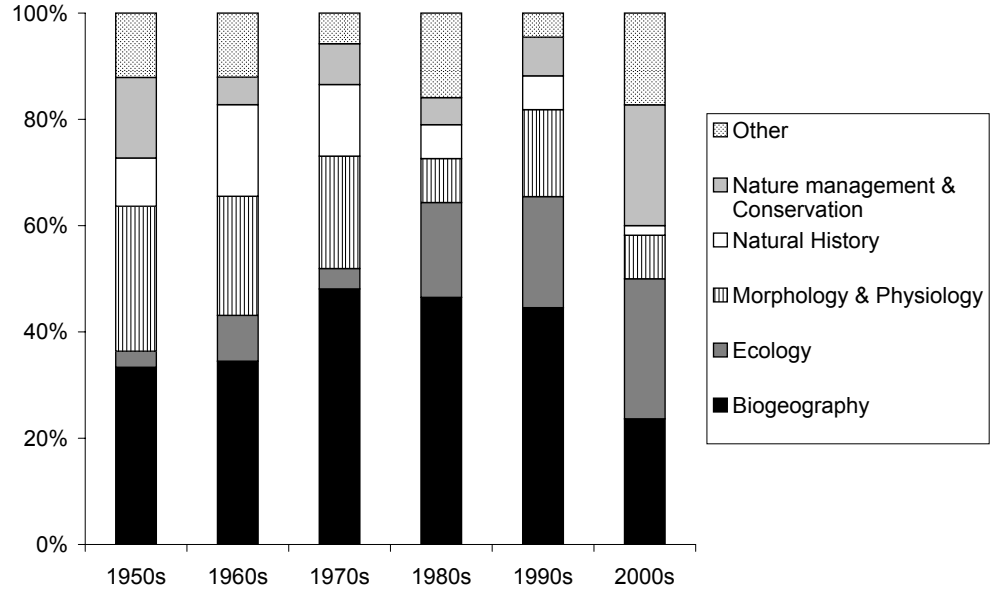

Figure 3. Shifts in the relative frequency in the disciplinary focus of articles published in the first fifty volumes of Lutra. The "Other" category includes taxonomy, animal welfare and ethology, population dynamics, genetics, research techniques, toxicology, and policy and law.

Camphuysen (Lutra 47, 2004) and all the stranding reports which provide exhaustive data about the harbour porpoise. Together this group of papers makes a valuable contribution to our growing knowledge on this species in Dutch waters.

In terms of research fields, articles on the biogeography of species have been the most numerous (figure 3). Almost 40% of the articles published in the first 50 volumes of Lutra describe the distribution of a species within Europe, a country or a region, the finding of a specimen, roost, wintering place or new location for a species. Memorable contributions in this respect are the papers on the distribution of the beaver (van Wijngaarden, Lutra 8, 1966) otter (van Wijngaarden, Lutra 10, 1970) and hazel dormouse (van Laar, Lutra 27, 1984) in the Netherlands. Ecology is the second most important research field, with 17% of all articles. However, whereas the biogeographical contributions have declined somewhat (slightly in the 1980s and 1990s and more rapidly since 2000), papers on ecology only started to seriously enter the journal in the 1980s (28 papers in the 1980s as opposed to 2 in the 1970s) and their number is still increasing. The same applies for articles in the field of nature management and conservation. From the 1980s onwards there has been a growth in this type of article - with papers on e.g. conservation measures for badgers along roads (Derckx, Lutra 29, 1986), management measures by the International Whaling Commission (van Beek, Lutra 30, 1987), threats to mammals in wetlands (van Apeldoorn, Lutra 37, 1994) and management measures to benefit mammals in agricultural landscapes (Huijser, Lutra 44, 2001), to name a few. The fourth most frequent research field is morphology and physiology, contributions from which have been rather stable, with an average of 12 articles (min. 9; max. 18) in each ten year period. There has been a marked decline in the number of papers from the field of natural history, including palaeontological studies, with just two papers published in the most recent period. Notably 88% of all articles published in Lutra describe studies on, or observations of, mammals in the wild, showing that Lutra remains a journal that primarily publishes field based studies. The remaining articles (12%) involve the study of mammals in an enclosure, animal rescue centre, zoo, laboratory, or farm, or are based on (museum) collections and/or the literature.

Table 1. "Top 10" authors, based on the number of scientific articles published in the first 50 volumes of Lutra.

Ranking	Author	Number of articles
1	van Laar	17
2	Lina	16
3	Broekhuizen	13
4	van Wijngaarden	9
5	van Bree	8
6	Bekker J.P.	8
7	Van der Straeten	7
8	Mostert	7
9	Hoekstra	7
10	Kompanje	6

There is no journal without authors. So let us also take a closer look at some statistics about the authors who contributed to the first 50 volumes of Lutra. In total there have been 396 first named authors that published in the journal. Of these, 293 published a scientific article. Eighty six of these authors have used Lutra as a platform to disseminate two or more articles, a pleasing 30% of all authors who have published a scientific article in Lutra. Of these 86, about half published two articles in Lutra, with the remainder contributing more than two manuscripts. Van Laar holds the record for the most publications with 17 (table 1). It is also encouraging that more than half of the authors in this 'top-10' continue to be active and frequently submit new papers to Lutra, as illustrated by the two papers by Broekhuizen in this issue. Authors' appreciation of Lutra as a means of informing their peers about their observations and research findings can not only be measured by the number of articles per author, but also by the time period between the publication of the first and most recent articles published by the same authors. Again a 'top-10' can be

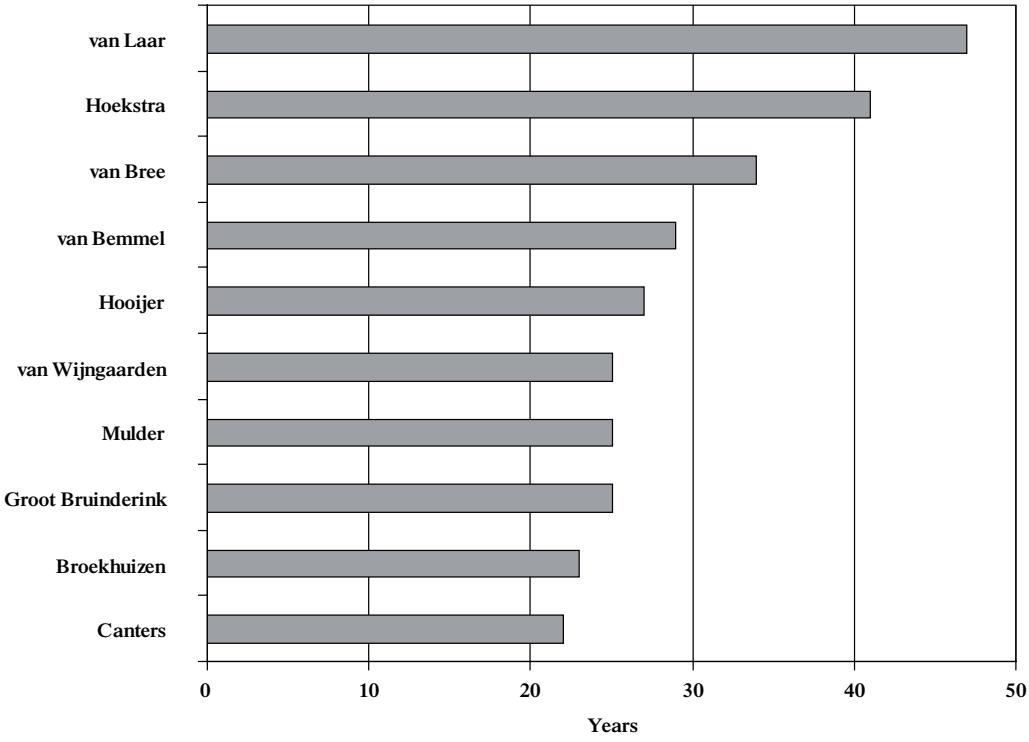

Figure 4. "Top 10" authors, based on the period between the publication of their first and their most recent articles.

made of this phenomenon of "loyalty to Lutra" (figure 4) with Van Laar, whose articles span a period of no less than 47 years, coming out again as the winner. His first article on small mammals in bird pellets in 1959 appeared in the very first volume of Lutra and his most recent contribution (jointly with Hemmelder) in 2006 describes population trends of hare and rabbit and the occurrence of other mammals at Schothorst, a city park in Amersfoort (Lutra 49).

Analysis of the data on authors in the first 50 volumes of Lutra also shows the evolution of the journal from a small society newsletter into a more comprehensive scientific journal. In the early years of Lutra most authors contributed under their personal title whereas nowadays contributions increasingly originate from authors at research institutes and universities (figure 5). This is not to imply that articles written by private individuals are of less value or scientific quality, but rather that the growing number of authors affiliated with professional scientific institutions shows an increasing recognition of Lutra as a professional medium for communicating scientific research results. Figure 7 also shows some other interesting shifts in the background of authors. In the first period, when Lutra was still a newsletter, most contributions were made under a personal title. In the 1960s an increasing number of articles were published by authors affiliated with museums. This trend continued until a sudden drop in the late 1990s, since when only occasional manuscripts from museum scientists have been received. The start of *Cranium* in 1984 – a new journal of the Dutch Working Group on Pleistocene Mammals – may partly explain this decrease yet, as early as the early 1970s, we were receiving fewer palaeontological articles from museum-based authors. Another reason may be the shift in interest of mammalogists from morphological studies, usually conducted and/or facilitated by museums, towards studies on ecology

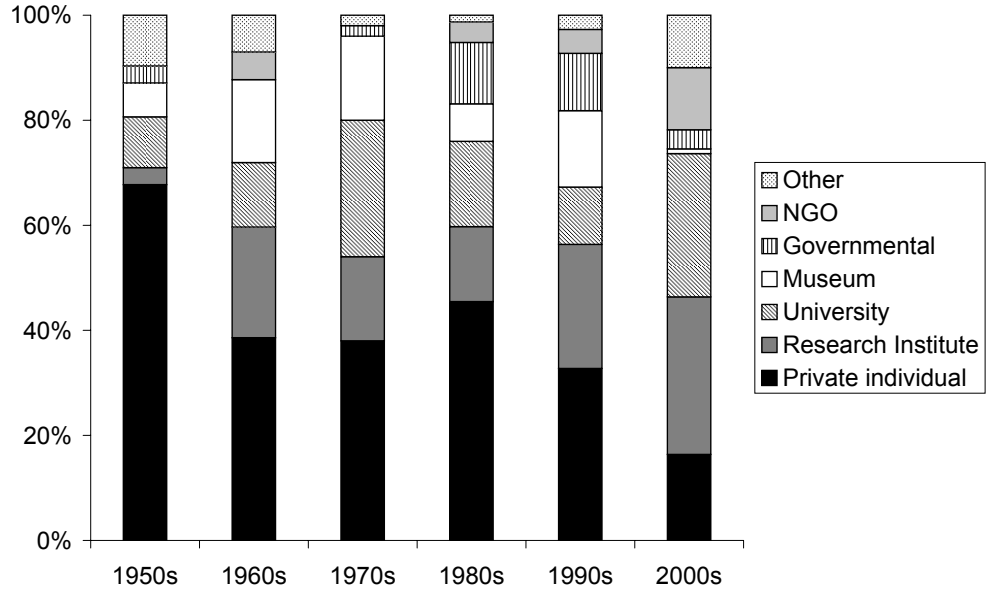

Figure 5. Affiliation of authors published in the first 50 volumes of Lutra. The "Other" category includes authors from nature management organisations, private (consulting) companies and zoos or animal care centres.

and wildlife management, which are more often conducted by universities and research institutes. But, perhaps the most logical explanation is the change in the composition of the editorial board, as described in the editorial of Lutra 50-1. Many articles from museums in the 1980s and 1990s were, without any doubt, the result of Smeenk's involvement as managing editor with the journal. Employed by the "Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie" (nowadays the Natural History Museum "Naturalis") in Leiden at that time, he was responsible for numerous contributions himself, including four research papers, and also encouraged his colleagues to publish their work in Lutra. This is well illustrated by the 16 articles, published by authors from museums between 1991 and 1999: 15 of which were about marine mammals, Smeenk's main field of research. Two other shifts in the background of authors are worth mentioning. One is the decrease in contributions from governmental organisations in the late 1990s and the other is the increase in contributions from NGOs in the same period. The first trend is somewhat worrisome as it may imply that civil servants are less involved in conducting and publishing studies on mammals, which may possibly indicate a widening gab between science and policy making. The second trend is more gratifying, as it shows the more professional approach of NGOs, including the Society for the Study and Conservation of Mammals (VZZ), for whom contract research is becoming 'standard procedure' and apparently contributing to an increase in scientific publications.

The evolution of Lutra into a mature scientific journal can also be seen in the shift between the types of contributions over the years (figure 6): with fewer "other" contributions – primarily dealing with society business, such as meeting minutes, travel reports, summaries of presentations, announcements or requests – and more full research articles. It is our wish that this trend continues and it is hoped that the recent decisions to open Lutra up for opinion articles (Lutra 47, 2004), which is intended to initiate scientific debate about current issues, and to transfer the bibliographies to other, more appropriate, media (such as the website) will both contribute to this process. When comparing the types of contributions

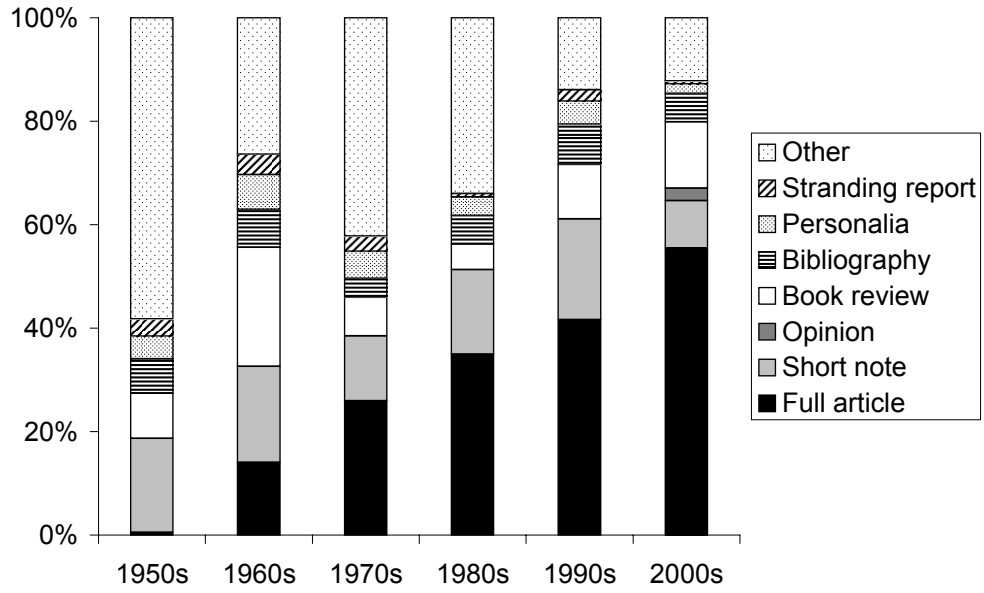

Figure 6. Shift in the type of contributions in the first 50 volumes of Lutra. The "Other" category includes editorials, summaries of presentations, minutes of meetings/workshops, announcements, previews of books, movies, conferences and meetings, news messages, requests, travel reports, reactions, and the publication of the statutes of the Society for the Study and Conservation of Mammals (VZZ).

in Lutra over the years one striking feature is the fairly constant number of book reviews, a form of contribution that is always much appreciated by the editors, as these inform us about up to date and important new publications on mammals. In total Lutra has published 122 book reviews, written by 46 different authors. Please, keep sending us those book reviews to enable us to highlight new findings on mammals published elsewhere! Another constant factor in Lutra has been the stranding reports that have been submitted over the years by Van Deinse (Lutra 1-8, 1953-1966), Van Utrecht (Lutra 10, 1968), Husson (Lutra 14 and 18, 1972/1976), Van Bree (Lutra 16, 20 and 25, 1974/1978/1982), and Smeenk (Lutra 32, 35, 38 and 46, 1989/1992/1995/2003) for the Netherlands and by Van Gompel for Belgium (Lutra 34 and 39, 1991/1996).

Lutra has not only become more 'mature' in terms of a significant increase in full research papers, but has also become more international. This can be seen in several shifting trends, relating to the language, origin of authors and countries where the published research was undertaken. As already described in the editorial for Lutra 50-1, a considerable move towards English papers has occurred since the late 1980s. This shift has been encouraged and was formalised in 2001 when English officially became the preferred language for Lutra. This ensures that Lutra can reach a wider audience and is more in line with scientific standards. There has also been a notable increase in publications from authors from outside the Netherlands and Belgium in recent years, with most of them originating from other European countries (figure 7). From the fifteen or so manuscripts currently being reviewed for future issues we see that this trend continues. Simultaneously there has been a shift in countries where the studies took place, with more research from European countries apart from the Netherlands and Belgium being published. This has resulted in more articles on species that do not occur in the Netherlands or Belgium, although still many of these 'foreign' articles are about species that do occur here.

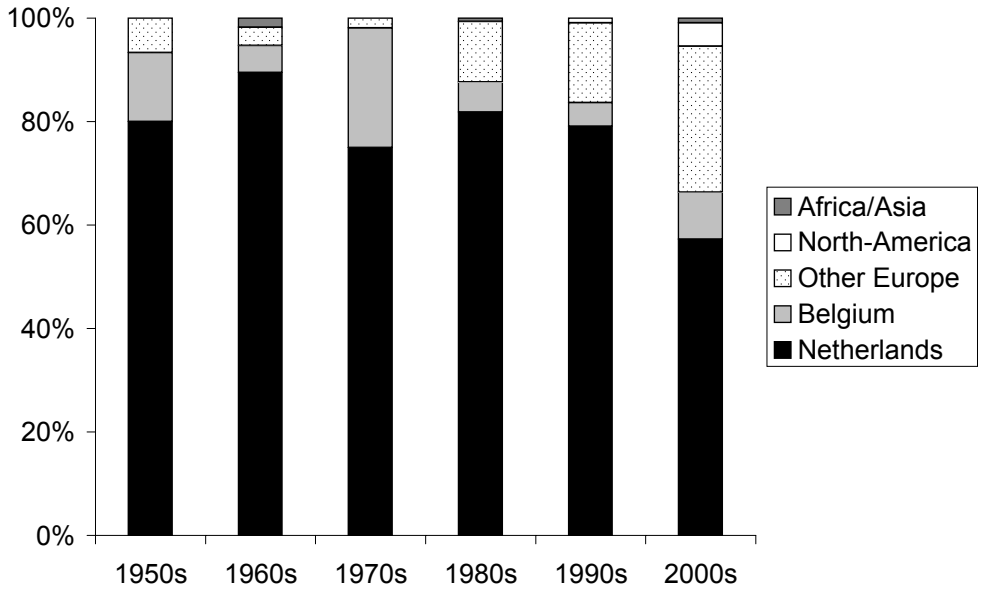

Figure 7. Shift in the residence of first named authors of articles published in the first 50 volumes of Lutra.

There have also been some papers on mammals from other continents, such as those on Salim Ali's fruit bat in India by Vanitharani et al. (Lutra 47, 2004) and the forest rabbit in Surinam by Hoogmoed (Lutra 26, 1983). This is not an entirely new phenomenon though: in the early days Lutra carried a report of a safari in Kenya by Koeman (Lutra 11, 1969). The primary focus of Lutra remains on European mammal species. We hope to more strongly position ourselves as a more international journal on European mammals and believe that the step we took in 2005, in publishing the full text of Lutra for free on the web, (see Lutra 48-2) will help us reach that objective. We intend to report about this in more detail in a future editorial. In the meantime we look forward to fifty volumes more of publishing a wide range of articles addressing all species groups, from large ungulates to shrews, and research fields, from ecology to genetics.

Correction

In the Editorial of issue 50-1 we credited the 'Société Française pour l'Etude et la Protection des Mammifères' (SFEPM) as the publisher of the journal *Mammalia*. This was incorrect. *Mammalia* is published by the 'Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle' in Paris. The SFEPM publishes the journal *Arvicola*.