

President's report 2021

President's report Netherlands Society for Evolutionary Biology (NLSEB) 2021

In 2021, the board of the Netherlands Society for Evolutionary Biology (NLSEB) consisted of Arjan de Visser (president), Sander van Doorn (Secretary), Rutger Hermsen (Treasurer), Koen Verhoeven (ESEB liaison), Liedewij Laan (PR officer) and Bregje Wertheim (board member). Founding board members Marcel Visser and Jacintha Ellers stepped down and Bregje Wertheim joined the board in 2021.

The board met five times in between the General Assemblies of 2021 and 2022 (18 June, 27 August, 8 November, 2 February & 19 April). During these meetings, the organization of activities announced in the policy plan was discussed and planned, besides the streamlining of membership and financial administration, upcoming changes in the board and new initiatives, such as the installation of the NLSEB Junior Board. Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, all board meetings were online.

At the online 2021 General Assembly of the Netherlands Society for Evolutionary Biology (NLSEB) the policy plan for 2021 was approved, which stated that the society would carry out the following activities:

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.

This was the 3rd conference of the Netherlands Society for Evolutionary Biology (NLSEB), which was originally planned for 2020, but due to the Covid-19 pandemic was postponed and took place online in the afternoons of 19 and 20 April 2021. The conference had a record attendance of > 250 registrations, which was in part due to the fact that no conference fee was asked. The conference included plenary lectures by Toby Kiers, Thijs Ettema and Mark van Vugt, as well as by the winners of the Netherlands Evolutionary Biology Prize 2019 and 2020 (see below), 6 parallel sessions with presentations selected from the abstracts, 2 poster sessions (in Gathertown), and the General Assembly. The board is grateful to the Meeting Committee 2021, who organized also the NLSEB2020 meeting, which had to be cancelled: Marian Bemer (chair), Sijmen Schoustra, Jeroen Meijer and Jacintha Ellers, as well as to Kim Ferguson for the online organization and moderation.

2. Organize an annual PhD and post-doc meeting, aimed to foster interactions between the 'next generation of evolutionary biologists'.

In 2021, this meeting was organized for the first time (the original planning was October/November 2019, but it was postponed twice due to the Covid-19 pandemic). It took place online in the mornings of 19 and 20 April with some 70 registered participants. The meeting involved pitch presentations by participants and 3 parallel workshop sessions, with a choice of 3 workshops per session on a range of topics related to

evolutionary research, career decisions or (online) teaching. The board is grateful to the NLSEB PhD/postdoc organizing committee: Melanie Lindner (chair), Yumi Nakadera and Karen Bisschop.

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. Five Newsflashes came out between April 2021 and June 2022, all still available on the NLSEB website. NLSEB also has a Twitter account with 224 followers.

4. Annually, award an outstanding evolutionary biologist with the Netherlands Evolutionary Biology 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 Netherlands Evolutionary Biology Lecture during the NLSEB conference.

At NLSEB 2021, 2 Netherlands Evolutionary Biology Prize winners were announced and given the opportunity to present their prize-winning work in a plenary lecture, because the 2020 meeting was cancelled: Langqing Liu (WUR) as the 2019 prize winner and Zheren Zang (Leiden U) as the 2020 winner. The jury members were Paulien Hogeweg (2019, 2020), Koen Verhoeven (2019, 2020), Sander Tans (2019), Marjon de Vos (2020).

5. Other forms of community building, such as organizing networking opportunities.

An important development in 2021 has been the establishment of the NLSEB Junior Board, formed by Melanie Lindner (chair), Nadja Brait (secretary), Yumi Nakadera (treasurer), Sam von der Dunk (communication) and Alanna Leale. The Junior Board will represent and connect PhD students and postdocs working in evolutionary biology in NL, and advise the NLSEB board on related issues. One recurrent activity will be to organize the annual PhD/postdoc meeting.

In addition, two workshops have been organized in the past year: one on best practices in online teaching in evolutionary biology (online 7 June 2021, organized by Maurijn van der Zee, Bart Pannebakker & Arjan de Visser, with 10 participants), and one on knowledge utilization in evolutionary research (online 29 March 2022, with 23 participants, organizers: Sander van Doorn & Arjan de Visser).

6. Serve as a communication channel to NWO, KNAW, universities and relevant institutions and societies (ESEB, NIBI, Origins Centre, Nationale Wetenschapsagenda, Topsectoren, NERN).

We have contributed to the organization of NWO Life 2021 (27 and 28 May 2021, online) and NWO Life 2022 (24 and 25 May 2022, Egmond aan Zee). In 2021, Arjan de Visser has replaced Rutger Hermsen in the NWO Life program committee. We were also involved in the organization of monthly online workshops of the Origins Center, including one on

fitness landscapes and evolutionary predictability (9 Nov 2021). Contacts have been established with the Biology Council, who coordinates the development of the new sector plan Biology, and board members maintain links with ESEB (ESEB-liaison Koen Verhoeven), NIBI, the Origins Center (Liedewij Laan and Bregje Wertheim are members of the Steering Committee of the OC) and NERN. Possibilities for more formal links with ESEB have been discussed with current president Astrid Groot. We are pleased that 'evolution' received a prominent place in the 'Sector Beeld Biologie', which is the road map of the 'Sector Plan Biologie', which details new investments in biological research in the Netherlands. Former NLSEB board member Jacintha Ellers was involved in preparing the 'Sector Beeld' and is currently vice-chair of the Biology Council, who advises the development of the Sector Plan.

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

From the Roundtable on best practices in online teaching of evolutionary biology, a succinct list of best practices and tools has been made available on our website.

On the 31st of December 2021, NLSEB had over 250 members. Many of these, however, received a free one-year membership upon registering for the NLSEB2021 meeting and hence may cancel their membership in 2022.

In 2021, the confidentiality advisors of NLSEB (Bregje Wertheim and Bas Zwaan) did not receive any complaints. In 2022, Bregje Wertheim will step down as confidentiality advisor, and Hannah Dugdale has agreed to become the new confidentiality advisor.

8 June 2022

Arjan de Visser, president NLSEB