

President's report 2019

President's report Netherlands Society for Evolutionary Biology (NLSEB) over 2019

The board of the Netherlands Society for Evolutionary Biology (NLSEB) was formed by Prof.dr. Marcel Visser (president), Prof.dr. Jacintha Eilers (ESEB liaison), Dr. Sander van Doorn (Secretary), Dr.ir. Liedewij Laan (Treasurer), Prof.dr. Arjan de Visser (board member) and Dr. Rutger Hermsen (board member). There were no changes in the board in 2019 but Dr. Koen Verhoeven joined the board meetings after the ESEB congress in Turku, where Prof. Eilers stepped down as executive vice-president of ESEB and where Dr. Verhoeven took over this role. He will therefore join the NLSEB board at the General Assembly meeting of 2020, to serve as the ESEB liaison for the NLSEB board.

The board met four times in between the General Assemblies of 2019 and 2020 (24 May, 6 September, 19 November & 21 February). These meetings were partly on initiating the NLSEB PhD/Post-doc meeting, initiating the NLSEB prize and on NLSEB's interactions with NWO on how evolutionary biology should be positioned in the newly formed working groups. The board followed-up on the process of streamlining the membership and financial administration, as well as obtaining an ANBI status for NLSEB. The board also worked on the NLSEB2020 meeting, in particular on the plenary speakers, a code of conduct, the general assembly meeting and on the development of a Policy Plan 2020.

At the 2019 annual meeting of the Netherlands Society for Evolutionary Biology (NLSEB) the policy plan for 2019 was approved, which stated that the society would carry out the following activities in 2019:

1. Organize an annual scientific meeting, with scientific presentations on evolutionary processes, in any field of science, and with other activities aimed at community building, such as networking meetings and round-table discussions. In 2019 this will be the Second Conference of the Netherlands Society for Evolutionary Biology (NLSEB) in Ede.

The Conference was organized by the Meetings Committee 2019: Eveline Verhulst, Martijn Egas, Katja Peijnenburg, Marian Bemer, Bertus Beaumont and Sijmen Schoustra. The meeting was a great success, with 170 participants and a large number of excellent talks and posters. The Poster prize was awarded to Meike Wortel (UvA).

2. Organize an annual PhD and post-doc meeting, aimed to foster interactions between the 'next generation of evolutionary biologists'. In 2019 this meeting will be organized for the first time, sometime in October/November.

The first NLSEB PhD/post-doc meeting was organized by Melanie Lindner, Ben Auxier, Astrid J. Kruitwagen, Kiran Gurung and Kathryn Stewart. The meeting did not take place in October/November 2019 as initially intended but was planned on 20th of April 2020, the day before the Third Conference of the Netherlands Society for Evolutionary Biology (and moved to 23 September because of Covid-19 regulations). The organizing committee

obtained additional funding from PE&RC. 29 participants registered for this event up to the moment of cancellation.

3. Inform members about upcoming meetings, funding opportunities and community news relevant to the society via Twitter, Facebook, the NLSEB website and newsflashes.

The main location for information on NLSEB is on its website www.nlseb.nl. Three Newsflashes came out, in August and November 2019 and January 2020, all still available on the NLSEB website. NLSEB also has a Twitter account with 127 followers and 42 following.

4. Annually, award an outstanding evolutionary biologist with the TBD Prize for the best peer-reviewed publication in the previous year as either first or last author, which consists of a financial award of 500 euros. The prize winner delivers the TBD Lecture during the NLSEB conference. The Prize will be awarded for the first time in the spring of 2020, with a call at the end of 2019.

The board put out a call to the NLSEB members to nominate a name for a prize for the best peer-reviewed paper. Although the board received five nominations, in the end it was decided to name the prize simply the Netherlands Evolutionary Biology Prize as the board felt that naming the prize after a scientist was not opportune at this time. The jury was formed by Prof. dr. Paulien Hogeweg, Prof. dr. Sander Tans en Dr. Koen Verhoeven. The first winner of the Netherlands Evolutionary Biology Prize will be announced at the Third Conference of the Netherlands Society for Evolutionary Biology in September, where the prize winner will give a plenary talk.

5. Other forms of community building, such as organizing networking opportunities. Examples include lunch meetings and workshops at the annual NLSEB meeting, the PhD/post-doc meeting and a get together for scientists from, or working in, the Netherlands at ESEB 2019.

At the NLSEB 2019 meeting, there were lunch meetings and dinner tables around specific topics, such as a joint initiative towards Evolutionary Biology education. Both were evaluated positively and will be carried forward to the NLSEB 2020 meeting as they provide an excellent opportunity to network and discuss timely issues relevant to the community. At the meeting of the European Society for Evolutionary Biology (ESEB) in Turku, NLSEB organized a get together for Dutch evolutionary biologists and evolutionary biologists working in the Netherlands. This was a very pleasant and successful meeting, about 40 people turned up, of which a large proportion Dutch scientists working abroad who were keen to reconnect with the Dutch evolutionary biology community.

6. Serve as a communication channel to NWO, KNAW, Universities and relevant institutions and societies (ESEB, NIBI, Origins Centre, Nationale Wetenschapsagenda, Topsectoren). In 2019 we will contribute to the organization of LIFE (an NWO congress) and we will actively approach NWO on a number of matters. We also aim to establish a more formal connection to ESEB, in addition to the already existing link where one of the NLSEB board members is also the executive vice-president of ESEB (who is always Dutch following the ESEB regulations).

Rutger Hermsen represented NLSEB in the organization of LIFE 2019, and this meeting had a number of excellent speakers from the evolutionary biology domain. The board played an active role in the discussion around the newly formed working groups of NWO, to assure that evolution was well represented. The board also initiated a discussion with NWO on the discipline codes used by NWO on all submitted proposals, as 'evolutionary biology' is very oddly placed in that list. NWO is now revising this list. In addition, NLSEB is now registered as an organization in ISAAC, the funding portal of NWO.

7. Support education and outreach by publishing links to educational resources on evolution on the NLSEB website.

There was little activity around this point other than the dinner table discussion about a joint (online) evolutionary biology course at NLSEB 2019. There are also a number of useful links on the NLSEB web site.

On the 31st of December 2019 NLSEB had 104 members. In 2019, the confidentiality advisors of NLSEB (Bregje Wertheim and Bas Zwaan) did not receive any complaints.

28 March 2020

Marcel E. Visser, president NLSEB