

# Resource

JUNE 2022 VOLUME 16

The journalism platform for all at Wageningen University & Research

**Two-tier approach**  
for nitrogen

**Work pressure study**  
shelved

**Taxonomy**  
as important  
as ever

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## FOREWORD

### Calling

As a Biology Master's student, I did my internship in the rainforest of Central Kalimantan, an Indonesian province on Borneo. It was a real adventure, but not cheap. I didn't get an internship allowance; instead I had to pay the organization about 400 euros a month to live and work there. I borrowed up to my limit. My degree in Wageningen gave me a heightened sense of responsibility to protect nature and 'save the world'. It is an urgent issue, but that is not reflected in the labour market. Working for free is widely accepted in a field that is often seen as a calling. But how do you progress from being a volunteer to being a paid professional? Three successful nature conservationists share their tips on page 24. Nature conservation is a people business, and that tends to get forgotten in degree programmes such as Biology and Forest & Nature Conservation. WUR alumnus Tjalle Boorsma has another tip for the university: 'Teach students how to sell themselves and make a pitch, to raise funds and market something.' Nature conservation is about more than standing up for endangered animals. You also have to stand up for yourself and the people who live alongside the nature that is under threat.

**Stijn Schreven**  
Science Editor





## PROTEST

On Saturday 11 June, hundreds of students travelled to Amsterdam for a protest as they want a bigger basic grant and more compensation for the 'unlucky students' who lost out on thousands of euros in grants because they were subject to the loan system. Emma Mouthaan (not in the photo), a Molecular Nutrition & Toxicology Master's student, was there. 'The maximum compensation for the loan-system generation is 1400 euros. That is less than what people with a student grant get *per year*.' The basic grant was abolished in 2015-2016 but will be returning in 2023-2024. Students not living at home will get over 3000 euros a year in student grants. LZ

Photo Josefine van Enk

# Work pressure study is shelved

**A new study on the causes of the work pressure at WUR has been shelved for the time being. This is because of the commotion within the organization and on the intranet in response to the announcement of the study. People are concerned by the use of employees' personal data from the latest Employee Monitor and they question the benefit of yet another study on work pressure.**

'We still believe the study would be useful,' says Myrte Marechal of Corporate HR. 'We think it can give us substantive insights. And all due care was taken regarding privacy. But given the reactions, you have to wonder whether the findings would be accepted. The commotion shows lots of people think such a study

won't help at present.'

The new study, to be conducted by an external consultancy, involves linking personal data from the Employee Monitor to sickness absence data and information from MyProjects. Does that mean people's privacy is at risk? No, says corporate privacy officer Peter Ras.

'The Employee Monitor is anonymous for WUR,' says Ras. 'We can't trace the data to an individual. But Effectory, the firm that runs the monitor, can link results at the individual level. After all, they sent the emails inviting staff to fill in the monitor.'

## Legitimate interest

Ras says WUR is allowed to process the data because resolving the work pres-

sure problem is a 'legitimate interest' as defined in the General Data Protection Regulation. 'Every time you process

**'Given the reactions, you have to wonder whether the findings would be accepted'**

for staff.'

It is not clear whether the study will go ahead eventually, says Marechal. 'First, we will look at where we are now and whether this really is the right route.' RK

data, you need a defined purpose and a lawful basis. Legitimate interest is one such basis. Work pressure is a big problem, not just for WUR but also

## Newcomers on TOTY longlist

Birgit Boogaard (who teaches Knowledge Technology and Innovation) and Casper Quist (Biosystematics) have made the longlist for the Teacher of the Year election for the first time.

The other eight nominees have been on previous longlists. Students were able to vote for their favourite teacher in May. A student jury will now select a top five (the shortlist) and a winner, who will be announced on 11 October. Boogaard sees her nomination as a sign of recognition for two of her main courses: African Philosophy and Social Justice Technology & Development. 'I'm really grateful that students recognize the need for them.' Quist calls his nomination 'fantastic'. 'The material I teach is stuff I really enjoy myself, and it seems that comes across.' LZ

Read more at [www.resource-online.nl](http://www.resource-online.nl)



## Rowing in the Ringvaart for KWF

Argonauts Luwe Groot and Wout Gerdes rowed in the 100-kilometre Ringvaart regatta under the direction of cox Bas Sapthu. And they did so in the 'Tante Dien', de oldest and slowest boat in the Argo fleet, true to an established tradition. Club chair Groot did wonder as he rowed quite why this has become

a tradition, but when they reached the finishing line, the predominant feeling was pride. 'We were one of the last boats to finish, but we made it.' And in doing so, the rowers raised nearly 4000 euros for cancer research organization KWF. LZ

## 4

That is the percentage wage increase as of 1 July that the unions have negotiated in the collective labour agreements for the Dutch universities and for Wageningen Research Foundation. Before you get your hopes up: inflation was 8.8 per cent in May. So the extra one-off gross payment of 400 euros (pro rata for part-timers) included in both agreements is particularly welcome. ME

## Art magazine to bring uni and town together

A group of student and non-student Wageningen residents are starting a new Wageningen magazine for art and culture, entitled *Uitwaaien*.

'We want to create an open platform where the people of Wageningen can share their artistic endeavours, from writing and painting to sculpture and dance,' says Fernando Gabriel Gracia Teruel, a Biosystems Engineering Master's student and one of the initiators.

The idea is that the magazine should bridge the gap between the university community and townspeople. 'They often live separate lives,' explains Health & Society Master's student Susan van Weperen. A lack of platforms for creative expression was another reason for starting the magazine.

The first issue of the magazine is planned for September. Input is welcome; go to [uitwaaienmagazine.nl](http://uitwaaienmagazine.nl). ME



### BUSYNESS MAKES YOU (NOT) THINK

BUSY EVERMORE  
TO WRITE IS MIGHT  
NO BUCKS, THAT SUCKS  
THINK-TIME OUT THE DOOR

HERSCHO DUDS

## Minister also goes for two-tier approach to nitrogen issue

**Nitrogen minister Christianne van der Wal announced more details about the government's nitrogen plans on Friday. Resource asked Tia Hermans, chair of WUR's Taskforce Integrated Regional Approach, to comment.**

**Farmers think the minister is still too vague. Do you agree?**

'I understand their reaction; the letter gives an initial indication and it isn't clear what this means for an individual farm. It still doesn't say what measures are needed to achieve the nitrogen targets. That will be the real challenge.'

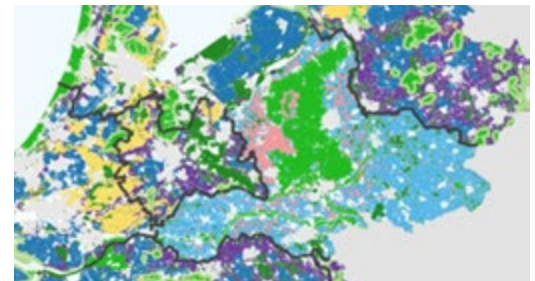
**That is now up to the provinces?**

'The minister says a combination of generic and area-specific measures are needed — precisely what we said in our nitrogen roadmap. But the provinces need to know what the generic policy is likely to be in order to figure out what area-spe-

cific measures to take, because the generic policy has different effects on different areas. To give an example, if the protein content of cattle feed is reduced, that will have a bigger effect in areas with a lot of dairy cows.'

**What does this letter mean for the Nitrogen Taskforce?**

'Our taskforce takes the integrated targets as its starting point — not just the nitrogen targets but also the climate objectives and the targets in the Water Framework Directive, because they are interconnected. The minister mentions that integrated aspect, but her letter only deals with the nitrogen targets. We will continue to investigate what sets of measures are required to achieve the targets in combination, while playing with the mix of area-specific and generic measures. We will also look at how farms fit in. Because just as provinces have to



The emission reduction chart from the minister's letter. Illustration Ministry of Agriculture

satisfy the national objectives, so farms have to stay within the provincial limits — and the impact differs depending on the type of farm. That is why we look at the socio-economic impact of the various sets of measures. To some extent these are questions the ministry and provinces are asking, but it's also partly our own line of research. This is how we try to keep the big picture in view.' ME



## Impact Award for fight against food waste

**Food Waste Free United, an initiative by Toine Timmermans, has won the first WUR Impact Award. Timmermans has been advocating cutting food waste for more than two decades.**

‘Super, I’m very pleased about it,’ responds Timmermans. ‘But our goal is to reduce food waste by half in the Netherlands and the world. And we still have a long way to go. If you row against the tide and you really want to change things, it takes time. This is a great morale-booster and it stands for recognition.’

There were eight entries for the first Impact Award. According to jury chair Marcel Schuttelaar (founder of Schuttelaar & Partners), each and every one was a fine example of a high-impact application of WUR science. ‘Projects that make me proud to be a WUR alumnus. Of the eight entries, four were nominated for the prize.’

The three runners-up were: NL2120, Bio Asphalt and Strip farming. NL2120 created a map last year of a future sustainable

**‘Our goal is to reduce food waste by half, and we still have a long way to go’**

Netherlands, as it could look in 100 years. Bio Asphalt works on making asphalt in which fossil fuel-based bitumen is partially replaced

by plant-based lignin. Strip farming is all about the advantages of growing different crops alongside each other.

The winning team will be honoured with a tile on the WUR Walk of Fame at Impulse, support with further activities aimed at expanding their impact, and the opportunity to dine with external guests at Omnia’s Faculty Club. With no food waste: Timmermans is confident of that. ‘Caterer Hutten is playing a pioneering role in tackling food waste.’<sup>RK</sup>



## Cricket in Wageningen

Cricket should become a Wageningen sport, says the Indian Student Association ISA. Bhakti Pawani, the ISA event coordinator, explains, ‘We thought it would be nice to organize a tournament. We’ve tried to follow the format of the Indian Premier League, where you auction players (photo) with team managers, team names and logos. So that’s what we did at the end of May.’ The first tournament will take place on 18 and 19 June at De Bongerd. JW

## New columnist: Sjoukje Osinga

University lecturer Sjoukje Osinga will be writing in *Resource* about education, information technology and anything else that catches her interest in Wageningen University life.

Osinga is an assistant professor in the Information Technology group at the Leeuwenborch. ‘So we’re in with the social sciences. A bit of an odd position for IT, but in Wageningen you belong to either the plant, animal, food, environmental or social sciences. Actually, IT is part and parcel of all of them, of course.’ After studying Artificial Intelligence and Cognitive Science in Groningen and Leuven, Osinga came to Wageningen in 1991. ‘I hadn’t even graduated yet but I could already start work here as an assistant professor. Those were very different times. There was no tenure track yet and hardly anyone in the group had a PhD, partly because IT was still a relatively new field at that

time.’ But Osinga did gain a PhD in 2015 with a thesis on agent-based modelling, which is the modelling of decision-making behaviour and the knowledge people use for it. She used examples from the pork supply chain in China, which she studied while living there for six months in 2006, with her husband and three small children.

She already has quite an array of ideas for her columns. ‘I have plenty to write about, especially in relation to education. And about things like the relationship between the university and the city: now that the aula has moved to Omnia, WUR is disappearing from the Wageningen townscape. The campus is beautiful, but isn’t it too much of a closed-off cocoon?’ LZ

*Want to know more about Sjoukje? You can read more online (Resource-online.nl). Read her first column on page 15.*

## Include food lessons in primary school curriculum

**Three out of four Dutch primary school pupils (aged 9 to 11) don't eat enough vegetables, and four out of five eat too little fruit. To improve this situation, schools can take part in the Taste Lessons and EU School Fruit programmes for lessons on healthy eating. Angeliek Verdonschot investigated how effective the programmes are.**

Verdonschot sat in on the Taste Lessons at 15 schools. This programme was used by about 5000 of the 7000 Dutch primary schools in 2017-2020. The programme consists of five lessons with experiments, cooking, tasting and homework to do with your parents. To evaluate the lessons, the

**'It would be good if the lessons got the parents involved'**

researcher used an assessment model developed by the University of Newcastle (Australia), where she did her PhD as well as at

WUR. 'It's mainly a

way of discussing the quality; it's not about comparing schools or programmes.'

Parents

Verdonschot also studied the effect of EU School Fruit in combination with Taste Lessons on the children's healthy eating behaviour. The lesson packages turned out to be of high quality, although the effect on pupils' eating behaviour varied between schools. Children at schools without a policy for healthy eating as the norm — such as no biscuits in the break — ate more fruit and veg after the EU School Fruit programme than children who didn't take part in the programme. Children where a healthy diet was not seen as so important at home also ate more healthily thanks to the EU School Fruit and Taste Lessons.

Verdonschot thinks that lessons on a healthy diet should be included in the standard curriculum of primary schools. 'There should also be more customization and it would be good if the lessons got the parents involved.' ss

## Mapping farmland soil life

The Netherlands has the most intensely surveyed soils in the world. But one aspect has not received so much attention, namely soil life. That will change with the new SoilProS project, funded by the Dutch Research Council and aimed at producing a new map of soil life.

The initiator Wim van der Putten, professor of Functional Biodiversity at WUR and the Netherlands Institute of Ecology (NIOO), explains how the map will be made. 'We are going to collect and analyse 1000 soil samples. We will draw on the existing soil maps and our knowledge of soil use.'

The survey is just the first step. The idea is to develop sustainable production systems, which are urgently needed, says Van der Putten. Intensive farming has led to soils specialized in one function only: crop production. That has been at the expense of other soil functions such as storing greenhouse gases, supplying clean drinking water and suppressing diseases and pests.

### Molecular profile

SoilProS aims to revitalize soil life and restore that multi-functionality. 'There is still a lot of biodiversity in farmland soils,' says Van der Putten. 'But certain components are missing that are essential for multi-functionality. The

important thing is to get back those components.'

The sample analyses are not about cataloguing individual micro-organisms. 'What we do is make a molec-

**'Intensive farming has led to soils specialized in one function only: crop production'**

ular profile of the soil based on the DNA we find in a sample. The profile says something about the diversity of micro-organisms in that soil.'

Artificial intelligence and machine learning will be used to identify patterns in the data. Van der Putten: 'Can the soil use be related to the profiles we find? And what should you do to change a certain cluster X of soil life into a different cluster Y?' Trials will also be run to test whether it works in practice. RK



Photo Shutterstock



## A Little Wiser

# The secret of lightning

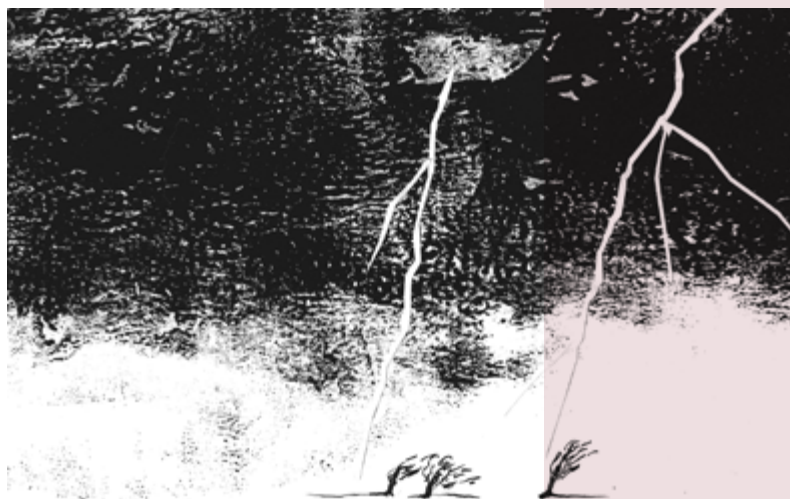
Summer is coming and it's nice and warm, but that also means thunder and lightning. How do they happen, actually?

'Lightning occurs in warm and humid weather,' says Bert Heusinkveld, a researcher in Meteorology and Air Quality. Warm air rises and you see a stack of clouds piling up. Higher up in the clouds, the water vapour cools and cold air and ice particles sink to the bottom. And the ice particles and water droplets collide. This transports an electric charge and creates a voltage difference in the cloud. The upper part of the cloud is mainly positively charged and the lower part negatively charged, just like a battery. This voltage difference slowly builds up and when it reaches a threshold value, discharge occurs in the form of a lightning flash. Heusinkveld: 'The flash usually goes to another cloud, but about a quarter of the flashes go to the ground. In the Netherlands, we get about 200,000 lightning strikes a year, most of them in August when it's hot and sultry.'

The discharge chooses the path of least resistance, which is usually the highest point in an open field. 'Every year, one or two people die as a result of being struck by lightning,' says Heusinkveld. 'It was more in the old days, when farmers still gathered up the hay with a pitchfork. Nowadays, it is not farmers who are affected but golfers.'

If you are unlucky enough to be in an open field when it thunders, crouch down with your feet close together. Heusinkveld: 'If your feet are far apart, there is a voltage difference between them and you will be electrocuted if you are struck. If your feet are close together, the difference is small and not much current flows through your body. By crouching, you reduce the chance of lightning striking you. If you are in water, you are even more at risk, because water is a good conductor and electricity will quickly spread across the surface. Fish are not usually affected, except when they swim just under the surface.'

Another fact: because thunderstorms are caused by the rising of warm, moist air, they do not occur at the North and South Poles as the sun hardly warms the surface there. Thunderstorms are also rare in deserts, but that is because it is too dry and clouds hardly form there. TL



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**'Every year, one or two people die by being struck by lightning. There were more in the past'**

Bert Heusinkveld,  
researcher in Meteorology  
and Air Quality

Every day we are bombarded with masses of sometimes contradictory information on pressing issues. In this feature, a WUR scientist gives you something to hold on to. What are the facts of the matter?

Every question makes you a little wiser. Do you dare to ask yours? Email us at [redactie@resource.nl](mailto:redactie@resource.nl)

Illustration Marly Hendricks



# Sniffer bees

Bees are useful creatures because of their role as pollinators, but they can do more: it turns out they make good detectives. Klaas van Rozen, a Field Crops researcher in Lelystad, will be using their skills to track down diseased seed potatoes.

These are potatoes affected by potato virus Y (PVY). This is by far the most important virus that seed potato growers have to deal with. The virus is spread by aphids. You can tell the plant is diseased by the discolouration and deformation

## Growers would benefit a lot from early detection of the potato virus

of the leaves, explains Van Rozen, but that is not always the case. 'It depends on the variety, the virus strain

and at what point you are in the growing season.'

The damage to the seed potatoes costs money, so growers put a lot of time and effort into preventing the disease. Van Rozen: 'They carry out an intensive selection, spray the plants with mineral oil every week to protect them and at regular intervals with insecticide to kill the aphids. The inspectorate checks the fields and there is a check of the tubers after the harvest.'

If too many plants or tubers are found with the virus, batches get rejected. So growers would benefit a lot from early detection of the virus. Detection and removal of infected plants is still a manual job. 'It would be useful to have a

system to remove diseased plants during the field inspection or post-harvest check,' says Van Rozen.

## Conditioning

That is where the bees come in. Van Rozen's idea is to train bees to identify the infected plants. He is enlisting the help of the Wageningen company BeeSense. It will use classical conditioning (the Pavlov effect) to train bees to sound the alarm if they detect the virus. The training uses the bee's sense of smell.

'The virus changes the plant's cell structure,' explains Van Rozen. 'This causes the plant to emit aromas, which the bees can be trained to detect. So the bee doesn't smell the virus itself.' The first step is an experiment to demonstrate whether the principle works. Then field trials will show whether it is feasible in practice. RK



Photo Shutterstock

## Wild cards

Klaas van Rozen's idea is one of ten projects that have received funding in the Biodiversity-positive Food Systems investment theme. That is one of the investment themes in WUR's updated Strategic Plan. Some of the investment money is going on 'wild cards': small-scale innovative studies. Ten of the 47 wild-card project proposals were accepted, getting a total of 200,000 euros. The bee study received 42,000 euros.

# Contact matters for cow and calf

PhD candidate Margret Wenker investigated the effect of contact between the cow and calf on welfare and health.

Wenker examined three kinds of contact: no contact (separated shortly after birth, which is the norm in dairy farming); full contact (the calf is kept with the cows and suckles the mother); and an intermediary variant where there is interaction but no suckling.

**For more animal-friendly livestock farming, we should be prepared to adapt the system to suit the animal**

## Does contact affect welfare?

'Behavioural experiments showed that cows value having contact with the calf: they were prepared to push increasingly heavy fences aside to get that contact. There were no negative effects on the cow's health, although of course the milk yield was less. The fat content of the milk was also lower, probably because the



cow makes less oxytocin, a hormone that is thought to influence the amount of fat released.'

## Full contact was a mixed blessing for the calf?

'We did indeed see some negative effects on health, which can mainly be explained by the fact that cowsheds are not geared to housing very young animals at present.

However, calves with full contact had a significantly larger daily weight gain and a different microbiome composition in the manure, which influences the immune system. Those factors could be beneficial to health in the longer run.'

## So health is not a reason to prevent contact?

'No. It should really be an argument to see how the barn system can be adapted to allow cow-calf contact without any negative effects for the calf. If we want livestock farming with respect for the animals, we should be prepared to adapt the system more to suit the animal. Contact between cow and calf can be a significant step towards more animal-friendly livestock farming. Although important prerequisites are financial compensation for the loss of milk and more knowledge about the changes that need to be made to the barn system.' ME

## In other news science with a wink

### ◆ ROBOT (1)

Researchers at EPFL University in Lausanne have developed a programme that calculates the likelihood of a robot taking over your job. They compare the requirements of 1000 jobs with the skills of robots and humans. Physicists are in luck; with a score of 0.43 (on a scale of 0 to 1) they do best. Abattoir workers have the highest risk: 0.78.

### ◆ ROBOT (2)

So how worried should you be? Here's a selection in descending order of cause for concern.

Livestock farmers: 0.68. Bricklayers: 0.68. Fitness trainers: 0.66. Bicycle mechanics: 0.64. Food technologists: 0.64. Caretakers: 0.63. Chemists: 0.59. Journalists: 0.58. Librarians: 0.58. Information officers: 0.55. Geneticists: 0.55. Biochemists: 0.51.

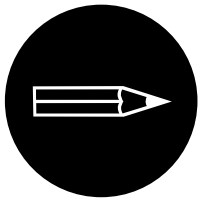
### ◆ MILK

Pregnant women produce super-antibodies to protect their babies, say researchers from Cincinnati Medical Center. The proteins are slight variants on standard antibodies. But that minimal difference broadens

their field of action considerably. The protection continues after birth via breastfeeding. Breast milk: a superfood.

### ◆ POLITICAL

Brain scans show whether someone is politically progressive or conservative, say scientists from Ohio State University after studying 174 adults. As for the chicken and the egg in this case, the researchers are in the dark. Do your political leanings shape the structure of the brain or does the brain determine political leanings? Creepy. RK



## 'Taxonomy is more important than ever'

*'In the end we will preserve only what we love; we will love only what we understand; and we will understand only what we are taught.'*

– Baba Dioum

We live in a time when many species are in danger of becoming extinct before we have learned anything about them. At the same time, most biology students cannot distinguish a beetle from a bug and all our taxonomic knowledge lies with a small group of grey old men. We need taxonomy - the description and classification of life forms – in order to learn how to recognize and protect life on Earth. Despite this, there is less and less money available, less interest and much knowledge is slowly being lost. We therefore object to the recently

**'Without collection-based research, we would have no idea that there was an insect decline going on in the first place'**

opinion, it wrongly suggests that (1) we can do without taxonomy, (2) collecting is not important and (3) collecting insects contributes to the global decline in insect populations. We would like to offer a considerably more nuanced perspective.

The article waves goodbye to an imaginary taxonomist brandishing his pins. The archetype of the 19th-century butterfly catcher can indeed be dismissed today, but not because taxonomy has had its day. On the contrary. Genetic research will not be able to replace specimen collection any time soon, precisely because the DNA code is still unknown for species on which we need a lot of taxonomic expertise. Nor can genetic research replace the most important

published article 'Goodbye pins and needles' on *Resource's* website. In our

side effect of taxonomy: discovering the love of nature by seeing it with one's own eyes - something that the famous quote from Baba Dioum illustrates nicely.

Whether killing insects is necessary for education and research is an important question. Today's taxonomists use macro photography, image recognition and molecular techniques, but do still collect insects when necessary. Anyone who researches biodiversity has to collect material sooner or later. Without collection-based research, we would have no idea that there was an insect decline going on in the first place. In our opinion, calling a halt to collecting entirely is counterproductive in this respect. The collected material not only serves educational purposes, but is also a resource for future research. As long as they are well preserved, specimens are of increasing value for all kinds of future genetic, toxicological, taxonomic and ecological research. Of course, the collecting and killing of insects should be done with great care and only when strictly necessary.

Finally, let us look at the facts; collecting insects does not affect their populations. In fact, unthinking everyday choices we all make result in masses of dead insects, many times more than what is collected throughout the Pyrenees course. Think, for example, of the immediate impact of mowing the lawn or driving a car or the indirect effects



of eating sprayed crops, using DEET or defleaing your pet.

It is 'five to twelve', the very last chance we have to turn things around and give as many species as possible a sustainable future. For this very reason, let us pay more attention to our choices and honour the species diversity around us. Not by letting them quietly disappear through our thoughtlessness, but by seeking them out, learning about them and thus being able to protect them.

*Eva Drukker (PhD), Rick Buesink and Corné van der Linden (Master's students) in Biosystematics, also supervisors on the Pyrenees excursion*

This letter is a response to the article 'Goodbye pins and needles', in which university professor Nina Fatouros explains why students no longer kill insects during the annual Pyrenees excursion. Scan the QR code to read the article.



# Work pressure: will it never end?

Now that we are back on campus after two strange Covid years, no one could deny that work pressure has got worse rather than better. With the summer holiday in sight – and who isn't in need of it? – it is time to go into action on solving this. For real this time.



Text Marieke Enter

**J**oshua Dijkman is an associate professor of Physical Chemistry and Soft Matter and represents the FNV trade union in a process known as the Local Consultation (*Lokaal Overleg*, see inset).

In the latter capacity, he pays close attention to developments in the collective labour agreement (CAO). This year, work pressure was an important issue at the negotiating table – and by no means for the first time. Enough to make you despair? Yes and no, he thinks. 'It is quite embarrassing that the problem still persists despite years of campaigning and protests. And WUR does acknowledge that too. What I find positive about the new university CAO, apart from the section on pay, is that it expresses a clear commitment to really fleshing out solutions that can reduce the work pressure.'

## Why is work pressure such a persistent problem?

'One of the reasons is that most scientists love their work and tend to be willing to go the extra mile. If recruitment was to dry up, there would be a much greater incentive to address the work pressure. But the reality is that there are too many rather than too few applicants for an academic career. So it is standard in the scientific community to work on in the evenings and weekends. Another factor is that many scientists feel a strong competitive

urge to more or less set up their own business. As a result, you sometimes find the same mentality at universities as in start-ups, with alpha males (and females) working 80 to 100 hours a week, staying overnight in their offices if necessary, and thinking that's okay. We know that this can result in a highly toxic work culture.'

## Local Consultation seeks input

The CAO for Dutch Universities includes a number of points on which further agreements must be made by individual universities (i.e. locally) on the precise details regarding things like work pressure, tenure track arrangements or social safety. The body that makes these agreements with the Executive Board and sees to it that they are carried out correctly is called the Local Consultation, or Personnel Affairs Consultation WU (OPWU). A number of WU colleagues represent their unions in these consultative bodies. Wageningen Research has its own collective agreement, with a local Periodic Consultation WR (POWR). OPWU and POWR work closely together. The WUR Council does not formally have a role in drawing up the CAO but it is an important sounding board. If you have ideas, about how to reduce the work pressure for instance, the Local Consultation invites you to share them, for example by sending an email to [joshua.dijkman@wur.nl](mailto:joshua.dijkman@wur.nl).



'The mentality at universities can be the same as in start-ups, with alpha males (and females) working 80 to 100 hours a week, staying overnight in their offices if necessary, and thinking that's okay. We know that can result in a very toxic work culture' • Illustration Valerie Geelen

### **That assumes that the solution lies with the scientists: just stop working so hard.**

'That is an oversimplification. But the solutions don't have to be enormously complicated. More support staff would solve a lot of problems at WUR, for example. According to figures from Universities of the Netherlands (UNL), the number of support staff at WUR has remained constant for years, which is astonishing in view of the big growth in the number of students and the huge increase in scientific output. Over the past 15 years, the number of lecturers at WUR has increased sixfold, but the administrative support they get has not kept pace at all.'

### **'It is standard in the scientific community to work on in the evenings and weekends'**

” The work pressure definitely hasn't declined. Until recently I thought nothing was really being done about it, but I've discovered WUR is looking at how to cut the internal bureaucracy: the administrative red tape and unwieldy IT systems. Hopefully that will make a real difference in the workload in the foreseeable future. Even so, the main reason for the work pressure — the systematic underfunding of universities — has still not been resolved.'

*Han Wiskerke – professor of Rural Sociology*

### **Are you arguing for even more flexible workers?**

'No! Continuity is important. To cite an example: WUR uses agency workers to check the student cards at exams. Unfortunately, these workers often fail to show up. Then the teachers have to check the student cards themselves. There is no time to do that, so you often don't bother. Why aren't permanent support staff available to do this? It's not as if WUR only runs three exams a year... You get good work from people who don't have



to be re-trained every time; who get the chance to gain experience and therefore get better and more efficient at the job. These are the advantages of offering people good career prospects.’

**Does this apply to lecturers and researchers too?**

‘I think it is most obvious in the case of lecturers. There are always teaching tasks – in fact, they are our core business – and the university is largely financed by the government for them. From that perspective, it is strange that nearly 50 per cent of Wageningen lecturers are on flexible contracts. In research, it seems harder to offer people good career prospects, because research is nearly always funded on a project basis. Which, incidentally, is another thing that increases the work pressure, because your funding simply ends at some point. But in research too, there is something to be said for having a fixed cohort of researchers – like experts in software, data management or other crucial research infrastructure: the kind of knowledge that is needed in almost every project. The Dutch Research Council is already pondering ways of embedding this kind of knowledge, but we should give it more thought at the local Wageningen level as well.’

**Because knowledge retention and continuity affect not just work pressure but also quality?**

‘What is more, knowledge retention and continuity are non-negotiable conditions for quality. It is much more efficient to organize things well, so you can accrue long-term knowledge. The solutions to this go beyond

” Nothing has improved for me since last year. It feels as if WUR is making the employee responsible for tackling the work pressure. They offer courses on working more efficiently, put out fresh fruit and give staff the opportunity to relax with a massage at the office. That’s all very well, but it leaves us saddled with the real problem.’

*Michiel Köhne – assistant professor in the Anthropology of Law*

” Although I am still experiencing the tail end of the Covid overload, I see improvements in the work pressure. There were far more changes to the education administrative systems during the Covid crisis, but now the university is restricting that again. We also discuss work pressure openly in our group. You really feel supported then. However, I would like more time to work on the connections with lecturers outside my group because I get a lot of pleasure from those connections and they also reduce the work pressure.’

*Jet Vervoort – lecturer in Nematology*

just pulling out your wallet – which is not necessarily the most sensible way to relieve the work pressure. In my opinion, lasting solutions lie more in “clear career prospects for lecturers that do justice to what they do for the universities”, in the words of the trade unions. WUR already has some good initiatives. Examples are the EduHub, or the team of lecturers at the Plant Sciences Group who can teach various courses that are run every year, so those lecturers get very good at them. But you must give those people a permanent contract, otherwise you’ll lose them again. WUR is one of the best universities in the world. So we should have the courage to make the investments needed to keep up that high standard.’ ■

**Research creates a stir**

The Employee Monitor has been highlighting the high work pressure for years. In the 2021 edition, 44 per cent of respondents said the work pressure was too high or much too high. WUR announced that it wanted to conduct a follow-up study to get a better idea of the causes. That created a stir, with criticism both of the substance of the plan (‘waste of money, this is the umpteenth study on work pressure - better to invest that time and energy in lasting solutions’) and of the process: several colleagues are not amused that WUR is planning to share data from the Employee Monitor with an external research agency. The study has now been shelved in view of the concerned reactions. See page 4.



# Royal Wageningen



**Sjoukje Osinga**

I see Crown Princess Amalia will be going to university in Amsterdam. Good for her that she is not slavishly following the family tradition — King Willem Alexander, Queen Beatrix and Queen Juliana all studied at Leiden. But did she consider Wageningen? Her degree is a combination of law, economics, politics and psychology. Not what you associate with Wageningen, but appearances can be deceptive. Her father studied history, but later got involved in water management. He would have been better off going to Wageningen for that. Máxima studied economics in Argentina, so a Dutch

## **‘Perhaps we could interest Amalia in a Master’s at Wageningen?’**

university was not an obvious alternative. But now she works around the world on microfinance for small business owners who don’t have access to the capital market. She would have got excellent preparation for that task at Wageningen.

I was recently involved in providing information to school leavers. We tried to put our Wageningen degree programme in the best possible light. We covered all bases. Look at our content — you won’t get this anywhere else! Look at our supervision —

small scale and you get lots of attention! Look at our status — Wageningen has topped the student guide ranking for years! But I noticed when talking to the school leavers afterwards that they had very different concerns. ‘What time do lectures begin in the morning?’ ‘How good does my English need to be?’ ‘How easy is it to find a room?’ Their considerations are very practical. ‘I have a friend here so she can show me the ropes.’ ‘It’s good for sports here.’ ‘I heard Wageningen is quite nice once you’re there.’

I suspect Amalia has got a lot going for her. She passed her school leaving exams with distinction, and her hobbies are horse riding, tennis and singing. Given her choice of degree, it seems she is interested in a combination of disciplines that she will be able to apply broadly. But hang on, aren’t ‘interdisciplinary’ and ‘applicability’ our middle names at Wageningen? Perhaps we could interest her in a Master’s?

If she came to our open day, I know what I would tell her. Amalia, the Ginkelse Heide is great for horse riding, and I can recommend a really fun choir for you!

This is the first column by Sjoukje Osinga, an assistant professor in the Information Technology group. Sjoukje studies big data. In her spare time she sings in the Wageningen chamber choir Musica Vocale. Read more about her on page 6.



## PROTEIN ADVENTURE

What are proteins and why are they so unequally distributed around the world? What makes it so logical to add tofu, tempeh, seaweed, lupin beans and mealworms to our diet, and what is the role of your eyes, ears and fingers in making food choices? Around 200 primary school children learned about such things during an XXL edition of the Junior Science Lab on the protein transition. WUR scientists Machiel Reinders and Maaïke Nieuwland gave an interactive lecture on 'adventurous proteins' – with a protein cooking lesson, which immediately became an attempt to break the world record for 'cooking with children'. It was a success on all counts. ME





## Tagged lapwings provide surprising insights

# WHERE ARE THE CHICKS?

Lapwings are raising hardly any chicks these days, monitoring of tagged birds has revealed. As a result, some of the birds are making bizarre excursions.



Text Roelof Kleis

**O**n a newly mown tract of grassland near the Brabant village of Eethen, student Roisin Normanly is emptying an insect trap. A week's harvest floats in the bright blue liquid in the trap. The dead insects will be taken to the lab in Wageningen for logging. There are five more of these 'reference points' scattered around the landscape, which between them provide a picture of the insect population in this small section of the area known as *the Land van Heusden en Altena*.

We need that picture to understand why lapwing chicks born here are having such difficulty fledging,

i.e. reaching the age when they are ready to leave the nest. Because that is where the problem lies. Lapwings in the Netherlands are not thriving. 'Lapwing numbers are falling by five per cent per year. It is estimated that there are still about 120,000 breeding pairs in the country but lapwing numbers have been declining sharply since the turn of the century. This is mainly because too few chicks reach adulthood.'

Visser has been researching the mortality of lapwing chicks since April, working with the Dutch Centre for Field Ornithology (Sovon) and the ecological consultancy Altenburg & Wymenga. For the first time, this is being done by fitting mother birds with GPS transmitters. At six locations in the country, six breeding lapwings were equipped with a lightweight (4.5 gram) GPS transmitter. 'By keeping track of the mothers, we also know where the young are,' Visser explains. 'So we hobble after the mothers and measure things we consider relevant for the survival of the chicks.'

### Tagging

Tagging lapwings is a time-consuming task. The birds are shy by nature. In Tim Visser's study, the mother birds are captured at the end of the brooding period. 'The urge to brood is strongest when the eggs are about to hatch,' Visser explains. 'Then they don't let anything deter them.' To tag a brooding bird, the eggs are first removed from the nest and replaced by fake eggs. A trap is then placed over the nest. Then it is a matter of waiting for the mother to return. 'When she touches a taut string, the trap closes,' says Visser. 'The bird is fitted with a transmitter, and then you release it and put the real eggs back.' The egg-swapping trick is a precautionary measure to avoid damaging the eggs.

### Decisive conditions

The measuring entails placing insect traps near the chicks' roosting places, taking soil samples, measuring soil moisture and mapping the vegetation (high, low,

etc.). Visser: 'This data is compared with data from the fixed measuring points in the area. That shows you which families manage to raise their chicks and what conditions are decisive. Is it the worms in the soil, the availability of insects, or the humidity of the soil? That sort of thing.'

A key fact here is that lapwings are a precocial species, Visser explains. 'That means that the chicks set off to find their own food soon after hatching. The parents protect and guide them. Insects are especially important for young chicks. As they grow older, they eat more and more worms. But these have to be available. And that is determined by how hard and wet the soil is. Worms that are 50 centimetres deep in the ground are no use to lapwings.'

The transmitters record the locations of the birds every half hour. Every 12 hours, Visser receives these posi-

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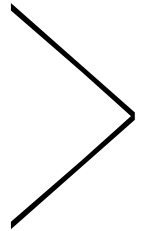
## 'THE NUMBER OF LAPWINGS IS FALLING BY FIVE PER CENT PER YEAR'

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## 'THE DECLINING LAPWING POPULATION IS A 'DOMESTIC' PROBLEM'

tions on his mobile phone via the GSM network. 'There have been quite a lot of studies on field birds, but it has always been difficult to track them. You can colour-ring them, but even then they are easy to lose sight of. These transmitters make it a lot easier.' They also generate some surprising observations.

It seems that families with surviving chicks often stay in one place for a long time. Visser: 'They get very attached to their locality and can get by with a territory of a few dozen square metres. So if they stay, it must be a good spot. If they start to roam further afield, you



Tim Visser is measuring worms, the adult lapwing's favourite food, using a ruler on his mobile phone • Photo Roelof Kleis



Lapwing chicks • Photo Tim Visser

## ‘WE HAD SIX CLUTCHES HERE AND ONLY ONE FLEDGELING SURVIVED’

know it won't end well.’ And birds whose clutch of chicks don't survive have been known to do the oddest things. ‘One bird from Friesland flew to Ukraine. And one from this part of Brabant even flew to Russia. We have never seen that before. It is well known that lapwings migrate outside the breeding season, but during the season – that is really spectacular! We are now waiting to see what they will do there. It would be even more extraordinary if they started nesting there now. Two nests in one season, many hundreds of kilometres apart. The only way to find out such things is by tagging birds.’

### Difficult year

Meanwhile, although the summer has yet to get going, it is clear that 2022 is going to be a bad year for lapwings. ‘We had six clutches here, with three

to four eggs in each nest. And we only have one fledgling. The chicks just don't make it here. And things are not much better at some of the other research locations,’ Visser says. ‘That is alarming and not good. It's an indication of how problematic the situation is.’ He does have an explanation for the poor results. ‘It has been a very difficult year. It was dry for a long time and drought is bad for field birds. Birds like wet ground, which they can peck away at. And most species of insects, the staple food

of lapwing chicks, need wet conditions too.’

And then there is predation. Visser points out a marsh harrier being chased away by about 10 lapwings. ‘The lack of suitable habitats makes the chicks extra vulnerable to predation. Especially when the families start flying around the area, looking for suitable grassland.’ On a nearby tract of flooded land, a group of lapwings is foraging along the water's edge. Visser takes out his telescope to see if any of his lapwings are among them. The study will continue for more than a month. ‘We will go on until they stop breeding. And that is still possible; lapwings have several broods per season.’ ■

### Domestic problem

The black-tailed godwit is our national bird. But there are few sights more Dutch in the Dutch countryside than the lapwing. Up till now, at least. Since the 1980s, the number of breeding lapwings has been in free fall. Since the turn of the century, with an annual decline of five per cent, things have been going particularly fast. And the reason lies mainly in the Netherlands. Lapwings do migrate, but the survival rate of adult birds, which stay abroad outside the breeding season, is high and constant. The decline in lapwing numbers is therefore a 'domestic' problem: according to studies by Sovon, their reproduction rate is too low. The main difficulty seems to lie in raising the young to adulthood. Visser's study is an attempt to discover the causes of this.



# UNIQUE houses

**There are student houses and then there are weird and wonderful student houses. In this feature we visit those UNIQUE houses.**

**Hanna:** 'The house is called White Wilma because it is on Wilhelminaweg and is white. The current owner painted it white again when he bought it in 2013; after years of poor maintenance it was more like Grey Wilma.'

**Mirjam:** 'Simon has painted a beautiful portrait of Queen Wilhelmina, which is up on the living room wall.'

**Simon:** 'I don't know about beautiful...'

**Hanna:** 'Well, I certainly couldn't do that.'

**Simon:** 'Hanna recently did some research on the history of the house.'

**Hanna:** 'Yes, it was built in 1911, in 1960 it was a wine shop and it has been a student house since 1981. It has been a vegetarian house for as long as we can remember. But that's a bit less strict than it was at first.'

**Mirjam:** 'In what way?'

**Hanna:** 'In the past, no meat was allowed to enter the house, except for the cat.'

**Aranka:** 'We eat together almost every day, often three-course dinners. We share all our fruit and vegetables, rice and pasta.'

**Simon:** 'Our neighbours are very nice. They play in a band, and we can hear them sometimes. It's kind of folk, what do you call it? Klezmer?'

**Hanna:** 'They used to come over when we had a house party.'

**Lennart:** 'For the internationals, it is nice to meet the local community.'

**Lennart:** 'White Wilma is old and there is always maintenance work to do. You don't have to be afraid of ruining anything, in fact you can only improve things. There are lots of homemade things in the house, like the cupboards and even the sofa. And Simon has built a pizza oven.'

**Aranka:** 'I sometimes wonder what we would do with the house if it was ours.'

**Hanna:** 'The door!'

**Lennart:** 'Yes, a door from the kitchen into the garden. Now we have to go the long way round all the time.'



## Witte Wilma

### Residents:

Aranka Kolmas, Hanna Hogenboom, Lennart Sattlegger, Maharshi Thakkar, Matteo Grella, Mirjam Schibler, Simon Fines, Soraya Lamochi, Yoost Raavel, Hummus the cat, and a couple of chickens

### Unique because:

the house is over a century old and has been a student house for 40 years

**Mirjam:** 'And a window in the living room, which is very dark now.'

**Lennart:** 'The downside of living in an old house is that it's badly insulated.'

**Aranka:** 'That will be a problem next winter. Can we put a donation link here?' <sup>CJ</sup>

If you too want your UNIQUE house in *Resource*, send an email to [resource@wur.nl](mailto:resource@wur.nl)



From the left: Mirjam, Lennart, Simon, Hanna and Aranka • Photo Julia van der Westhuyzen

Veni grant:

# WHO 'WASTED' THE GREAT DEPRESSION IN AFRICA?

In the aftermath of the Great Depression, governments in Europe got more involved in the economy and the welfare of citizens, and the gap between rich and poor got smaller. But these positive effects did not materialize in African countries, which were still largely under colonial rule at that time. Economic historian Michiel de Haas received a Veni grant from the Dutch Research Council this spring to look for a different perspective on that poverty.



Text Stijn Schreven

**T**he ultimate goal is to understand the poverty in Africa,' says assistant professor of Agricultural and Environmental History De Haas, 'with regard to the impact of colonialism, for instance. You can only address it when you understand it. I want to pose questions about poverty, and to debunk outdated framing. Our attitude to poverty has got to change, so we make different choices.' Researching the economic history of colonial East Africa has personal significance to the Dutchman too. 'My son and stepson have Ugandan roots and Ugandan nationality. That gives me extra motivation and a sense of responsibility to increase our historical understanding of this region.' De Haas is looking specifically at the crisis in the 1930s. This is unusual in his field, because economic historians often study much longer periods. Also, up to now more attention has been paid to the colonization and decolonization of Afri-

ca than to this crisis under the colonial regimes. The stock market crash of 1929 and the malaise that followed are seen as the deepest economic crisis in the history of global capitalism. We know a lot about the consequences of this Great Depression for the US and Europe, says De Haas. 'Governments started to intervene more in the economy and welfare. Take the first steps towards a welfare state in the Netherlands, for example. Inequality decreased.'

## What was happening in Africa at the time?

'Africa mainly exported primary commodities: agricultural products and minerals. The price of these products plummeted, falling further than the prices of manufactured goods. As a result, for the same volume of export you could only buy half

the amount of imported goods such as textiles. In response to this fall in prices, people started to produce and export more, which made African economies more dependent on these exports. In my research, I look specifically at cotton, coffee and copper in the former British and Belgian colonies in Central and East Africa (Burundi, Congo, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania and Zambia).'

## Why did production and exports increase despite low prices?

'There are two possible explanations. The first is that farmers took the initia-

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**'THE ULTIMATE GOAL IS TO UNDERSTAND AFRICAN POVERTY'**

tive to produce more to earn more. How did they do that? Did their wives and children help out? Or did they spend less time on other work, such as making their own textiles? A second hypothesis is that the colonial authorities became more involved in production. The colonial power collected taxes, which the population paid out of income from exports. Falling export prices indirectly reduced the government's income. People became poorer, fled or rebelled. When people start to resist, a government must use more repression to achieve the same goals. To what extent did that go on? And how can governments do that when their budgets are under pressure?

**You state that African economies are still heavily dependent on exports to be able to import. How is that possible?**

'I suspect that colonialism stood in the way of better systems. In general, it was not in the interests of the colonial power to diversify the economy. Especially in times of crisis, they mainly wanted to export more of the same, but that pushes the economy further and further into import-export dependency, a dead-end street. The population is less able to

diversify and to make things themselves so as to become more resilient and less dependent on imports. That strong export dependency and its impact on people's standard of living are just as relevant today.'

**To test your hypotheses, you delve into the archives. How do you go about that?**

'We collect import and export statistics and data on tax receipts to chart how exports developed during the Great Depression. That is the quantitative side, but the statistics don't tell you anything about the perspective of workers, farmers and villages. I use the colonial archives for that, looking at things like the correspondence between colonial officials, and newspaper archives.'

How do you shed light on the side of both the colonizer and the colonized?

'Firstly, by reading as widely as possible. Newspapers from that time give a voice to the local population. Sometimes farmers petition the government, saying for example that it is not fair that they are getting such low prices. Secondly, you have to read the archives with a critical eye. That could mean, for example, not



The Teso District Archive in Uganda at the time of De Haas's research (see the other photo caption) • Photo Doreen Kembabazi

always going along with a colonial officer's interpretation of the facts about particular developments.'

**Are you conscious of your own background as a researcher?**

'Certainly. I am a Dutch city boy looking at economic processes in completely different countries where a lot of people lived outside the cities. I am involving colleagues in East Africa in my research to check if I am asking the right questions. Most of the work on the Great Depression in Africa has been done by African historians, such as the Nigerian Moses Ochonu - a source of inspiration for me. The Veni grant gives me an opportunity that many historians in Africa don't have because they do a lot more teaching.' ■



'Here I am photographing the Teso District Archives. I am sitting outside because the archive was difficult to access, as you can see in the other photo. It has been catalogued and refurbished since then' • Photo Doreen Kembabazi

## Idealism in (salaried) practice

# How to become a conservationist

As a WUR student, you learn to care about nature and the environment, but how do you make a living from your ideals and find a job in which you can make an impact? *Resource* talked to three winners of the Future for Nature Award, an international prize for young nature conservationists under 35. What is their advice to students? 'Perseverance is key.' Text Stijn Schreven

A paid job in nature conservation is not usually handed to you on a plate. You need determination and the courage to take the path less trodden. Maggie Muurmans, the 2009 winner (see inset): 'I never made a career plan. I just say yes to everything, paid or voluntary,

if the work makes a difference. And as soon as it stops appealing to me, I usually stop.'

Tjalle Boorsma, the winner in 2020, has a similar strategy. After graduating in Forest and Nature Conservation at WUR, he didn't want to go into research or business. But what then? 'I started exploring different options, although there was a common thread running through that quest: something to do

with birds and with protecting nature, and in the tropics. conservation. I moved to Bolivia and spent three months applying for jobs with NGOs.' Eventually the director of Asociación Armonía hired him for four months, after which he would be expected to raise the funds to cover his salary. 'Perseverance is key. Be patient and confident that you will find your place.'

## Create your own job

There is plenty of work to be done in the field of nature conservation, but not much funding. How do you raise funds? 'Don't be afraid to try out an idea of your own,' says Charudutt Mishra, the winner in 2008: 'No step is too small. Whether you succeed or fail, you'll always learn a lot. I started with a project in a small village aiming at reducing conflicts between livestock and the snow leopard.'

Muurmans too created her own job. She



## Winners of the Future for Nature Award

### Maggie Muurmans (winner in 2009)

Founder of Yayasan Pulau Banyak, co-founder of Ocean Connect Inc., PhD candidate and researcher at Griffith University, and senior executive at a community-based organization. Based in: Australia. Topic: marine conservation and citizen science.

### Tjalle Boorsma (winner in 2020)

Conservation programme manager at Asociación Armonía. Based in: Bolivia. Topic: critically endangered birds such as the blue-throated macaw.

### Charudutt Mishra (winner in 2008)

Science and conservation director and executive director of the Snow Leopard Trust, co-founder of Nature Conservation Foundation India. Based in: India, also active in the USA and Asian snow leopard countries. Topic: snow leopards in Asia.





One of the projects Maggie Muurmans (winner in 2009) worked on was in Indonesia protecting turtles and their eggs and young. ♦ Photo David Robinson

started out at a zoo in the UK, where she trained people to look after critically endangered animals. But something bothered her: why was she working with zoo animals when their cousins in the wild were dying out? 'I felt the need to do more. After volunteering in Costa Rica and Nicaragua, I moved to Indonesia to protect a beach full of nesting sea turtles. I stayed there for seven years and set up the project, *Yayasan Pulau Banyak*, for which I won the award. I applied for grants and paid my own salary.'

### Build up a network

To get this far, it helps to have an extensive network. Muurmans developed one while she was at university. Boorsma started actively networking when he got the job in Bolivia. Before leaving for Bolivia, he visited the Dutch offices of WWF, IUCN, and Birdlife International to share his plans for protecting threatened bird species. In 2018, he was a guest on the radio wildlife programme *Vroege Vogels*. 'The director of Birdlife heard me

'Perseverance is key. Be patient and confident that you will find your place'

and asked around in the office if anyone knew me. So the answer was yes! He then invited me to meet him, and asked me how he could help.'

### Be a people person too

Although 'doing something for wildlife' is probably your primary motive for pursuing a career in nature conservation, you'll find yourself working mainly with people. So you need to enjoy that. 'There is a strong human component in conservation,' says Muurmans. 'Only by talking to everyone, including people who think differently to you, can you arrive at a mutual understanding and find common goals,' she concludes. This community engagement is also crucial if you want your research to be translated into policy, says Misha. 'You've got to get out of the lab and

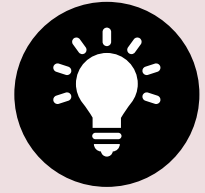
engage with communities and governments. 'For my PhD, I studied snow leopards and their prey in the Himalayas. I lived in a mountain village and saw the problems the people there face. That spurred me into action. I worked with local people to set up a no-grazing zone where snow leopards, blue sheep and ibex had right of way. And after finishing my PhD, I helped set up a community livestock insurance programme to compensate for snow leopard attacks.'

### Keep it in perspective

A career in conservation is often a vocation, and that can be problematic. Before you know it, you are working all the time. 'This job is my life. My colleagues are also close friends,' says Boorsma. 'My tip is to do other things outside of working hours, find hobbies, make friends.' Mishra takes the same approach and it helps make him resilient. 'There are few successes and lots of setbacks in nature conservation. To stay positive, I get exercise and do research, which is creative. I like writing articles.' ■

### Future for Nature Academy

The Future for Nature Academy connects WUR students, conservationists and winners of the Future for Nature award. The academy was founded in 2016 by assistant professor Ignas Heitkönig (Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, WUR) and Rascha Nuijten (now director of the Future for Nature Foundation). The academy is a platform that helps students build a professional network, awards a prize every year, and runs an annual academy day of seminars, workshops and discussions.



# Internships

## How to find one

During your internship you learn about the professional practice and you get the chance to apply what you have learned. But how do you find a good internship? Five tips from experts and people with first-hand experience.

Text Luuk Zegers, with input from Katerina Mouka ♦ Illustration Iija Bouwknecht

# 1

### Know what you want

Marco Santagiuliana, lead scientist at the Vegetarian Butcher, has supervised a lot of interns. 'Of course we expect our trainees to have some technical skills, but the key quality is enthusiasm. Students with the

drive to get everything they can out of the experience. So I advise students: find out what drives you.'

'Some students already have a clear idea of what they want to do,' says Astrid van Noordenburg, head of Student Career Services, 'but most of them don't.' To find out what suits you, you can consider which courses you find interesting and whether there is anything you've been interested in since you were a child. Van Noordenburg: 'What energizes you? What kind of internship would you be happy to get out of bed for every morning? No idea? Make an appointment with our career coach to figure it out together.'

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**'IF THE PERFECTLY  
MOTIVATED STUDENT  
APPROACHES US, WE  
CAN ALWAYS ARRANGE  
SOMETHING'**

# 2

### Know what you are capable of

Once you know what you want, it's time to find out what you have to offer as an intern. Van Noordenburg: 'That's not just a question of technical skills, but also of soft skills: how

do you collaborate with colleagues, are you detail-oriented, do you have problem-solving abilities? In short: which skills have you already developed and which do you want to develop further on an internship?'

'You often discover where your strengths and weaknesses lie during group work, ACT projects and your thesis,' says student Minori Arisaka. 'How well can you collaborate and how do you deal with giving and receiving feedback?' Arisaka herself found an internship that matched her thesis topic. 'That meant I could show that I already had a little experience in that area. I think that can help you to get offered a job.'

'But you don't have to have every skill in the book,' says internship supervisor Santagiuliana of the Vegetarian Butcher. 'In our sector, everything is new. There are no experts with 20 years of experience. Of course it is good to have some skills in, for example, microbiology, if you are looking for an internship in that field. But it is more important that you follow the scientific approach.'

## ‘YOU DON'T HAVE TO KNOW EVERYTHING ALREADY’

# 3

### Look in the obvious places...

So now it's time to start looking, but how do you do that? There are several ways. Van Noordenburg points to the WUR Career Platform where about 430 companies offer internships. ‘Companies approach us with internships and jobs. There are always about 70 internships available. If you can't find one yourself, you can call on Career Support to help you look.’

All the degree programmes have internship coordinators who can help as well. ‘They have a good overview of the possibilities within your field,’ says Van Noordenburg.

# 4

### ...and in less obvious ones

There are other ways of finding an internship besides taking the ‘beaten track’. It all boils down to one word, really: networking. ‘Talk to your friends, fellow students and club members about their intern-

ships,’ says Van Noordenburg. ‘That can help you figure out which direction you want to go in and you can find out how they got their place. Are you especially interested in a particular course you have taken? Then talk to the lecturer, they sometimes have leads as well.’

When it comes to networking and careers, you can't really do without LinkedIn, continues Van Noordenburg. ‘There you can see who has already done an internship at a company, who is working there, and so on. You can message those people to ask about their internship experiences. They might be able to refer you to their internship coordinator.’

If you have your eye on a particular company, it pays to check its website for vacancies, Santagiuliana advises. ‘There are usually contact details, and you can ask to be put in touch with current or former trainees.’ This can be a useful move even when there are no published vacancies. ‘If the perfectly motivated student approaches us at a time when we don't have any internships, but we see something in them, then we can always arrange something.’

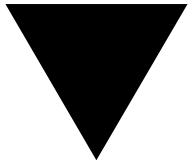
# 5

### Prepare for the interview

Invited for an interview? Good preparation can make the difference between being

hired and not. Santagiuliana: ‘The best applications are when a student clearly consciously chose this company. You can tell after a few sentences that they are super-well prepared: they know the company, the trends in the market, and so on. They are not here just because they have to do an internship to graduate, but because they really want to be here.’ ■





## Key people: Janine Willink

Everyone is indispensable on the campus, but not everyone is in the spotlight every day or gets much of the credit for the hard (team) work that goes on. *Resource* puts these colleagues in the limelight in the Key People series. This time, meet Janine Willink (57), a masseuse on campus through MassageProfs and a receptionist at Atlas.

Text Milou van der Horst • Photo Guy Ackermans

‘Giving massages really is my passion. That’s why it was so wonderful when WUR hired me through MassageProfs to give chair massages. Through the vitality budget, colleagues can have a massage from me, among other options. To start with and during the Covid period, these were 20-minute chair massages, but now they can come to my salon. Thanks to WUR, I have a large and continuous stream of clients, which helped when I started my own salon. Although massaging is my passion, I like to have security and not focus on just one thing. That is why I combine massage with reception work. I was especially happy about that

during the Covid time.

I give people a mental holiday. I see them relax during my massage, which I achieve using long strokes, a little music, the atmosphere, the oil of their choice and warmth. The workload of WUR employees is quite high and they spend a lot of time sat at a computer, so most of my clients have neck, arm and shoulder complaints.

The fact that I work at WUR myself makes a difference: some people like it, others don’t. At first I was uncomfortable with colleagues coming to my home, partly because a massage in my salon is often more extensive and the client takes off the top layer of clothing, which is different to a chair massage. But now I particu-

larly like the fact that I can plan my time myself for massages in my own salon, which was not possible as long as I was giving chair massages on the campus. I have always worked with my hands: first for three years as a hairdresser until I had to stop because of occupational eczema, then for 25 years as a florist until the business went bankrupt. My interest in massages was awakened after my frozen shoulder was massaged away when I was on holiday in Turkey. It’s amazing that you can cure someone or relieve their ailments with a massage - what a power! Besides, I just really love working with my hands and with people. And I’m very interested in bodies and their vitality. I think it’s great that I can stimulate the body’s capacity for self-healing with my work, so that a person can thrive and blossom.’

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### ‘I give people a mental holiday’





## Campus ♦ residents

### Science Shop

What can NGOs do if they have a research question but don't have the money to fund the research? The campus has the perfect solution: the Science Shop. It originated because students at the then Agricultural College didn't 'just' want education and research. They wanted a problem-oriented approach that also encompassed groups in society who had little or no access to science. To prove their point, they occupied one of the college buildings. For four weeks, until the Science Shop's predecessor was established.

These days, WUR needs a lot less persuading to support the Science Shop. For example, WUR gave funding of almost half a million euros last year for the Science Shop's projects. The money was used to study the recycling options for non-wearable textiles and figure out what mobile grazing management with cows and chickens means for grassland with herbaceous plants on sandy soil — to give a couple of examples. But the principal research theme at the

**It is very satisfying to be out in the field working on insights that are badly needed**

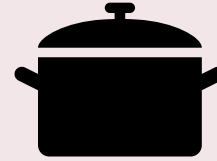
a mix of students and WUR professionals). It is very satisfying to be out in the field working on insights that are badly needed. The NGOs that come to the Science Shop are enthusiastic too as it gives them access to knowledge. They are taken more seriously as a result, and that helps them make the world a better place. So things are going well. There is one wish, though: to be even more accessible and better known. This article should help. ME

Science Shop is food production, accounting for 19 of the 51 projects in 2021.

The best thing about the Science Shop is that the work is meaningful, say the researchers (mostly

There are about 100 companies on the campus. We introduce them to you in *Resource*. This time: the Science Shop.

The WUR community is home to all the flavours of the world. Razvan Costache (24), a Master's student of Plant Sciences, shares a recipe for an easy Romanian stew.



Flavours of WUR

## Romanian pea stew

'My mum used to make this recipe almost every week when I was a child. Most Romanian recipes usually take a lot of preparation and many hours to cook, but this one is an easy dish that makes feel like I'm at home.'

- 1 Chop the onion and the garlic and dice the carrots.
- 2 Cut the beef into small pieces.
- 3 Heat a little sunflower oil in a large pan and add the meat.
- 4 Fry the meat for 3 minutes and add the chopped onions, garlic and carrots.
- 5 Add salt, pepper and paprika to taste and fry for 5 minutes.
- 6 Mix in 100 ml of tomato sauce and then add water until everything is covered.
- 7 Bring the water to the boil and boil for 15-20 minutes until the sauce thickens.
- 8 Add the peas and 100 ml of water and boil until the sauce is reduced again.
- 9 Add salt, pepper and dill to taste.

### Ingredients (for 4 people):

- 500g peas
- 2 carrots
- 1 large onion
- 2-5 cloves of garlic (to taste)
- 100 ml tomato sauce
- 300g beef
- Sunflower oil, salt, pepper, paprika, dill



**Razvan Costache**  
a Master's student of  
Plant Sciences

### 10-euro lunch voucher

Share your recipe with *Resource* and get an **Aurora voucher worth 10 euros**.  
resource@wur.nl

# Irregular Opening Hours – Summer 2022

## Forum

		Monday to Friday	Saturday and Sunday
Building	2 July - 29 July	8 am - 8 pm	10 am - 6 pm
	30 July - 31 July		10 am - 6 pm
Library	2 July - 3 July		10 am - 6 pm
	4 July - 29 July	8 am - 6 pm	closed
	30 July - 9 August	8 am - 10 pm	10 am - 6 pm
	10 August - 4 September	8 am - 6 pm	closed
Student Service Centre	4 July - 21 August	12:30 pm - 2:30 pm	closed
	22 August - 2 September	10 am - 2:30 pm	closed
ServicePoint IT	4 July - 4 September	8 am - 5:30 pm	closed
Restaurant	4 July - 4 September	closed	closed
Grand Café	4 July - 4 September	10 am - 2 pm	closed
Wageningen in'to Languages	4 July - 4 September	10 am - 2 pm	closed

During working hours, the building is open to the public. After working hours, entrance is only possible with a WUR card.

## Aurora

		Monday to Thursday	Friday	Saturday and Sunday
Building	2 July - 31 July	closed	closed	closed
	1 August - 4 September	8 am - 7 pm	8 am - 6 pm	closed
Bike basement	2 July - 31 July	closed	closed	closed
	1 August - 4 September	8 am - 7 pm	8 am - 6 pm	closed
Your Barista	2 July - 31 July	closed	closed	closed
	1 August - 4 September	8 am - 5 pm	8 am - 5 pm	closed
Blend	2 July - 31 July	closed	closed	closed
	1 August - 4 September	closed	closed	closed
Plant	2 July - 31 July	closed	closed	closed
	1 August - 4 September	closed	closed	closed
World Flavours	2 July - 31 July	closed	closed	closed
	1 August - 4 September	closed	closed	closed

Aurora is closed on Saturday and Sunday.

## Orion

		Monday to Thursday	Friday	Saturday and Sunday
Building	2 July - 31 July	closed	closed	closed
	1 August - 10 August (resit exams)	8 am - 7 pm	8 am - 6 pm	closed
	11 August - 4 September	8 am - 7 pm	8 am - 6 pm	closed
Bike basement	2 July - 31 July	closed	closed	closed
	1 August - 10 August (resit exams)	8 am - 9 pm	8 am - 9 pm	closed
	11 August - 4 September	8 am - 9 pm	8 am - 9 pm	closed
The Spot	2 July - 31 July	closed	closed	closed
	1 August - 10 August (resit exams)	8 am - 8 pm (at least)	8 am - 8 pm (at least)	closed
	11 August - 4 September	8 am - 8 pm (at least)	8 am - 8 pm (at least)	closed
Restaurant	2 July - 31 July	closed	closed	closed
	1 August - 10 August (resit exams)	11:30 am - 2 pm	11:30 am - 2 pm	closed
	11 August - 4 September	11:30 am - 2 pm	11:30 am - 2 pm	closed

Orion is closed on Saturday and Sunday.

## Leeuwenborch

		Monday to Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Building	4 July - 31 July	7 am - 10 pm	closed	closed
	1 August - 14 August (resit exams)	7 am - 10 pm	10 am - 5 pm	closed
	15 August - 28 August	7 am - 10 pm	closed	closed
	29 August - 4 September	7 am - 10 pm	10 am - 5 pm	closed
Library	4 July - 31 July	8.30 am - 6 pm	closed	closed
	1 August - 14 August (resit exams)	8.30 am - 6 pm	closed	closed
	15 August - 28 August	8.30 am - 6 pm	closed	closed
	29 August - 4 September	8.30 am - 6 pm	closed	closed
Coffee Bar / Restaurant	4 July - 31 July	closed	closed	closed
	1 August - 14 August (resit exams)	closed	closed	closed
	15 August - 28 August	closed	closed	closed
	29 August - 4 September	closed	closed	closed

30 Minutes before closing time you will be requested to leave the building. After 6 pm entrance is only possible after registration at the reception desk.

# WEEKLY UPDATES ON STUDENT LIFE AND WORKING AT WUR?

Go to [resource-online.nl](https://resource-online.nl)  
(Subscription page) and subscribe  
to our digital newsletter.

**SIGN UP**

## Resource

WUR from within: straight, sharp, transparent



## IN MEMORIAM

### ARVID VAN VIEGEN

We are sad to announced the death of our colleague Arvid van Viegen on 29 May.

Arvid had been ill for some time. He was only 50 years old and although we knew that his health was deteriorating, we were shocked by the news of his death. Arvid worked at Wageningen University & Research for nearly 25 years, mainly in the personnel and payroll administration department, where he was a reliable, skilled and committed employee who set great store by delivering good service.

We knew Arvid as a cheerful, loyal and sociable colleague who greatly valued good working

relationships and contributed a lot to them.

We are losing a good colleague, but above all a good and pleasant person, and we will miss Arvid very much.

We were also aware of how fond Arvid was of his children and that he was a real family man. It is a sad thought that his daughter Mirte and his son Jens have had to lose their father at such a young age. We wish them and all Arvid's family and friends much strength at this sad time.

*The staff of Corporate HR and Shared Service Centre HR*

## Colophon

*Resource* is the independent medium for students and staff at Wageningen University & Research. *Resource* reports and interprets the news and gives the context. New articles are posted daily on [resource-online.nl](https://resource-online.nl). The magazine is published every fortnight on Thursday.

**Contact** Questions and comments for the editors: [resource@wur.nl](mailto:resource@wur.nl) | [www.resource-online.nl](http://www.resource-online.nl)

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## Moving

**'As an international student who can't drive in the Netherlands, I often wonder how people like me move from Wageningen to other places in the Netherlands or Europe. I have heard from friends that it can be expensive and complicated to hire a removal firm or even just a van. Does anyone have advice or tips on this topic?'**

Julia van der Westhuyzen,  
MSc student of Plant  
Sciences



## Friends

'I experienced the same difficulty when moving around Europe. Once I did rent a van. There are international companies that allow you to rent a van in one country and return it in another. Like you, I don't drive, so I asked two friends to drive the van to my new apartment. It felt a bit like a road trip and my friends stayed with me for a few days to explore the area. For them it was a cheap holiday, while they were doing me a huge favour at the same time.'

Jacob, Master's student

## Cargo bike

'This is indeed a challenge for international students in the Netherlands. When I want to move my belongings, I rent a cargo bike from Idealis and ask my fellow Chinese friends to help me move. But when you are dealing with a lot of stuff you do need to contact a company or a friend or colleague who owns a car. You could also ask for help in the Facebook community *Wageningen student plaza*. In addition, there are self-service car rentals such as Greenwheels or Mywheels. The price is fine and the procedure is easy. Just ask some friends who can drive to help you.'

Anna Huang, PhD student of Aquatic Ecology and Water Quality Management

## Parcel delivery services

'Indeed, moving can be very expensive. As someone who has moved internationally six times, I've always sold items that I can live without or that I can easily buy in my country of destination. For things I can't live without, I've used parcel delivery services like GLS, UPS, Parcel2Go, or EuroSender. If you can afford to move gradually, perhaps leave some of your items with a friend, fly back to Wageningen with Ryanair, and move them as checked luggage.'

Anna Abatayo, assistant professor of Environmental Economics and Natural Resources

## Declutter

'Use moving from one country to the next as an opportunity to "declutter your life". Go through your belongings and only take with you the most important items. If you do not drive or make use of a removal firm, you are limited to the belongings that fit in a suitcase. Donate or sell the furniture, clothes and other belongings you're leaving behind. It will feel liberating to carry all your belongings in a single, perhaps somewhat large, suitcase.'

Elise, Biology student

## OV student card

'Within the Netherlands, you can use your public transport (OV) student card, that lets you travel throughout the country for free or at a discount. There are also all kinds of discounts and good connections with Germany, Belgium and France. It is also increasingly easy to hire a car for one or two days. This is possible for from as little as 25 euros per day. In short, there are enough options for moving cheaply and easily.'

Mohamed el Bouziri, assistant location manager

## NEXT WURRY

**Summer fun**  
**'I won't be going home this summer and I hear Wageningen is deserted during the holidays. What is there to do? How can I get through the summer?'**

Zarina, PhD student

*Do you have advice or tips for this WURrier? Or could you use some good advice yourself? **Email your tips or your question (100 words max) by 21 June to [resource@wur.nl](mailto:resource@wur.nl) subject noWURries.***