

# Fieldwork based student thesis project/internship

**Subject: Relationship between personality and social rank on feeding tables**

**Period: From January 2008 onwards (3-6month)**



## Interests:

Like humans, great tits exhibit personalities - consistent individual differences in behaviour. Personality is a complex of heritable and correlated traits which form an individual's behaviour. Personality is recognizable during mild stress. We can predict an individual's behaviour from an earlier challenging situation. It is known that personality influences the life history of individuals.

## Theme

Our aim is to study the influence of personality frequencies on source system of Great tit population in the estate Westerheide (5km from Arnhem center). In March 2007 we changed the frequency of personality in this area to investigate how the personality of neighbors influences fitness and thereby selection. We thereby hope to get insight in how variation in personality is maintained in nature. It is known that personality differences influence the hierarchical structure. It would therefore be highly interesting to find out, how the frequency change of personality types in flocks in March will influence hierarchy on the feeding stations in winter. A changing hierarchy has influence on the chance to breed and therefore future reproduction.

## Challenges

- Study dominance hierarchies on birdfeeders/feeding tables in the field
- Engage in capture-mark-recapture program to calculate condition, survival and dispersal in the population
- Behavioral testing of birds to assess their personality
- Roost controls: nest boxes checks to map roosting territories
- Statistical analyses of the data
- Your own initiative and new questions and ideas within this topic

## Good to know:

- Driver license is very useful
- Ability to work under extreme field conditions
- Flexibility in time also outside the normal working hours



## Place:

- NIOO-CTE in Heteren.
- Your field area is about 5km from the centre of Arnhem near Oosterbeek.

## Information:

You can find more information on our webpage [www.nioo.knaw.nl](http://www.nioo.knaw.nl). For further information you can ask Msc. Eva Fucikova telephone 026-4791248, e-mail: [E.Fucikova@nioo.knaw.nl](mailto:E.Fucikova@nioo.knaw.nl), [K.vanoers@nioo.knaw.nl](mailto:K.vanoers@nioo.knaw.nl) or [P.Drent@nioo.knaw.nl](mailto:P.Drent@nioo.knaw.nl)

