

tussen Duin & Dijk



Connection and defragmentation

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The squ and Amsterdam's

- A red squirrel uses the rope bridge near the Europaboulevard.
Photo: still from the film *De Wilde Stad*.



In 2012, the Amsterdam city council adopted a municipal ecological structure and launched a programme aimed at solving 180 ecological bottlenecks.

In 2010, as part of the Province's general spatial planning, a provincial ecological structure was adopted. The provincial ecological structure is part of the Natuurnetwerk Nederland (NNN), formerly known as the Ecologische Hoofdstructuur (National Ecological Network). The NNN is the green network of existing and new natural sites in the Netherlands. The network is meant to create better connections between the natural sites and the surrounding agricultural areas.

Amsterdam is adding a number of cross and parallel connections intended to reinforce the structure as a whole.

Amsterdam's municipal ecological structure as established in 2012 (Timmermans & Daalder, 2012) is an elaborated, supplemented and sophisticated continuation of the NNN. Amsterdam is adding a number of cross-connections and parallel areas intended to reinforce the structure as a whole. The goal is to give plants and animals in Amsterdam the best possible chances

of survival. By connecting areas with green roads (roadside verges and banks) and by opening up 180 ecological barriers (bottlenecks) like tarmac roads and other infrastructure to animals, for example by means of eco-passages. Another advantage is that the city itself will also have more nature to enjoy. Conspicuous species like frogs, butterflies, dragonflies, hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*) and rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) greatly increase the amenity value of the

urban green areas. Because the ecological structure is an integral part of the spatial development strategy, the following general policy principle applies: 'the national ecological network will be respected, bottlenecks will be tackled and changes require the official approval (by decision) of the municipal council.' For any spatial projects in areas with a bottle-

neck mentioned in this strategy, the policy intention is to include solving that problem in the terms of reference and/or budget of the respective project plan.

Ecological management

With regard to the management of Amsterdam's ecological structure, the following two policy statements by the city council are of interest: Management and design of the green spaces within Amsterdam's ecological structure has to be as environmentally compatible as possible, focused on vegetation variety and providing adequate coverage. Chemical pesticides may not be used in Amsterdam's ecological structure. In support of the environmental policy, the city council determined in 2015 that 50% of the public green spaces managed by the Municipality are to be managed in an insect-friendly way. This concerns public green spaces outside the ecological structure. This policy has been set out in the 'Agenda Groen' (green agenda) (Van der Veur & Wijten, 2015).

