

Nationaal Park Schiermonnikoog

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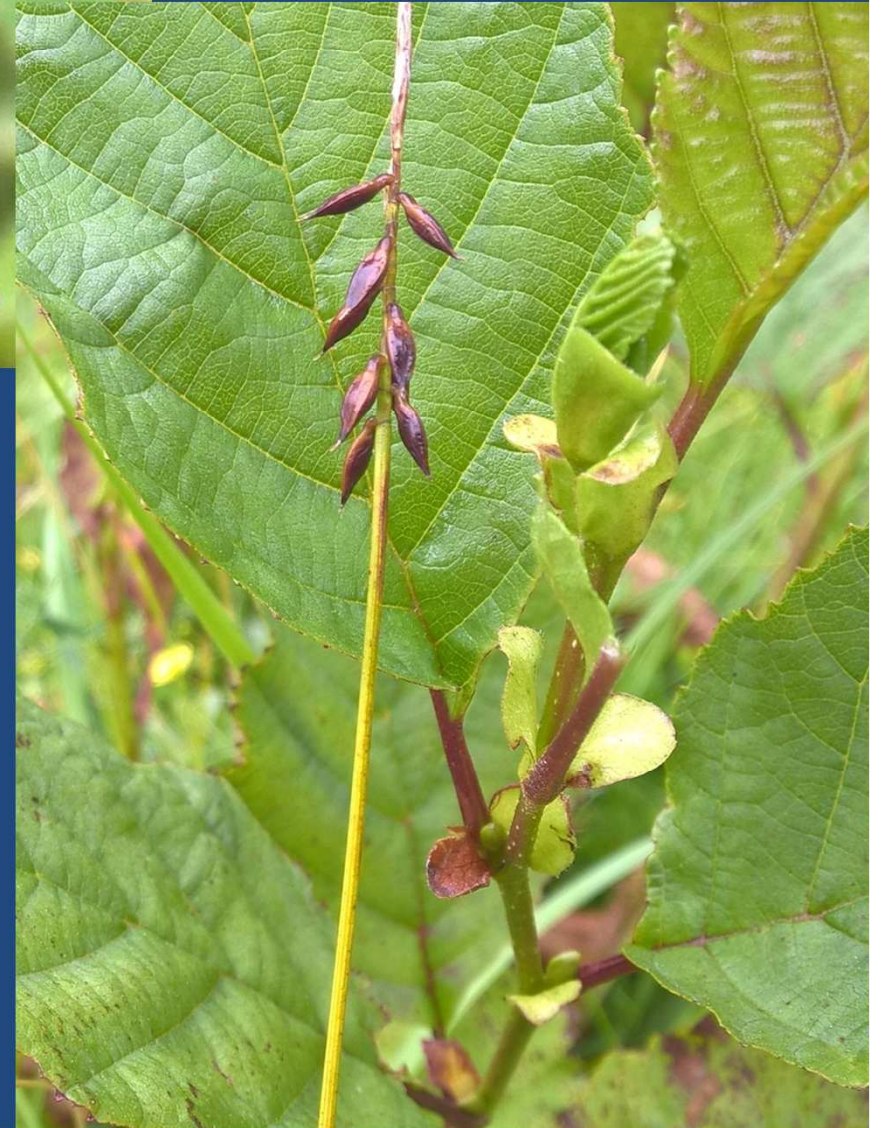
Natuurmonumenten











Schiermonnikoog

- Barrier-island Waddensea: dunes, saltmarshes
- National Park since 1990, ca. 6.000 ha.
- In Dutch context a natural island with little human influence
- In it's present form only 350 years old due to dynamics of Waddensea
- Rapid succession over last 20 years in dune area is threat to diversity
 - Dunes were planted and fixated with trees and grass
 - Rabbits virtually disappeared (diseases)
 - High nitrogen deposition from activities on mainland and partly from agriculture on the island itself

Management plan 2011

- Work with the natural qualities of the island, the island has always had it's own way
- Restore natural dynamics of wind, water and wildlife
 - Wash-over complex
 - Dynamic dunes
 - Large herbivores (can also facilitate return rabbits)
- Other management (mowing, sod-cutting) locally and limited in time
- Work in close cooperation with the people of the island











“Don’t mention the R-word”

- The island Schiermonnikoog already is wild!
- Large wild herbivores never occurred on the island as it is now
- But the process of grazing did and is much older than this island
- Without large herbivores the island can not maintain its present diversity in species and habitats
- Large herbivores are now a management tool, with a minimum of human interference

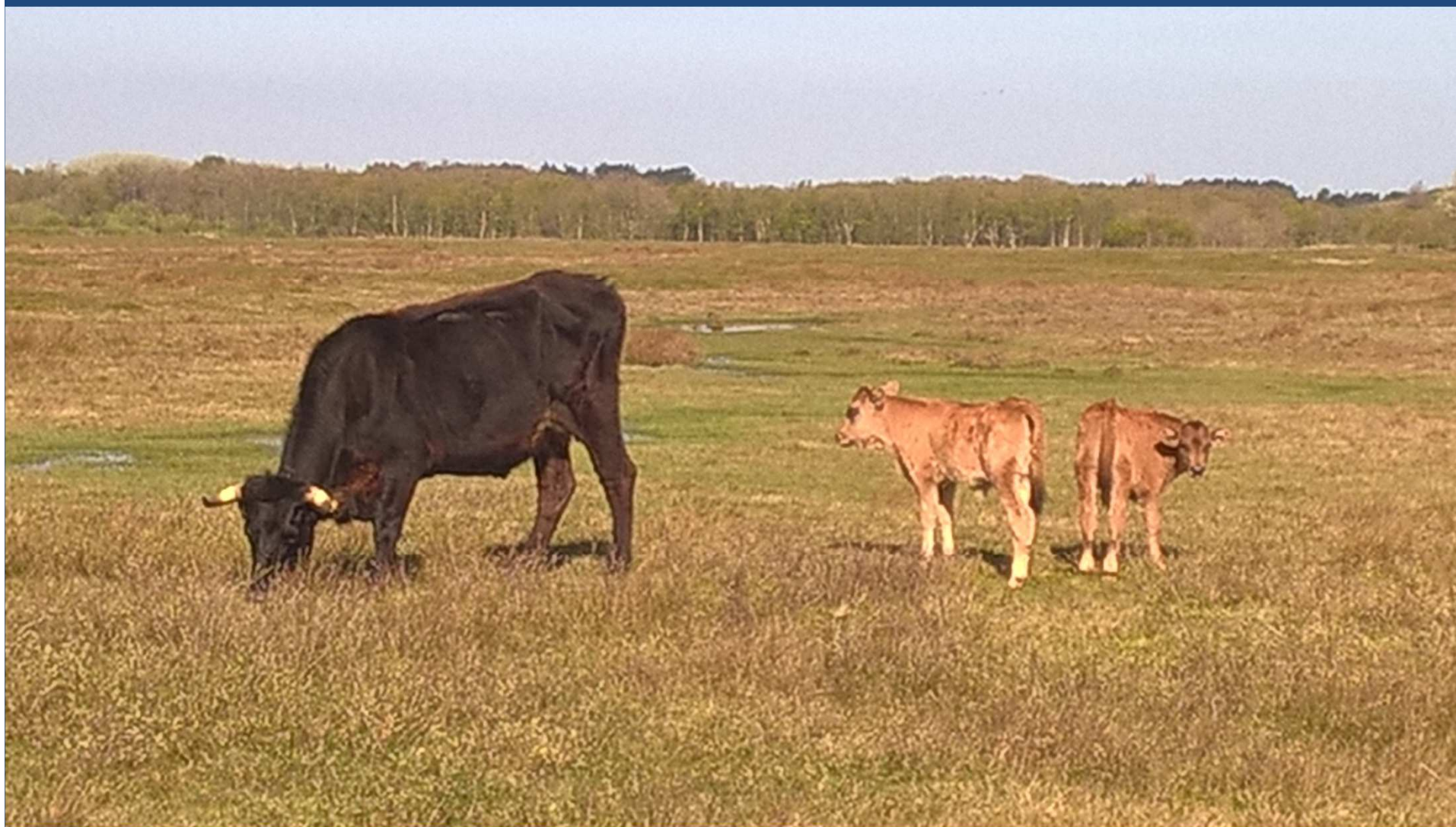
Step by step

- On the longer term: free ranging herbivores (except in village & polder)
- Horse (Exmoor), cattle (Sayaguesa), European bison, maybe also Red deer
- First start 2015 on 100 ha. with Sayaguesa's in social group (male, female and young animals)
- Introduction Exmoor ponies in 2017
- Year-round, no feeding
- When necessary in the future: population control













Experiences so far

- No problems with public, herd is calm and friendly, not interested in people
- Animals are capable of handling cold as well as warm weather, they are in very good health
- Sayaguesa's explore the whole area
- Eat substantially from trees (twigs, leafs, buds)
- Make open sandy spots in steeper parts of the terrain due to their weight

Practice brings problems

- Some people are afraid of the animals
- Some people do not like fences (it's to keep us out!)
- Some people do not trust Natuurmonumenten (not originated on the island)
- *Some* people. Minority of negative-minded people dominate the public debate

Practice takes patience

- Take people outside and show them (and have a nice day yourself as well)
- Focus on possibilities and on people who are open for debate, stay in touch at all levels
- Have a long term vision and proceed... at the same time:
- Accept that the road may wind surprisingly and be prepared to move





Introduction of European bison on Schiermonnikoog in 201?

