

Panta rhei

Panta rhei is the ancient Greek expression for 'everything flows.' It is a valuable aphorism for all aspects of life. The famous Greek philosopher Heraclitus (who lived around 600 B.C.) is said to have remarked: "Only change itself is a real, constant and eternal flux, like the continuous flow of the river which always renews itself." He argued that people never cross the same river twice, as both the river and the person are constantly changing. Heraclitus was one of the first Greek philosophers who made the transition from natural philosophy (defined by Wikipedia as 'the analysis and synthesis of common experience and argumentation to explain or describe nature') to a more empirical way of thinking. In this respect he may be considered as one of the founding fathers of modern natural sciences, including biology, physics and chemistry.

In nature, *panta rhei* can be used to characterise the cycle of plants and animals; that are born, grow older and eventually die but will be superseded by their descendants. In science, *panta rhei* can characterise the experiments of scientists who can only report their results to each other because they are standing on the shoulders of giants: their predecessors. Scientists are constantly using the results of others in order to generate improvements in mankind's knowledge.

Panta rhei can also aptly describe the continuously changing needs of the readers of

scientific journals. It would not be good if Lutra stayed the same and didn't change. It is the task of the editorial board to see how the journal can best be adapted to current needs. In the words of our previous editor, Edgar van der Grift (Lutra 53-1: Editorial): 'Lutra is an instrument to present valuable research results or interesting observations on mammals to the scientific world'. We have recently implemented major changes: introducing double-blind peer review procedures and deciding to publish solely in English. These changes were made in order to improve the quality of submitted papers and raise the profile of Lutra among mammalogists around the globe. Currently, we are in the process of obtaining an impact factor, which will further help us to increase our visibility among (more or less) similar journals in the field. Full internet access to the content of previous issues is also important and offers new opportunities for existing readers of the journal and others. The editorial board thinks that such changes will contribute positively to the vitality and standing of Lutra in the future.

And finally, the phrase *panta rhei* also can be applied to the editorial board and its members. It was September 2009 when I joined the board of Lutra and, a little later, became its secretary. Since then there have been considerable changes in my life (a new job, political work) that require a lot of my attention. This has had many effects on the amount of time that I can

attribute to the journal. *Lutra* needs a secretary who can dedicate sufficient time to maintaining and further improving the quality of the journal and to face future challenges. Although I could continue to make a contribution to these goals, I feel it would not be enough. *Lutra* deserves better, so I have decided to step down from the editorial board.

Jasja Dekker is also leaving our board, after nine years. Besides being an editor, Jasja was *Lutra*'s secretary from 2003 to 2008. In addition, he made some much appreciated initiatives, such as the compilation and production of the '50 Volumes of *Lutra*' DVD in 2008. We thank Jasja for being a great colleague over the years and wish him all the best in his career at the Dutch Mammal Society.

2011 is the United Nations' Year of the Bat (or, preferably, 'Bats'; cf. our last issue's editorial). Therefore, this issue is largely devoted to this highly successful group of mammals. Martijn Boonman's paper on the use of culverts by bats presents information that is highly pertinent when planning (new or wider) roads or railways, that may cause habitat fragmen-

tation. Marc Van De Sijpe provides us with some new insights into the echolocation of the trawling bats of Europe, employing an extremely sensitive type of ultrasound microphone. Furthermore, we also have papers on the population trends of the harbour porpoise and the occurrence of the bicoloured white-toothed shrew in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen and its current status in the Netherlands.

Lutra has an interesting future ahead. I wish my colleagues on the editorial board all the best in realising its potential.

In this edition of *Lutra* a new general layout has been adopted which features the Dutch Mammal Society's new logo: a more modern design of our traditional symbol of the long, whiskered otter. The old logo has embellished this journal and many other documents for many years. But *panta rhei* also applies to the image of the Dutch Mammal Society. And, while we have maintained *Lutra lutra* as the symbol of our society and its scientific journal, we have opted for a more modern representation of it.

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