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Grazing in coastal grasslands

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Grazing in coastal grasslands

Brent Geese and facilitation by herbivory

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Grazing in coastal grasslands

Brent Geese and facilitation by herbivory

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Preface

Wild enthusiasm stirred in me, when I was asked over the phone about my interest in a study on 'Moose' and 'Bear'. Wow, working on wildlife in a scenery of rugged mountain ranges and forested valleys... It took a while for me to discover that there had been a misunderstanding, since the project, in fact, dealt with 'Goose' and 'Hare'. I applied nonetheless, and found myself welcome amidst a diverse group of motivated students and fine colleagues, co-operating most closely with Maarten Loonen and Julia Stahl. One of the results of the research we were enabled to do about the geese and the hare, and their interaction with vegetation and larger herbivores, is now in your hands.

In this book, we focus on habitat use by Brent Geese, vegetation succession and facilitation, themes that have been the subject of study for many years by the departments of Plant- and Animal Ecology of the University of Groningen. It was at the initiative of Bart Ebbinghe (Alterra), Jan Bakker and Rudi Drent to bring together these separate lines of fundamental research, in order to answer an applied question: "What will happen with the Brent Geese when the management of their foraging areas is changed?".

This question is relevant, because Brent Geese spend large amounts of time on salt marshes, but also on agricultural land. There is a relationship between the attractiveness of salt-marsh habitat for Brent Geese and the degree to which farmers are bothered by them. It is an example of a very common situation, where man and nature are in potential conflict. In order to choose wisely the most suitable type of land use in such a situation, a proper ecological understanding is required. I am fascinated by these issues, and, therefore, I greatly appreciate the chance I have had to work with these people and these animals on this subject, in spite of the initial misunderstanding.

Daan Bos