

Wolf found in Netherlands is no joke, scientists say

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A stuffed wolf is displayed on August 7, 2013 in Naarden, Netherlands, during a press conference. A female wolf's body was found by the roadside near the tiny village of Luttelgeest in the north of the country in July. The first wolf found in the Netherlands in over 140 years walked there freely from eastern Europe, scientists said Wednesday, dismissing allegations it was a joke.

The first wolf found in the Netherlands in over 140 years walked there freely from eastern Europe, scientists said Wednesday, dismissing allegations its body had been dumped as joke.

The female wolf has mystified the Netherlands since its body was found

by the roadside near the tiny village of Luttelgeest in the north of the country in July.

Some had even suggested that eastern European [agricultural workers](#) employed in the Netherlands had brought the wolf from their home country in order to confound the Dutch.

But now a bevy of Dutch scientific and wildlife groups have come together to establish the truth.

The Dutch Wildlife Health Centre (DWHC) said in a statement after a press conference that "the wolf died from a heavy blow to the head, apparently from being hit by a car."

The wolf was in [good health](#), around one and a half years old and had just eaten some young beaver, the DWHC said in a joint statement with the Naturalis Biodiversity Centre, the Alterra research institute and WolvenInNederland (Wolves in the Netherlands).

The wolf apparently originally came from "eastern Europe, near the Russian border," Naturalis and Alterra said.

It seemingly entered the Netherlands "by natural means" and lived here for some time before being run over, WolvenInNederland and Alterra said.

However, more research needs to be done to be more precise, the groups said.

"In any case the body showed no signs of having been transported to the Netherlands. There were no signs it had been frozen.

"Furthermore there were no signs of wear on the fur, paws or claws that

would suggest captivity."

Wolf droppings have also been found in the area, although they did not necessarily come from the dead wolf, the statement said.

Alterra researcher Geert Groot Bruinderink told state broadcaster NOS that "there's a big possibility" that [wolves](#) are present in the Netherlands.

"If one is found then there are more," he said.

The last sighting of a wolf in the Netherlands was in 1869, but in the southeast of the country near Germany, national news agency ANP reported.

Changing conservation policies since the 1990s have allowed [wolf](#) populations to increase in western Europe, including in France, Germany and Italy.

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