

First golden jackal spotted in the Netherlands

March 3 2016



On 19 February 2016 a golden jackal (*Canis aureus*) was spotted in the Veluwe nature reserve. It is the first sighting of this animal species in the Netherlands. This was done with the help of a camera trap. At the request of the park warden the exact location will not be made known.

Coincidence

The golden jackal was spotted unintentionally in the Veluwe during a study that tracks the movements and behaviours of ungulates there, which is currently being carried out by Alterra and Wageningen University. The camera footage was shown to a number of known jackal experts, who confirmed that this was indeed a golden jackal.

On the rise

This species is on the rise in Europe. Originally the golden jackal was found mainly in the Balkans, Greece and Turkey. However, the species has now been spotted more to the west and north as well, in countries like Italy, Austria, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Poland and the Baltic States. There is also a growing number of sightings in Germany, the closest one having been near Frankfurt.

Characteristics golden jackal

The golden jackal is a medium-sized canine. With a shoulder height of around 50 cm, it is visibly bigger than the fox. The colour of its coat varies greatly. On the back, the fur is usually a mix of black, brown and light hair, which gives the animal a shabby appearance. The golden jackal has relatively long legs and narrow paws. Its ears are big. Another clear characteristic is its short (approx. 25 cm), black-tipped tail, always hanging down. The golden jackal is omnivorous. It hunts hares, rabbits, other rodents, reptiles, amphibians and birds, but also eats bird eggs, fruit, and garbage. The species is found in widely diverse areas. The golden jackal lives in steppes, forests and swamps, but is no stranger to cultivated landscapes either.

Wandered, escaped or placed



"We still don't know where this animal came from," says Alterra researcher Edgar van der Grift. "It is possible that it 'ventured' across our borders of its own accord, but it could also be an escaped or illegally released animal. At this time we are trying to find DNA material of the animal, such as faeces or fur. This can provide more insight into the origin of this animal."

Provided by Wageningen University

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