GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Belgium has a surface area of 30,521 km² and an average population density of 324 people per km². Urban zones occupy a considerable part of the country, in particular in the northern half. Intensive agriculture is prominent throughout the north, whilst in the south larger areas are covered by forests. Belgium can be divided into three regions according to altitude, from west to east: a lowland area (0–50 m) extending from the coast to the central plateau; the medium-altitude zone (50–200 m) extending to the riverine lowlands of Sambre and Meuse; and the upland zone to the east (highest point 694 m).

Belgium has 48 Important Bird Areas (IBAs) covering 6,483 km², which is more than 20% of the land area of the country (Table 1, Map 1). Of these, 28 IBAs are in the Flemish Region (Vlaams Gewest), 19 are in the Walloon Region and one in the Belgian coastal zone, which is federal territory.

The first pan-European IBA inventory (Grimmett and Jones 1989) identified 41 IBAs for Belgium, compared to 48 in this current inventory. The changes can be explained by the division of two sites into four and the identification of five new sites (Table 1). The division concerns Vlaamse Banken en Westkust (site BE001 in the previous inventory) which has been split into two IBAs: Trapegeer-Stroombank (001) and Westkust (002); and the Dyle valley (formerly site BE023) which falls within both the Flemish and Walloon Regions, and is treated separately as sites De Dijlevallei (016) and Vallée de la Dyle (031). The total IBA area has decreased but the division guarantees better protection. The new sites are four

Table 1. Summary of Important Bird Areas in Belgium.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IBA code</th>
<th>Administrative region</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
<th>Criteria (see p. 11)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>001</td>
<td>BE001 Trappegeer-Stroombank</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>A4i, B1i, C1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>002</td>
<td>BE001 Westkust</td>
<td>1,415</td>
<td>C7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>003</td>
<td>BE002 Ijzervallei-De Blankaat</td>
<td>5,100</td>
<td>A4i, B1i, B2, C1, C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>004</td>
<td>— Voorhaven Zeebrugge and Raaif van Heist</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>A4i, B1i, C2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>005</td>
<td>BE003 Poldercomplex</td>
<td>9,149</td>
<td>A4i, A4iii, B1i, B2, C2, C3, C4, C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>006</td>
<td>BE004 Zwin</td>
<td>1,820</td>
<td>B1i, B3, C3, C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>007</td>
<td>BE005 Krekengebied</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>A4i, B1i, B2, B3, C2, C3, C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>008</td>
<td>— Bourgoyen-Ousemeersen</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>B1i, C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>009</td>
<td>— Gentse Kanaalzone</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>B1i, C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>010</td>
<td>BE006 Durme en Middenloop van de Schelde</td>
<td>7,923</td>
<td>A4i, B1i, C1, C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>011</td>
<td>BE007 Schuren en Polden van de Beneden-Schelde</td>
<td>7,570</td>
<td>A4i, B1i, B3, C2, C3, C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>012</td>
<td>BE008 Kuijend and Blokkersdijk</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>A4i, B1i, B3, C2, C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>013</td>
<td>BE010 Kalmthoutse Heide</td>
<td>2,200</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>014</td>
<td>BE009 De Maaljes, Waustwezel Heide en Groot Schietveld</td>
<td>4,100</td>
<td>C7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>015</td>
<td>— Mechels Rivierengebied, Antwerpen</td>
<td>2,263</td>
<td>B1i, C3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 ... continued. Summary of Important Bird Areas in Belgium. 48 IBAs covering 6,483 km²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IBA code</th>
<th>1989 code</th>
<th>International/National name</th>
<th>Administrative region</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
<th>Criteria (see p. 11)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>016</td>
<td>BE023</td>
<td>De Dijlevallei</td>
<td>Vlaams Gewest</td>
<td>1,250</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>017</td>
<td>BE012</td>
<td>Zegge</td>
<td>Vlaams Gewest</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>B1, C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>018</td>
<td>BE011</td>
<td>Gebieden ten noorden van Turnhout en Ravele</td>
<td>Vlaams Gewest</td>
<td>7,075</td>
<td>B2, C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>019</td>
<td>BE013</td>
<td>Ronde Put</td>
<td>Vlaams Gewest</td>
<td>5,400</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>020</td>
<td>BE014</td>
<td>Demervallei</td>
<td>Vlaams Gewest</td>
<td>7,010</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>021</td>
<td>BE015</td>
<td>Vallei van de Zwarte Beek</td>
<td>Vlaams Gewest</td>
<td>8,864</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>022</td>
<td>BE016</td>
<td>Gebieden gelegen te Peer en Hechtel-Eksel</td>
<td>Vlaams Gewest</td>
<td>10,015</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>023</td>
<td>BE018</td>
<td>Hamonterveld, Hagereen, Buitenheide, Mariahof en Stampoorterveld</td>
<td>Vlaams Gewest</td>
<td>13,125</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>024</td>
<td></td>
<td>Grensmeei</td>
<td>Vlaams Gewest</td>
<td>2,653</td>
<td>B1i, C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>025</td>
<td>BE017</td>
<td>Gebieden gelegen te Houthalen-Helchteren en Meeuwen-Gruitrode</td>
<td>Vlaams Gewest</td>
<td>2,798</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>026</td>
<td>BE019</td>
<td>Vijvercomplex van Midden Limburg</td>
<td>Vlaams Gewest</td>
<td>2,560</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>027</td>
<td>BE020</td>
<td>Boekrijk</td>
<td>Vlaams Gewest</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>028</td>
<td>BE021</td>
<td>De Molen</td>
<td>Vlaams Gewest</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>029</td>
<td>BE022</td>
<td>Mechelse Heide en de Vallei van de Ziepbeek</td>
<td>Vlaams Gewest</td>
<td>2,350</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>030</td>
<td>BE024</td>
<td>Bassin de la Haine</td>
<td>Région Wallonne</td>
<td>13,715</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>031</td>
<td>BE023</td>
<td>Vallée de la Dyle</td>
<td>Région Wallonne</td>
<td>1,314</td>
<td>C7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>032</td>
<td>BE025</td>
<td>Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse</td>
<td>Région Wallonne</td>
<td>83,866</td>
<td>A1, C1, C2, C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>033</td>
<td>BE026</td>
<td>Haute Meuse</td>
<td>Région Wallonne</td>
<td>7,700</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>034</td>
<td>BE027</td>
<td>Croix-Scaille</td>
<td>Région Wallonne</td>
<td>36,610</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>035</td>
<td>BE029</td>
<td>Daubeisse</td>
<td>Région Wallonne</td>
<td>14,914</td>
<td>B3, C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>036</td>
<td>BE028</td>
<td>Lesse et Lomme</td>
<td>Région Wallonne</td>
<td>22,426</td>
<td>B3, C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>037</td>
<td>BE030</td>
<td>Merve et Famenne</td>
<td>Région Wallonne</td>
<td>5,100</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>038</td>
<td>BE031</td>
<td>Saint-Hubert</td>
<td>Région Wallonne</td>
<td>16,700</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>039</td>
<td>BE032</td>
<td>Or designate</td>
<td>Région Wallonne</td>
<td>10,900</td>
<td>C7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>040</td>
<td>BE033</td>
<td>Malheur</td>
<td>Région Wallonne</td>
<td>41,638</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>041</td>
<td>BE035</td>
<td>Vallée de la Lienne</td>
<td>Région Wallonne</td>
<td>8,500</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>042</td>
<td>BE037</td>
<td>Tailles</td>
<td>Région Wallonne</td>
<td>8,494</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>043</td>
<td>BE036</td>
<td>Wanne-Loppem</td>
<td>Région Wallonne</td>
<td>5,700</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>044</td>
<td>BE034</td>
<td>Hautes Fagnes/Eifel</td>
<td>Région Wallonne</td>
<td>80,304</td>
<td>A4i, B1i, B1iv, C2, C5, C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>045</td>
<td>BE038</td>
<td>Deux Ourthes</td>
<td>Région Wallonne</td>
<td>34,678</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>046</td>
<td>BE039</td>
<td>Haute Sûre/Ardenne méridionale</td>
<td>Région Wallonne</td>
<td>89,443</td>
<td>B3, C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>047</td>
<td>BE040</td>
<td>Sûre-montigny</td>
<td>Région Wallonne</td>
<td>32,541</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>048</td>
<td>BE041</td>
<td>Côte Bajocienne</td>
<td>Région Wallonne</td>
<td>8,287</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Map 1. Location, area and criteria category of Important Bird Areas in Belgium.
proposed Ramsar Sites and a new proposed Special Protection Area (SPA). Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse (032) and Malchamps (040) significantly increased in surface area. Durme/Middenloop Schelde (010) also increased in surface area to compensate for losses of habitat at Schorren and Polder van de Beneden-Schelde (011) due to harbour development works. Demervallei (020) is larger than mentioned in Grimmett and Jones (1989).

**ORNITHOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE**

There are 94 species of European conservation concern (SPECs) which regularly breed in Belgium, of which 46 have an unfavourable conservation status in Europe (Tucker and Heath 1994). Entre Sambre et Meuse (032) qualifies under the A1 criterion for its important population of *Crex crex*, a species of global conservation concern (Table 2).

In particular, several of the wetland IBAs in the lowlands are important for wintering waterfowl and gEEE populations. A total of eight IBAs (001, 004, 005, 007, 010, 011, 012, 044) support more than 1% of the biogeographic population of at least one species (thus meeting criteria A4 and B1), and a further six IBAs (003, 006, 008, 015, 017, 024) support more than 1% of the flyway population of at least one species (criterion B1) (Table 3). Sites with the highest concentrations of wintering and migrating waterfowl are the IJzerbroeken–De Blankaart (003), Poldercomplex (005) (which holds more than 60% of the biogeographic population of wintering *Anser brachyrhynchus*). Durme en Middenloop van de Schelde (010), and Schorren and Polders van de Beneden-Schelde (011). A total of 300,000 waterbirds winter yearly in Flanders and an additional 33,000–55,000 waterbirds winter in Wallonia. Particularly important are the wintering numbers of *Anser fabalis, Anas acuta, Pluvialis apricaria and Recurvirostra avosetta*.

**Table 3. Important Bird Areas in Belgium that support important numbers of one or more congregatory species (i.e. meeting criteria A4 and/or B1). IBAs meeting both criteria A4 and B1 for the species are shown in bold. IBAs meeting only criterion B1 for the species concerned, and not A4, are shown in normal type. For key to ‘Season’, see p. 7.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>IBA code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Pluvialis crista</em></td>
<td>Great Crested Grebe</td>
<td>W 001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Cygnus columbianus</em></td>
<td>Bewick’s Swan</td>
<td>W 007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Anser albifrons</em></td>
<td>Bean Goose</td>
<td>W 005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Anser brachyrhynchus</em></td>
<td>Pink-footed Goose</td>
<td>W 005, 006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Anser albifrons</em></td>
<td>White-fronted Goose</td>
<td>W 005, 006, 007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Anser anser</em></td>
<td>Greylag Goose</td>
<td>P 011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Anas penelope</em></td>
<td>Wigeon</td>
<td>W 003, 005, 011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Anas strepera</em></td>
<td>Gadwall</td>
<td>W 010, 011, 012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Anas crecca</em></td>
<td>Teal</td>
<td>W 003, 010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Anas acuta</em></td>
<td>Pintail</td>
<td>W 003, 010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Anas crecca</em></td>
<td>Shoveler</td>
<td>W 003, 005, 008, 012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Aythya ferina</em></td>
<td>Pochard</td>
<td>W 012, 024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Gus gos Crane</em></td>
<td>Grenadier</td>
<td>P 044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Recurvirostra avosetta</em></td>
<td>Avocet</td>
<td>B 011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Pluvialis apricaria</em></td>
<td>Golden Plover</td>
<td>P 005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Larus minutus</em></td>
<td>Little Gull</td>
<td>P 001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sterna sandvicensis</em></td>
<td>Sandwich Tern</td>
<td>B 004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sterna albifrons</em></td>
<td>Little Tern</td>
<td>B 004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition Voorhoven van Zeebrugge and Baai van Heist (004) holds internationally important breeding numbers of *Sterna albifrons* in the tern colony.

Several species of European conservation concern and species listed on Annex I of the EC Birds Directive have significant populations at IBAs (Table 4).

**HABITATS**

All terrestrial IBAs contain at least some artificial landscape, with nearly 50% of these having more than half of their surface area covered by this habitat-type. Major artificial landscapes are
intensively used agricultural land and, in Wallonia, large forestry plantations. Over 80% of IBAs have woodland habitat; those with more than 50% of the site area being natural woodland are all situated in Wallonia and are Entre Sambre et Meuse (032), Haute Meuse (033), Daverdisse (035), Saint-Hubert (038), Wanne-Logbiermé (043) and Sinémurienne (047) (Figure 1).

IMPACTS ON IBAs – LAND-USE AND THREATS

Over 80% of IBAs are used in some way for agriculture, and in about one quarter of sites it is the dominant land-use, especially for IJzervallei–De Blankaart (003), Poldercomplex (005), Krekengebied (007) and Deux-Ourthes (045), where more than 80% of the surface area of each IBA is used for agriculture.

Nearly 60% of sites are used for forestry and in 15 IBAs this is the dominant land-use, with forestry activities impacting on more than half of the area of the IBA. All such sites are in Wallonia and include Croix-Scaille (034), Daverdisse (035), Saint-Hubert (038) and Wanne-Logbiermé (043).

Nature conservation is a major land-use in just under 10% of IBAs. In contrast, in nearly 20% of IBAs hunting is the main land-use, especially in Wallonia. Although in only two sites do military activities occur in more than 50% of the area, military areas have

Although nearly 80% of all IBAs have some wetland habitats, these are small, with the exception of Durme en Middenloop van de Schelde (010) which is 80% wetland habitat and Zwin (006) which is 40%. Grassland is present in 50% of IBAs, but only two IBAs have more than 50% humid grassland; 85% of IJzervallei–De Blankarta (003) and 60% of Poldercomplex (005) are humid grassland.

Scrub habitat consists mainly of heathland and dune-scrub vegetation, and is the predominant habitat-type in two IBAs: Houthalen-Helchteren (025) for heathland and Westkust (002) for dune-scrub vegetation. Trapegeer-stroombank (001) is a marine area with sandbanks and shallow water.

The national protection status of Important Bird Areas in Belgium (see Table 5 for categories) = 737–815 km² (12–13% of total IBA area).

Figure 4. The international protection status of Important Bird Areas in Belgium.
in general a high conservation value, especially for heathland habitats. Houthalen-Helchteren (025), Vallei van de Zwarte Beek (021), Haute Fagne-Eifel (044), Marche en Famenne (037), Sinémurienne (047) are the most important heathland sites. Recreation and tourism are increasing, affecting over 70% of IBAs, and considered a particularly significant threat to parts of Westkust (002), Kalmthoutse Heide (013) and Haute Fagnes (044). In Belgium most habitats are fragmented, thus the filling-in of wetlands, afforestation and groundwater abstraction have a high impact on these sites.

**PROTECTION STATUS**

Table 5 summarizes the national and international protection status of Belgian IBAs.

### National protection

The legislation for the protection of sites is different for Brussels, Wallonia and Flanders. The principal categories of protected areas are: State Nature Reserves, Private Nature Reserves (NGO), Nature Parks (Wallonia only), Forest Reserves, ‘Zones humides d’interet biologique’ (wetlands of biological importance (Wallonia only)) and Protected Landscape (data on the last three designation-types have not been compiled for this chapter—see ‘Analytical methods’ section).

Six IBAs are fully or partly protected as State Nature Reserves and 34 as Private Nature Reserves (Table 5); these designations may cover parts of the same IBA. Overall 77% are partially covered by some form of national protected area, but in only 11 IBAs does this cover exceed 10% of the IBA area (Figure 4). Indeed less than 15% of the total surface area of IBAs in Belgium is effectively protected. Protection of a site is generally guaranteed once it has been designated as a green area on the physical planning map. The physical planning map is drawn up by regional governments and determines the designation of the area as an industrial, agricultural, green, military, recreational or residential zone.

### International protection

Belgium is party to several international initiatives (Box 1). It has also signed the Benelux agreement on nature and landscape conservation. Thirty-six IBAs are designated as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) under the EC Birds Directive and six as Ramsar Sites (five of which are also SPAs). Seven IBAs are proposed SPAs but have not been compiled for this chapter—see ‘Analytical methods’ section).

Although 77% of IBAs have some form of international protection (Figure 5) the actual protection of the areas is far from adequate. The main problems are the lack of specific protection measures, in particular habitat protection, and the absence of complete management strategies for the sites. In most SPAs only certain habitats are legally protected within the boundaries of the area, and often these habitats represent only a small percentage of the total IBA area (with the exception of deciduous woodland), and are insufficiently protected. All but 12 IBAs are SPAs and thus are part of the Natura 2000 network of the EU. In Flanders, more than 50% of the area of the IBAs is proposed as a Site of Community Importance, whilst in Wallonia this is less than 5%.
Grasslands in river valleys (potential *Crepus crex* habitat), as well as historical polder grasslands (key wintering sites for important geese populations), are still insufficiently protected. Harbour development threatens several areas and although compulsory land compensation is foreseen by the EC Birds Directive, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find such zones of an equal ornithological value.

**CONSERVATION ISSUES**

- Rare and vulnerable breeding birds are monitored throughout Belgium. A monitoring project for common birds is running in Wallonia and Brussels, while several local projects take place in Flanders. Scientific research and monitoring of wintering and migrating waterfowl populations (including geese) is carried out in the whole country.
- Several IBAs are included within the framework of the 'Ecologisch Impulsgebied', an integrated conservation and development project. This initiative, launched by the Flemish Region, aims to harmoniously combine nature conservation and other land-uses. Several zones within SPAs are subject to management agreements with local farmers, while others are being bought by the Flemish Region and managed as nature reserves. The future of many geese and wader populations on farmed landscapes depend on the success of such initiatives. This affects IBAs 003, 016, 018, 020, 021 and 026.
- For a site to be recognized as a nature reserve by the government, a management plan has to be drawn up. Management plans exist only for small parts of the IBAs protected as reserves. For some of these IBAs overall management plans are currently being developed.
- In Wallonia several local forest management plans are being implemented.
- Agri-environmental agreements take place within the framework of landscape conservation and restoration.
- Subsidies from regional governments, and LIFE funds from the European Union, are increasingly important for the acquisition and management of nature reserves.
- Regional governments are supporting monitoring projects for species and sites.

**ANALYTICAL METHODS**

- Counts of passage birds are in most cases given as maxima for the period 1990–1996.
- Waterfowl counts are good quality, the range is given for the 1990–1996 period. For geese, the figures for wintering data are not confined to the limits of the IBA, but to the whole east coast polder area.
- Most data on breeding birds are from the period 1993–1996/1997. Data from terns and plovers in the Voorhaven Zeebrugge and Baai van Heist (004) are maxima for the period 1990–1999.
- All key species are covered by the IBA inventory.
- Assigning percentage cover and categories for land-use, habitats and threats in the Walloon region was difficult due to lack of detailed regional information. The figures given are estimates. For the Flemish region, data reflect the 1996 situation and changes may have occurred in the meantime.
- Complete information on all protected sites within IBAs was difficult to obtain, due to lack of an available appropriate database system at the time of data compilation. Therefore data for some national protected-area designations is incomplete.
- Areas of IBAs were calculated using GIS (Geographic Information System) techniques; consequently almost all IBAs are different from the figures given for the previous pan-European IBA inventory (Grimmett and Jones 1989).

**GLOSSARY**

**BNVR/RNOC** Belgische Natuur- en Vogelreservaten/Réserves Naturelles et Ornithologiques de Belgie, the BirdLife Partner in Belgium.

**LIFE** an EU funding line (Regulation 1973/92/EEC) which supports EU environmental legislation, including the Birds and Habitats Directives.

**MUM** management unit on North Sea mathematical models.

**Natura 2000** the name given by the European Commission to the ‘coherent ecological network’ of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas for Conservation (SACs) that is due to be established within the European Union member states by June 2004, under the Birds and Habitats Directives.

**polder** a flat area of land, often below sea-level, with an artificially regulated water-regime, having been claimed from the sea or from a lake or river.

**SPA** Special Protection Area (designated under Article 4 of the EC-Birds Directive).

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We would like to thank BNVR/RNOC and all participants in the Centrale Ornithologique Aves, the Bijzondere Broedvogel Project Vlaanderen and the waterfowl counts, who provided a great part of the ornithological data used for this review. We thank Jan Seys and Jeroen Van Waeyenberge (Instituut voor Natuurbewijs) for providing unpublished data on breeding colonies of terns in Zeebrugge.

**SITE ACCOUNTS**

**Trappeger-Stroombank**

- **Admin region**: Belgian Federal Government
- **Coordinates**: 51°12’N 2°45’E
- **Altitude**: 0–23 m
- **Area**: 17,000 ha
- **Protection status**: National None International High
- **IBA covered by Vlaamse Banken (Federal) Ramsar Site.**

**Site description**

A marine area off the west Belgian coast, with sandbanks that are slightly covered by sea water at all times, and mud- and sandflats that are fully exposed at low tide.

**Habits** Marine areas (sea inlet/coastal features), Wetland (mudflat/sandflat)

**Land-use** Unknown

**Birds**

- **Podiceps cristatus** Great Crested Grebe
- **Larus minutus** Little Gull

Other species include passage *Phalacrocorax carbo*, *Sterna sandvicensis*, *S. hirundo*, *S. parasitica*, *Gavia stellata* (winter >150 birds), *G. arctica*, *Sula bassana*, *Somateria mollissima*, *Uria aalge*, *Alca torda* and *Aethyta marila*, and wintering *Melanitta nigra* (1,500–2,000 birds).

**Westkust**

- **Admin region**: Vlaamse Gewest
- **Coordinates**: 51°08’N 2°40’E
- **Altitude**: 0–23 m
- **Area**: 1,415 ha

**Site description**

The site includes all important dune areas along the western part of the Belgian coast and encompasses the saltmarshes and mudflats of
the River IJzer estuary. Habitats range from sand-beaches, shifting dunes, fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation, wet and dry depressions with Lysimachia vulgaris and Salix repens and wooded areas. The site consists of several large zones separated from each other by urbanized areas.

| Habitats | Forest and woodland (30%); mixed forest; scrub (70%); scrub; Wetland (40%); sand-dunes/sand beach |
| Land-use | Nature conservation/research (90%); Tourism/recreation (10%); Water management (30%) |

### Birds

This is an important staging site for migrating passerines. The site supports nationally important numbers of migrating and wintering waders. Galerida cristata breeds at the site (20 pairs, which is 20–25% of the Flemish population).

### Protection status

**National High**

International High

340 ha of IBA covered by State Nature Reserve (De Westhoek, 340 ha).

80 ha of IBA covered by State Nature Reserve (Houtsaegerduinen, 80 ha).

1 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Doornpanne, 1 ha).

20 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (IJzermonding, 20 ha).

1 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Ysermonde, 1 ha).

1,415 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Westkust, 1,415 ha).

### Conservation issues

**Threats**

Consequences of animal/plant introductions (B), Disturbance to birds (B), Groundwater abstraction (A), Natural events (B), Recreation/tourism (B)

The succession of vegetation within certain dune areas may result in the loss of some habitat-types (‘natural event’ threat). The entire IBA is designated as a reserve or green area on the physical planning map, and has been protected since 1995 by the ‘Dune Decree’. A proposed Site of Community Importance covers 1,400 ha of this site (Duingebieden inclusief IJzermonding en Zwin, 2,891 ha). For most of the zones, a management plan exists or is currently being prepared.

A nature development project to restore dune areas is underway in the IJzermonding Reserve. Detailed information on all breeding bird species is collected in the framework of a four-year census project, linked to the study of the effects of nature management measures. Migratory birds are regularly counted.

### IJzervallei–De Blankaart

**Admin region** Vlaams Gewest

**Coordinates** 51°00’N 2°50’E

**Altitude** 3–7 m

**Area** 5,100 ha

### Site description

A large area of flat and annually (in winter) inundated hay-meadows and grasslands along the IJzer and Handzame rivers. The site includes the Blankaart, a shallow freshwater lake with extensive reedbeds and Salix marshes.

| Habitats | Forest and woodland, Grassland (85%); humid grassland; Wetland (5%); standing fresh water; water-fringe vegetation), Artificial landscape (10%); highly improved reseeded grassland; arable land |
| Land-use | Agriculture (90%), Hunting (5%), Nature conservation/research (10%), Tourism/recreation (5%), Water management (5%) |

### Birds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cypselus luteus</strong></td>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anas penelope</strong></td>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>A, B1, C3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anas crecca</strong></td>
<td>Teal</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>A, B1, C3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anas acuta</strong></td>
<td>Pintail</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>A, B1, C3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anas clypeata</strong></td>
<td>Shoveler</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>B, C1, C3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Circus cyaneus</strong></td>
<td>Marsh Harrier</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>A, C6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chlidonias niger</strong></td>
<td>Black Tern</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>C2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Daily maximum.

This is an internationally important area for migrating and wintering waders and waterfowl, especially wintering Anas penelope. The site is also nationally important for breeding meadow birds.

### Protection status

**National Low**

International High

113 ha of IBA covered by State Nature Reserve (Blankaart, 113 ha).

2,160 ha of IBA covered by Ramsar Site (Blankaart, 2,160 ha).

5,100 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (IJzervallei including Blankaart, 5,100 ha).

### Conservation issues

**Threats**

Agricultural intensification/expansion (A), Construction/impact of dyke/ dam/ barrage (B), Drainage (A), Dredging/conditioning (B), Recreation/tourism (C)

The area is included in the ‘Ecologisch Impulsgebied’, an integrated conservation and development project. Small zones are managed as nature reserves by BNVR/RNOB and the Flemish Region. A management plan exists for the Blankaart area and several smaller zones. 170 ha (4%) is designated as a green area on the physical planning map of Flanders. Wintering waterbirds have been monitored for the past 15 years and breeding birds intensively for the last five.

### Voorhaven Zeebrugge and Baai van Heist

**Admin region** Vlaams Gewest

**Coordinates** 51°21’N 3°11’E

**Altitude** 0-0 m

**Area** 230 ha

### Site description

An industrial area in Zeebrugge harbour.

### Birds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sternula albifrons</strong></td>
<td>Sandwich Tern</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>B1i, C2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sternula hirundo</strong></td>
<td>Common Tern</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sternula albifrons</strong></td>
<td>Little Tern</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1,950</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>A4i, B1i, C2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is an important tern colony, with the only breeding site for Sterna albifrons and S. albifrons in the country. The area also holds 114 breeding pairs of Chlidonias alexandrinus.

### Protection status

**National Partial**

International None

45 ha of IBA covered by State Nature Reserve (Baai van Heist, 45 ha).

### Conservation issues

**Threats**

Industrialization/urbanization

As a result of the development of harbour activities, the available breeding area for terns and plovers has dramatically decreased, while colonization of the (protected) beach area is partly successful but limited by space. The suitable habitats in the most important breeding area of the Voorhaven will be lost in the near future as a result of harbour activities. The area is a proposed Ramsar Site.

### Polderkomplex

**Admin region** Vlaams Gewest

**Coordinates** 51°15’N 3°13’E

**Altitude** 0–0 m

**Area** 9,349 ha

### Site description

The area includes the most interesting parts of the coastal polders to the north of Brugge which consist of grasslands, extensively used ditches, canals and reedbeds. It also includes a small part of the coastal dunes near Blankenberge.

| Habitats | Grassland (60%); Artificial landscape (40%); arable land; perennial crops/orchards/groves |
| Land-use | Agriculture (90%); Nature conservation/research (5%); Tourism/recreation (5%) |
This is an internationally important wintering site for

Anser brachyrhynchus, A. albifrons and Anas penelope. The area is also important for breeding meadow birds.

### Protection status

#### National Low

**International High**

12 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (De Fonteintjes, 12 ha). 60 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Uitkerke Polder, 60 ha). 9,349 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Poldercomplex Hoeke, Damme, Meierkerke, Uitkerke, 9,350 ha).

#### Conservation issues

- **Threats**
  - Agricultural intensification/expansion (A), Drainage (A), Disturbance to birds (B), Human activity (B), Natural events (A), Recreation/tourism (B)
  - Water quality is also deteriorating due to agricultural pollution, and the lowering of the water-table in the area is also a threat. The area is well studied by a local ornithological working group (Vogelwerkgroep Noord-Oost-Vlaanderen).

#### Site description

- **Habitats**
  - Wetland (5%), Artificial landscape (10%; arable land; perennial crops/orchards/groves; forestry plantation)
  - Agriculture (95%), Nature conservation/research (5%), Tourism/recreation (5%)

#### Important Bird Areas in Europe – Belgium

**Krekengebied**

- **Admin region** Vlaams Gewest
- **Coordinates** 51°15’N 3°40’E
- **Altitude** 2-5 m
- **Area** 780 ha

This is an internationally important wintering site for **Cygnus columbianus**. The area is also a nationally important breeding site for **Luscinia svecica** (25 pairs) andreed species.

### Protection status

#### National Low

**International High**

14 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Grote Geul, 14 ha). 19 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Meetjeslandse kreek, 19 ha). 780 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Krekengebied, 780 ha).

#### Conservation issues

- **Threats**
  - Agricultural intensification/expansion (A), Disturbance to birds (B), Drainage (A), Human activity (B), Recreation/tourism (C)

#### Site description

- **Habitats**
  - Wetland (5%), Artificial landscape (10%; arable land; perennial crops/orchards/groves; forestry plantation)
  - Agriculture (95%), Nature conservation/research (15%), Tourism/recreation (15%)

#### Important Bird Areas in Europe – Belgium

**Bourgoyen-Ossemeersen**

- **Admin region** Vlaams Gewest
- **Coordinates** 51°04’N 3°21’E
- **Altitude** —
- **Area** 213 ha

This large part of the area consists of humid grasslands inundated during the winter period.
**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Anas crecca</em></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>B, C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is a very important site for wintering ducks, particularly for diving ducks, but no data are available for individual species.

**Protection status**

National Partial International None

**Conservation issues**

The area is now well protected and there are no immediate threats. It is proposed as a Ramsar Site.

---

**Schorren en Polder van de Beneden-Schelde**

**Site description**

A brackish part of the River Schelde on Flemish territory near the border of the Netherlands, encompassing mud and sandflats and brackish marshes. The neighbouring polders are included and comprise grazing-meadows, agricultural land, several large reedbeds, sandy and muddy industrial wasteland, and several deep-water docks connected with the River Schelde.

**Habitats**

Wetland (10%; tidal river/enclosed tidal water; mudflat/sandflat), Artificial landscape (90%; arable land; other urban/industrial areas; ruderal land)

**Land-use**

Agriculture (30%), Nature conservation/research (10%), Urban/industrial/transport (40%)

**Protection status**

National None International None

**Conservation issues**

The area is included within a project which is preparing an ecological model of the River Schelde estuary, and thus receives detailed study. About 1,560 ha is designated as a green area on the physical planning map. The whole estuarine area is currently subject to designation as a State Nature Reserve, which will highly improve its conservation. 3,800 ha of IBA covered by proposed Site of Community Importance (Schelde-en Durme-estuariun van NL grens tot Gent, 4,139 ha).

---

**Durme en Middenloop van de Schelde**

**Site description**

The area includes long sections of the Schelde and Durme rivers, with very rare freshwater tidal river marshes as well as mudflats, marshes, reedbeds, oxbows and wet meadows.

**Habitats**

Forest and woodland (5%; mixed forest), Wetland (20%; tidal river/enclosed tidal water; standing fresh water), Artificial landscape (20%)

**Land-use**

Agriculture (20%), Nature conservation/research (80%), Tourism/recreation (10%)

**Protection status**

National Partial International High

**Conservation issues**

The IBA is covered by several Nature Reserves; Brede Schooren, 4 ha; ‘As State, Daknamse krekken’, 12 ha; De Cramp, 8 ha; De Notelaer, 28 ha; Grauwe Plaat, 1 ha; Groot Schoor van Grenbergen, 8 ha; Het Molsbroek, 75 ha; Kalkene Meersen, 34 ha; Kijkverdriet, 5 ha; Konkelschoor, 2 ha; Rietsnijderij, 3 ha; Schor aan de Dunemonding, 6 ha; Schorren bij Zele, 12 ha; Schorren van Brant, 20 ha; Sint-Amandschoor, 6 ha; Sint-Onolfsschor, 5 ha; Vlassenbroekse schorren, 17 ha. 17 ha of IBA covered by State Nature Reserve (Stort bij Weert, 17 ha). 23 ha of IBA covered by State Nature Reserve (Schorren van de Durme, 23 ha). 7,923 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Durme en de middenloop van de Schelde, 7,923 ha).

This is an internationally important staging and wintering site for waders and waterfowl, especially for *Anser anser* and *Anas crecca*. The area is also nationally important for breeding meadow birds and waders.

**Protection status**

National Low International High

45 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Galgenschoor, 45 ha). 215 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Groot Buitenschoor, 215 ha). 7,570 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Schorren en polders van de Beneden-Schelde, 7,570 ha).
Conservation issues

Threats  Agricultural intensification/expansion (B), Disturbance to birds (A), Industrialization/urbanization (A), Infrastructure (A)

Breeding and wintering waterbirds are regularly surveyed. A recent report on the state of nature in part of the IBA is being produced within the framework of future infrastructure development. According to the physical planning scheme of the Flemish Government this site will be destroyed by infrastructure works for the harbour of Antwerp: only very small parts of the IBA will remain free of industrial plants. 400 ha of IBA covered by proposed Site of Community Importance (Schelde and Durne-estuary from Dutch border to Gent, 139 ha).

Site description

This IBA comprises two sites, separated by the River Schelde; Kuifeend, an area of freshwater pools and reedbeds, and Blokkersdijk, a shallow freshwater lake surrounded by reed- and willow-marshes.

Habitats  Forest and woodland (5%), Wetland (30%; standing fresh water; water-fringe vegetation), Artificial landscape (40%; arable land; other urban/industrial areas; ruderal land)
Land-use Agriculture (40%), Nature conservation/research (20%), Tourism/recreation (10%), Urban/industrial/transport (20%)

This is an internationally important wintering site for Anas strepera and A. clypeata. The area is also important for breeding reedbed species and staging and wintering ducks and grebes.

Protection status

National Partial International High
56 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Kuifeend, 56 ha). 100 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Blokkersdijk, 100 ha). 194 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (De Kuifeend en Blokkersdijk, 194 ha).

Conservation issues

Threats  Filling-in of wetlands (A), Industrialization/urbanization (A), Infrastructure (A)

Breeding and wintering birds have been monitored for almost 20 years by Natuurreservaten Antwerpen-Noord.

Birds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anas strepera</td>
<td>Gadwall</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>A, B3, C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anas clypeata</td>
<td>Shoveler</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>A, B1, C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recurvirostra avosetta</td>
<td>Avocet</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larus melanocephalus</td>
<td>Mediterranean Gull</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>A, C2, C6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This IBA is also a nationally important staging site for migrating waders and breeding heathland species, including Lullula arborea.

Site description

The site includes arable land, grasslands and marshes (De Maatjes), and heaths and mire habitats in military camps (Grooth and Klein Schietveld).

Habitats  Forest and woodland (5%), Scrub (25%; heathland), Grassland (5%; humid grassland), Wetland (30%; standing fresh water), Artificial landscape (40%; arable land; forestry plantation; ruderal land)
Land-use Agriculture (40%), Forestry (10%), Military (40%), Nature conservation/research (10%)

One of the main threats is accidental fire damage during dry periods. There is intensive research on heathland habitats related to management and a detailed management plan exists. The whole site is designated as a green area on the physical planning map. 2,000 ha of IBA covered by proposed Site of Community Importance (Kalmhoutse Heide, 2,018 ha).

Protection status

National Low International High
10 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (De Maatjes, 10 ha). 4,100 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (De Maatjes, Wuustwezelheide en Groot Schietveld, 4,100 ha).

Conservation issues

Threats  Agricultural intensification/expansion (A), Groundwater abstraction (B), Infrastructure (C)

About 10% of the site is designated as a green area on the physical planning map. 1,770 ha of IBA covered by proposed Site of Community Importance (Klein- en Groot Schietveld, 2,042 ha).

Birds

An important breeding area for meadow and heathland species, e.g. Limosa limosa (10–20 pairs). It is also a nationally important staging site for migrating passerines, waders, gulls and raptors. The meadows are an important feeding site for the up to 350 Larus melanoccephalus and up to 600 Numenius phaeopus.

Site description

An area of flat grasslands, small swamps, channels and large artificial lakes along the Dijle, Zenne and Rupel rivers. Human activities include
A remnant of the once extensive Kleine Nete river valley, with pools and low moorland, overgrown grasslands and alder swamps. The area is included in the ‘Ecologisch Impulsgebied’, an integrated conservation and development project. Intensive research on the influence of hydrology upon land management is currently carried out. 549 ha of IBA covered by proposed Site of Community Importance (Vennen, Liereman en Korhaan, 7,075 ha). 60 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (De Dijlevallei, 91 ha). 7,075 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Arendonk, 12 ha). 7,075 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (De Dijlevallei, 170 ha). 1,250 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Doode Bemde, 70 ha). 1,250 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (De Dijlevallei, 1,250 ha).

**Conservation issues**

Threats Agricultural intensification/expansion (B), Infrastructure (A), Recreation/tourism (B)

The area is included in the ‘Ecologisch Impulsgebied’, an integrated conservation and development project. Intensive research on the influence of hydrology upon land management is currently carried out. 549 ha of IBA covered by proposed Site of Community Importance (Vennen, Liereman en Korhaan, 7,075 ha). 60 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (De Dijlevallei, 91 ha). 7,075 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Arendonk, 12 ha). 7,075 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (De Dijlevallei, 170 ha). 1,250 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Doode Bemde, 70 ha). 1,250 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (De Dijlevallei, 1,250 ha).

**Conservation issues**

Threats Agricultural intensification/expansion (B), Infrastructure (A), Recreation/tourism (B)

The area is included in the ‘Ecologisch Impulsgebied’, an integrated conservation and development project. Intensive research on the influence of hydrology upon land management is currently carried out. 549 ha of IBA covered by proposed Site of Community Importance (Vennen, Liereman en Korhaan, 7,075 ha). 60 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (De Dijlevallei, 91 ha). 7,075 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Arendonk, 12 ha). 7,075 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (De Dijlevallei, 170 ha). 1,250 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Doode Bemde, 70 ha). 1,250 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (De Dijlevallei, 1,250 ha).

**Protection status**

National Low International High

70 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Doode Bemde, 70 ha). 1,250 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (De Dijlevallei, 1,250 ha).

**Protection status**

National Low International High

170 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (De Liereman, 170 ha). 12 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Turnhout, 12 ha). 60 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Turnhouts vennengebied, 60 ha). 7,075 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Arendonk, 7,075 ha). 7,075 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (De Zegge, 7,075 ha). 91 ha of IBA covered by proposed Site of Community Importance (Kleine Nete en vallei met moerasgebieden en heiden, 2,635 ha).

**Conservation issues**

Threats Agricultural intensification/expansion (A), Drainage

As the site is small, most threats impacting on it originate from outside the IBA. The site is managed as a nature reserve by the Koninklijke Maatschappij voor Dierkunde Antwerpen, and measures are being taken to address the problems of drainage and water pollution. 91 ha of IBA covered by proposed Site of Community Importance (Kleine Nete en vallei met moerasgebieden en heiden, 2,635 ha).

**Protection status**

National Low International High

170 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (De Liereman, 170 ha). 12 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Turnhout, 12 ha). 60 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Turnhouts vennengebied, 60 ha). 7,075 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Arendonk, 7,075 ha). 7,075 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (De Zegge, 7,075 ha). 91 ha of IBA covered by proposed Site of Community Importance (Kleine Nete en vallei met moerasgebieden en heiden, 2,635 ha).

**Conservation issues**

Threats Agricultural intensification/expansion (B), Recreation/tourism (B)

The area is included in the ‘Ecologisch Impulsgebied’, an integrated conservation and development project. Small zones are managed as nature reserves by BNVR/RNOB and the Flemish Region. 2,624 ha of IBA covered by proposed Site of Community Importance (Vennen, heiden en moerasen rond Turnhout, 2,377 ha), 700 ha of IBA covered by proposed Site of Community Importance (Liereman en Korhaan, 854 ha).
**Ronde Put**

**Admin region** Vlaams Gewest  
**Coordinates** 51°11'N 5°11'E  
**Altitude** 25–35 m  
**Area** 5,400 ha  

**Site description**

An area of the Turnhoutse Kempen covered with deciduous and coniferous woodlands, small heathlands, and marshes and ponds.

**Habitats**  
Forest and woodland (10%); broadleaved deciduous forest; Scrub (5%); heathland; Artificial landscape (45%); arable land; forestry plantation  
**Land-use**  
Agriculture (40%); Forestry (40%); Nature conservation/research (10%); Tourism/recreation (10%)

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Pernis apivorus</em></td>
<td>Honey Buzzard</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This IBA is also a staging site for migrating passerines and raptors.

**Protection status**

National Low International High  
10 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (De Maatjes, 10 ha). 40 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (De Ronde Put, 40 ha). 5,400 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (De Ronde Put, 5,400 ha).

**Conservation issues**

Threats  
Agricultural intensification/expansion (A), Disturbance to birds (B), Drainage (B), Infrastructure (B), Recreation/tourism (A)

**Demervallei**

**Admin region** Vlaams Gewest  
**Coordinates** 51°01'N 5°11'E  
**Altitude** 15–50 m  
**Area** 7,010 ha  

**Site description**

The area is situated in the Demer river valley, west and east of the town of Diest. It comprises a rich variety of former river arms, peat ponds, marshes, reedbeds, sedge-fields, humid grasslands and alluvial forests, including heathland relics on the sandy hills bordering the valley.

**Habitats**  
Forest and woodland (10%); broadleaved deciduous forest; alluvial/very wet forest; Grassland (15%); humid grassland; Wetland (20%); standing fresh water; water-fringe vegetation; Artificial landscape (60%); arable land; perennial crops/orchards/groves; forestry plantation; urban parks/gardens  
**Land-use**  
Agriculture (40%); Forestry (30%); Nature conservation/research (20%); Tourism/recreation (5%); Urban/Industrial/Transport (10%)

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Luscinia svecica</em></td>
<td>Bluethroat</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>80 A C6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A breeding and staging area for meadow birds, waders and waterfowl.

**Protection status**

National Low International High  
10 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (De Demervallei, 7,010 ha). 62 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Langdonken, 62 ha). 6,010 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (De Demervallei, 6,010 ha).

**Conservation issues**

Threats  
Agricultural intensification/expansion (A), Disturbance to birds (B), Infrastructure (A), Recreation/tourism (A)

**Vallei van de Zwerke Beek**

**Admin region** Vlaams Gewest  
**Coordinates** 51°07'N 5°20'E  
**Altitude** 32–70 m  
**Area** 8,864 ha  

**Site description**

An extensive heathland on the Kempen plateau, with oligotrophic fens and sand-dunes, and the Zwerke Beek wil valley, a well-preserved, semi-natural landscape with bogs, moorland, marsh, woodland and extensive arable land.

**Habitats**  
Forest and woodland (20%); mixed forest; Scrub (30%); heathland; Grassland (10%); humid grassland; mesophile grassland; Artificial landscape (40%); arable land; forestry plantation  
**Land-use**  
Agriculture (20%); Military (70%); Nature conservation/research (10%); Tourism/recreation (5%)

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Caprimulgus europaeus</em></td>
<td>Nightjar</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40 A C6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is a breeding area for meadow birds and woodland passerines.

**Protection status**

National Partial International High  
827 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Vallei van de Zwerke Beek, 827 ha). 8,864 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Militair domein en de vallei van de Zwerke Beek, 8,864 ha).

**Conservation issues**

Threats  
Consequences of animal/plant introductions (A), Infrastructure (B), Other (A)

**Gebieden gelegen te Peer en Hechtel-Eksel**

**Admin region** Vlaams Gewest  
**Coordinates** 51°01'N 5°25'E  
**Altitude** 48–75 m  
**Area** 10,015 ha  

**Site description**

Extensive grassland with a few extensively cultivated areas, bisected by valleys with old hay-meadows and wet woodlands. Of particular importance are the Abeek, Dommel and Bolliserbeek valleys.

**Habitats**  
Forest and woodland (5%); mixed forest; alluvial/very wet forest; Wetland (5%); river/stream; Artificial landscape (80%); arable land; perennial crops/orchards/groves; urban parks/gardens; other urban/industrial area; ruderal land  
**Land-use**  
Agriculture (80%); Nature conservation/research (5%); Tourism/recreation (5%); Urban/Industrial/Transport (10%)

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Alcedo atthis</em></td>
<td>Nightjar</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15 B C6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Honey Buzzard also breeds at this site.

**Protection status**

National None International High  
10,015 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Bocholt, Hechtel-Eksel, Gruitrode, Neerpelt en Peer, 10,015 ha).
Several small areas have been managed for *Emberiza hortulana*. The species formerly bred in the area and, up to 10 years ago, was the only site in Flanders where the species still occurred. However, this conservation action probably came too late as only 1–2 singing males are observed annually in the area, and it is doubtful that a viable population will be established. The physical planning map of the Flemish Region designates 17% of the IBA as a green area.

**Hamonterheide, Hageven, Buitenheide, Mariahof en Stamprooierbroek**

Admin region Vlaams Gewest
Coordinates 51°10’N 5°35’E
Altitude 26–40 m Area 13,125 ha

**Site description**

A large site with heathland, marshes, fish-ponds, extensive grassland, deciduous woodland and agriculture land.

Habitats Forest and woodland (15%); Broadleaved deciduous forest; Alluvial/very wet forest; Scrub (5%); Heathland; Artificial landscape (40%); Highly improved reseeded grassland; Arable land; Urban parks/gardens.

Land-use Agriculture (59%); Forestry (40%); Nature conservation/research (10%); Tourism/recreation (5%).

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Botaurus stellaris</em></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Lullula arborea</em></td>
<td>Woodark</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A breeding and staging area for reedbed species and meadow birds.

**Protection status**

National Low International High

170 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Hageven, 170 ha). 400 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Stamprooierbroek-Urloebroek, 400 ha). 13,125 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Hamonterheide, Hageven, Buitenheide, Stamprooierbier, 13,125 ha).

**Conservation issues**

Threats Agricultural intensification/expansion (A), Drainage (B), Other (A).

Partial

This is an important site for wintering *Aythya ferina*.

### Conservation issues

**Threats** Agricultural intensification/expansion (A), Aquaculture/fisheries (A), Filling-in of wetlands (A), Infrastructure (A), Recreation/tourism (A)

The site is severely impacted by the construction of buildings, camping activities, the filling-in of wetlands and the destruction of trees, reedbeds and all other vegetation bordering the fishponds. The area is included in the ‘Ecologisch Impulsgebied’, an integrated conservation and development project. 800 ha of IBA covered by proposed Site of Community Importance (Valleien van de Laarbeek, Zonderikbeek, Slangbeek, 2,811 ha).

**Bokrijk**

**Admin region** Vlaams Gewest

**Coordinates** 50°57’N 5°24’E

**Altitude** 35–55 m

**Area** 800 ha

### Site description

An area of several ponds and fens fed by numerous brooks, with heathland and deciduous, mixed and coniferous woodland and grasslands.

**Habitats** Forest and woodland (15%; broadleaved deciduous forest; alluvial/very wet forest), Wetland (30%; standing fresh water), Artificial landscape (55%; arable land; perennial crops/orchards/groves; forestry plantation)

**Land-use** Agriculture (15%), Fisheries/aquaculture (30%), Forestry (40%), Nature conservation/research (25%), Tourism/recreation (25%)

The area is a breeding and staging site for reedbed species.

### Birds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Botaurus stellaris</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Conservation status

**National Partial International High**

213 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (De Maten, 213 ha). 600 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (De Maten, 600 ha).

### Conservation issues

**Threats** Infrastructure (B), Recreation/tourism (B)

561 ha of IBA covered by proposed Site of Community Importance (De Maten, 561 ha).

**Mechelse Heide en de Valleie van de Ziepbeek**

**Admin region** Vlaams Gewest

**Coordinates** 50°57’N 5°38’E

**Altitude** 50–100 m

**Area** 2,350 ha

### Site description

The site includes the Ziepbeek and the Asbeek valleys, which hold very important areas of wet and dry heath and fen, coniferous and deciduous woodland, and a small bog.

**Habitats** Forest and woodland (20%; broadleaved deciduous forest), Scrub (20%), heathland, Wetland (5%; river/stream; fen/transit mire/spring), Artificial landscape (60%; forestry plantation; ruderal land)

**Land-use** Agriculture (20%), Forestry (40%), Nature conservation/research (40%), Tourism/recreation (5%), Urban/industrial/transport (10%)

A breeding area for heathland and woodland species.

### Birds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lullula arborea</td>
<td>Woodlark</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>B C6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### De Maten

**Admin region** Vlaams Gewest

**Coordinates** 50°57’N 5°27’E

**Altitude** 40–60 m

**Area** 600 ha

### Site description

An extremely diverse area in the Striemenbeek valley, with heathland, marshes, oligotrophic and mesotrophic ponds, wet woodlands and inland dunes.

**Habitats** Forest and woodland (20%; broadleaved deciduous forest; alluvial/very wet forest), Scrub (25%; heathland), Grassland (5%), Wetland (30%; standing fresh water: water-fringe vegetation; fen/transit mire/spring), Artificial landscape (20%; arable land)

**Land-use** Agriculture (30%), Fisheries/aquaculture (15%), Nature conservation/research (30%), Tourism/recreation (10%), Urban/industrial/transport (10%)

The IBA is a breeding site for reedbed species.

### Bassin de la Haine

**Admin region** Région Wallonne

**Coordinates** 50°29’N 3°44’E

**Altitude** — Area 13,715 ha

### Site description

A complex of ponds, marshes and grasslands in the Haine river basin.

**Habitats** Forest and woodland (25%; broadleaved deciduous forest; alluvial/very wet forest), Scrub (heathland), Grassland (humid grassland; mesophyle grassland), Wetland (10%); standing fresh water; river/stream; water-fringe vegetation; fen/transit mire/spring)

**Artificial landscape** (60%; highly improved reseeded grassland; perennial crops/orchards/groves; forestry plantation; urban parks/gardens; other urban/industrial area; ruderal land)

**Land-use** Agriculture (25%), Fisheries/aquaculture (1%), Forestry (50%), Hunting, Nature conservation/research (5%), Tourism/recreation, Urban/industrial/transport (15%), Water management
Tringa glareola, Sterna hirundo and Lullula arborea (summer and passage).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ixobrychus minutus</td>
<td>Little Bittern</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcedo atthis</td>
<td>Kingfisher</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locustella vireola</td>
<td>Bluethroat</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Protection status**

**National Low International High**


**Conservation issues**

- Threats: Forestry, Agriculture, Intensive agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Aquaculture, Nature conservation/research (5%), Tourism/recreation, Urban/industrial/transport (5%), Water management (1%).

**Habitats**

- Forest and woodland (50%; broadleaved deciduous forest, scrub, heathland).
- Grassland (wetland; meadow; grassland; grassland; marine grassland).
- Wetland (standing fresh water; river/stream; water fringe).
- Artificial landscape (35%; highly improved reseeded grassland; perennial crops/orchards/groves; forest plantation; urban parks/gardens; other urban/industrial areas; ruderal land).

**Land-use**

- Agriculture (20%), Fisheries/aquaculture (1%), Forestry (60%), Hunting, Nature conservation/research (5%), Tourism/recreation, Urban/industrial/transport (5%), Water management (1%).

**Species**

- Phalacrocorax carbo, Ciconia ciconia, Falco peregrinus, Falco columbarius, Pandion haliaetus, Pluvialis apricaria, Sterna hirundo and Chlidonias niger.

**Protection status**

**National None International High**

83,866 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Entre-Sambre-Meuse, 83,866 ha).

**Conservation issues**

- Threats: Abandonment/reduction of land management (C), Forestry (B), Intensive agriculture (B), Nature conservation/research (5%), Tourism/recreation, Urban/industrial/transport (5%), Water management (1%).

**Habitats**

- Forest and woodland (50%; broadleaved deciduous forest, scrub, heathland).
- Grassland (wetland; meadow; grassland; grassland; marine grassland).
- Wetland (standing fresh water; river/stream; water fringe).
- Artificial landscape (35%; highly improved reseeded grassland; perennial crops/orchards/groves; forest plantation; urban parks/gardens; other urban/industrial areas; ruderal land).

**Land-use**

- Agriculture (20%), Fisheries/aquaculture (1%), Forestry (60%), Hunting, Nature conservation/research (5%), Tourism/recreation, Urban/industrial/transport (5%), Water management (1%).

**Species**

- Phalacrocorax carbo, Ciconia ciconia, Falco peregrinus, Falco columbarius, Pandion haliaetus, Pluvialis apricaria, Sterna hirundo and Chlidonias niger.
**Croix-Scaille**

**Admin region** Région Wallonne  
**Coordinates** 49°56’N 4°58’E  
**Altitude** — Area 36,610 ha

**Protection status**
National Low  
**Conservation issues**

**Site description**
The site comprises the Belgian part of the Croix-Scaille upland plateau and a stretch of the Semois river, with important deciduous woodlands and well-preserved rivers, and remnant bogs and heaths on the upland plateau.

**Habitats**
- Forest and woodland (40%; broadleaved deciduous forest; alluvial/very wet forest),  
- Scrub (broadleaf),  
- Grassland (humid grassland; mesophile grassland),  
- Wetland (standing fresh water; river/stream; water-fringe vegetation; fen/transitional mire/spring),  
- Artificial landscape (45%; highly improved reseeded grassland; perennial crops/orchards/groves; forestry plantation; urban parks/gardens; other urban/industrial areas; ruderal land)

**Land-use**
- Agriculture (15%),  
- Fisheries/aquaculture (1%),  
- Forestry (80%),  
- Hunting, Nature conservation/research (1%),  
- Tourism/recreation, Urban/industrial/transport (5%)  

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ciconia nigra</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Species listed on Annex I of the EC Birds Directive occurring on passage or in winter include *Milvus migrans*, *M. milvus*, *Circus cyaneus*, *Pandion haliaetus* and *Lullula arborea*.

**Protection status**
National Low  
**Conservation issues**

**Site description**
A large plateau of old deciduous woodland in the northern Ardennes.

**Habitats**
- Forest and woodland (80%; broadleaved deciduous forest; alluvial/very wet forest),  
- Grassland (humid grassland; mesophile grassland),  
- Wetland (standing fresh water; river/stream; water-fringe vegetation; fen/transitional mire/spring),  
- Artificial landscape (20%; highly improved reseeded grassland; perennial crops/orchards/groves; forestry plantation; urban parks/gardens; other urban/industrial areas)

**Land-use**
- Agriculture (10%),  
- Fisheries/aquaculture (1%),  
- Forestry (90%),  
- Hunting, Nature conservation/research (1%),  
- Tourism/recreation, Urban/industrial/transport (8%)  

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dendrocopos medius</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B3, C6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Protection status**
National Low  
**Conservation issues**

**Site description**

**Marche en Famenne**

**Admin region** Région Wallonne  
**Coordinates** 50°18’N 5°25’E  
**Altitude** — Area 5,100 ha

**Protection status**
National Low  
**Conservation issues**

**Site description**
A typical area of the Famenne depression, covered by woodlands and pastures, and including the very important Marche en Famenne military camp, which remains of agricultural disturbance, as well as a stretch of the River Ourthe.

**Habitats**
- Forest and woodland (40%; broadleaved deciduous forest; alluvial/very wet forest),  
- Scrub (broadleaf),  
- Grassland (humid grassland; mesophile grassland),  
- Wetland (standing fresh water; river/stream; water-fringe vegetation; fen/transitional mire/spring),  
- Artificial landscape (30%; highly improved reseeded grassland; perennial crops/orchards/groves; forestry plantation; urban parks/gardens; other urban/industrial areas; ruderal land)

**Land-use**
- Agriculture (40%),  
- Forestry (60%),  
- Hunting (50%),  
- Military (40%),  
- Nature conservation/research (1%),  
- Tourism/recreation (60%),  
- Urban/industrial/transport (1%)  

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Milvus migrans</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circus cyaneus</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Species listed on Annex I of the EC Birds Directive occurring on passage or in winter include *Milvus migrans*, *M. milvus*, *Circus cyaneus*, *C. aeruginosus*, *Falco peregrinus* and *F. columbarius*.  

**Lesse et Lomme**

**Admin region** Région Wallonne  
**Coordinates** 50°07’N 5°10’E  
**Altitude** — Area 22,426 ha

**Protection status**
National Low  
**Conservation issues**

**Site description**
The area includes the most ornithologically interesting parts of the Calettenois and Famenne, along the River Meuse. A large variety of habitats are present including calcareous dry grasslands and woodlands.

**Habitats**
- Forest and woodland (40%; broadleaved deciduous forest; alluvial/very wet forest),  
- Scrub (broadleaf),  
- Grassland (humid grassland; mesophile grassland),  
- Wetland (standing fresh water; river/stream; water-fringe vegetation; fen/transitional mire/spring),  
- Coastal area (screes/boulders; caves),  
- Artificial landscape (45%; highly improved reseeded grassland; perennial crops/orchards/groves; forestry plantation; urban parks/gardens; other urban/industrial areas; ruderal land)

**Land-use**
- Agriculture (45%),  
- Fisheries/aquaculture (1%),  
- Forestry (40%),  
- Hunting (90%),  
- Nature conservation/research (1%),  
- Tourism/recreation, Urban/industrial/transport (10%)  

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perdix sparrow</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonasa bonasia</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crex crex</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dryocopus martius</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dendrocopos medius</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B3, C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lanius collurio</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Species listed on Annex I of the EC Birds Directive occurring on passage or in winter include *Milvus migrans*, *Circus cyaneus*, *Falco peregrinus*, *F. columbarius*, *Pandion haliaetus* and *Pluvialis apricaria*.

**Daverdisse**

**Admin region** Région Wallonne  
**Coordinates** 50°02’N 5°06’E  
**Altitude** — Area 14,914 ha

**Protection status**
National Low  
**Conservation issues**

**Site description**
A large plateau of old deciduous woodland in the northern Ardennes.

**Habitats**
- Forest and woodland (80%; broadleaved deciduous forest; alluvial/very wet forest),  
- Grassland (humid grassland; mesophile grassland),  
- Wetland (standing fresh water; river/stream; water-fringe vegetation; fen/transitional mire/spring),  
- Artificial landscape (20%; highly improved reseeded grassland; perennial crops/orchards/groves; forestry plantation; urban parks/gardens; other urban/industrial areas)

**Land-use**
- Agriculture (10%),  
- Fisheries/aquaculture (1%),  
- Forestry (90%),  
- Hunting, Nature conservation/research (1%),  
- Tourism/recreation, Urban/industrial/transport (1%)  

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dendrocopos medius</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>B0</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B1, C6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Protection status**
National Low  
**Conservation issues**

**Site description**
The 3 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Nature Reserves in Deverdisse, 3 ha). 14,914 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Daverdisse, 14,914 ha).

**Habitats**
- Forest and woodland (40%; broadleaved deciduous forest; alluvial/very wet forest),  
- Scrub (broadleaf),  
- Grassland (humid grassland; mesophile grassland),  
- Wetland (standing fresh water; river/stream; water-fringe vegetation; fen/transitional mire/spring),  
- Artificial landscape (30%; highly improved reseeded grassland; perennial crops/orchards/groves; forestry plantation; urban parks/gardens; other urban/industrial areas; ruderal land)

**Land-use**
- Agriculture (40%),  
- Forestry (50%),  
- Hunting, Nature conservation/research (1%),  
- Tourism/recreation (60%),  
- Urban/industrial/transport (1%)  

**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buteo buteo</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Groundwater abstraction (C), Industrialization/urbanization (C), Intensified forest management (C), Recreation/tourism (C)
## Site description

A woodland area in the high Ardennes, including many ponds and humic grasslands.

### Habitats
- Forest and woodland (20%; broadleaved deciduous forest)
- Grassland (humid grassland; mesophile grassland)
- Wetland (standing fresh water; river/stream; raised bog; water-fringe vegetation; fen/transition mire/spring)
- Artificial landscape (80%; highly improved reseeded grassland; perennial crops/orchards/groves; forestry plantation; urban parks/gardens; other urban/industrial areas)

### Land-use
- Agriculture (10%)
- Fisheries/aquaculture (1%)
- Forestry (90%)
- Hunting
- Nature conservation/research (5%)
- Recreation/recreation, Urban/industrial/transport (15%)

### Species

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Circus nigra</td>
<td>Black Stork</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>B C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aegolius funereus</td>
<td>Temminal’s Owl</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>B C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dryocopus martius</td>
<td>Black Woodpecker</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20 B C6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Species listed on Annex I of the EC Birds Directive occurring on passage or wintering include Milvus migrans, M. migrans and Circus cyaneus.

## Protection status

**National** Low  **International** None

23 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Nature Reserves de St-Hubert, 23 ha).

## Conservation issues

**Threats**
- Abandonment/reduction of land management (C)
- Agriculture, intensification/expansion (C)
- Construction/impact of dyke/dam/barage (C)
- Disturbance to birds (C)
- Drainage (C)
- Filling-in of wetlands (B)
- Groundwater abstraction (B)
- Industrialization/urbanization (B)
- Infrastructure (B)
- Intensified forest management (C)
- Recreation/tourism (A)

## Site description

The western ridge of the Fagnes plateau south of Spa, covered by bogs, fens, remnant dry heaths and peaty heaths. The area includes important woodland.

### Habitats
- Forest and woodland (10%; broadleaved deciduous forest)
- Grassland (dry siliceous grassland; alpine/subalpine/montane; humid grassland; mesophile grassland)
- Wetland (standing fresh water; river/stream; raised bog; water-fringe vegetation; fen/transition mire/spring)
- Artificial landscape (80%; highly improved reseeded grassland; perennial crops/orchards/groves; forestry plantation; urban parks/gardens; other urban/industrial areas; ruderal land)

### Land-use
- Agriculture (20%)
- Forestry (70%)
- Hunting, Nature conservation/research (5%)
- Recreation/recreation, Urban/industrial/transport (5%)

### Species

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tengmalm’s Owl</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>B C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aegolius funereus</td>
<td>Temminal’s Owl</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>B C6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Species listed on Annex I of the EC Birds Directive occurring on passage or wintering include Ciconia nigra, Circus cyaneus, Circus aeruginosus, Falco columbarius, Asto flammeus and Lullula arborea.

## Protection status

**National** Low  **International** High

15 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Nature Reserves de Malchamps, 15 ha). 41,638 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Malchamps, 41,638 ha).

## Conservation issues

**Threats**
- Abandonment/reduction of land management (C)
- Agriculture, intensification/expansion (A)
- Construction/impact of dyke/dam/barage (A)
- Disturbance to birds (C)
- Drainage (B)
- Dredging/Filling-in of wetlands (C)
- Groundwater abstraction (C)
- Industrialization/urbanization (B)
- Infrastructure (B)
- Intensified forest management (C)
- Recreation/tourism (A)

## Site description

An example of the traditional grasslands landscape of the high Ardennes valley, and surrounding woodland.

### Habitats
- Forest and woodland (20%; broadleaved deciduous forest; broadleaved evergreen forest)
- Grassland (scrub; sclerophyllous scrub/garrigue/maquis)
- Grassland (dry siliceous grassland; humid grassland; mesophile grassland)
- Wetland (standing fresh water; river/stream; raised bog; water-fringe vegetation; fen/transition mire/spring)
- Artificial landscape (70%; highly improved reseeded grassland; perennial crops/orchards/groves; forestry plantation; urban parks/gardens; other urban/industrial areas)

### Species

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lanius collurio</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1 30</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>B C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podiceps cristatus</td>
<td>Common Pochard</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>B C6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Species listed on Annex I of the EC Birds Directive breeding at the site include Ciconia nigra, Alcedo atthis and Lanius collurio. Species listed on Annex I occurring on passage or wintering include Milvus migrans, M. migrans, Circus cyaneus, C. aeruginosus, Falco columbarius, Pandion haliaetus and Pluvialis apricaria.
Species listed on Annex I of the EC Birds Directive occurring on passage or wintering include Milvus migrans, M. milvus, Circus cyaneus, C. aeruginosus, Falco columbarius and Lullula arborea.

**Protection status**
National None International None

**Conservation issues**
Threats Abandonment/reduction of land management (A), Afforestation (B), Agricultural intensification/expansion (A), Disturbance to birds (B), Drainage (B), Filling-in of wetlands (B), Groundwater abstraction (B), Industrialization/urbanization (B), Intensified forest management (B), Recreation/tourism (B)

---

**Site description**
An area of mires and heaths in a woodland and grassland landscape in the Ardennes.

**Habitats**
Forest and woodland (20%); broadleaved deciduous forest; Scrub; Grassland (dry siliceous grassland; alpine/subalpine meadowland; heathland; mesophile grassland); Wetland (standing fresh water; river/stream; raised bog; water-fringe vegetation; fen/transitional mire/spring); Artificial landscape (10%); highly improved reseeded grassland; perennial crops/orchards/groves; forestry plantation; urban parks/gardens; other urban/industrial areas; ruderal land

**Land-use**
Agriculture (20%), Forestry (60%), Hunting (90%), Nature conservation/research (10%), Tourism/recreation, Urban/industrial/transport (5%)

---

Species listed on Annex I of the EC Birds Directive occurring on passage or wintering include Milvus migrans, M. milvus, Circus cyaneus, C. aeruginosus and Falco columbarius.

**Protection status**
National Low International None

1 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Natures Reserves in Wanne-Liège, 1 ha).

**Conservation issues**
Threats Afforestation (A), Agricultural intensification/expansion (C), Aquaculture/fisheries (C), Drainage (C), Filling-in of wetlands (C), Industrialization/urbanization (C), Intensified forest management (B), Recreation/tourism (C)

---

**Site description**
The site includes the high plateau of the eastern Ardennes, covered by peatbogs, fens and woodland.

**Habitats**
Forest and woodland (20%); broadleaved deciduous forest; aluval/very wet forest, Scrub (2%); scrub; heathland; Grassland (5%); dry siliceous grassland; alpine/subalpine/ boreal grassland; humid grassland; mesophile grassland; Wetland (standing fresh water; river/stream; raised bog; water-fringe vegetation; fen/transitional mire/spring); Artificial landscape (60%); highly improved reseeded grassland; perennial crops/orchards/groves; forestry plantation; urban parks/gardens; other urban/industrial areas; ruderal land

**Land-use**
Agriculture (20%), Forestry (60%), Hunting (90%), Military (4%), Nature conservation/research (10%), Tourism/recreation (90%), Urban/industrial/transport (5%), Water management (5%)

---

Species listed on Annex I of the EC Birds Directive occurring on passage or wintering include Milvus migrans, M. milvus, Circus cyaneus, C. aeruginosus and Falco columbarius.

**Protection status**
National Partial International High
4,448 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Nature Reserves in Hautes Fagnes Eifel, 4,448 ha). 67,800 ha of IBA covered by Natural Park. 80,304 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Hautes Fagnes/Eifel, 80,304 ha).

**Conservation issues**
Threats Abandonment/reduction of land management (C), Afforestation (C), Agricultural intensification/expansion (A), Burning of vegetation (C), Construction/impact of dyke/dam/structure (C), Disturbance to birds (B), Drainage (B), Filling-in of wetlands (C), Flooding (C), Industrialization/urbanization (C), Intensified forest management (B), Recreation/tourism (C), Riparian zone destruction (B), Settlement/development (C), Tourism/recreation (B), Water management (C), Water pollution (C)

---
**Birds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc Criteria</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Ciconia nigra</em></td>
<td>Black Stork</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>B, C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Bonasa bonasia</em></td>
<td>Hazel Grouse</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Rare</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Population size unknown.

Species listed on Annex I of the EC Birds Directive occurring on passage or wintering include *Ciconia nigra*, *Bonasa bonasia*, *Milvus migrans*, *Circus cyaneus*, *Pernis apivorus*, *Circus cyaneus*, *Black Kite*, *Honey Buzzard*, and *Lullula arborea*.

**Protection status**

National None  International High

34,678 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Deux Ourthes, 34,678 ha).

**Conservation issues**

Threats Abandonment/reduction of land management (C), Afforestation (C), Agricultural intensification/expansion (A), Aquaculture/ﬁsheries (C), Construction/impact of dyke/dam/barrage (C), Disturbance to birds (C), Drainage (B), Extraction industry (C), Filling-in of wetlands (B), Groundwater abstraction (B), Industrialization/urbanization (B), Infrastructure (C), Recreation/tourism (C).

---

**Deux Ourthes**

Admin region Région Wallonne

Coordinates 50°05’N 5°46’E

Altitude — Area 34,678 ha

**Site description**

An undisturbed part of the Ourthe valley with wooded slopes.

Habitats Forest and woodland (70%; broadleaved deciduous forest; alluvial/very wet forest), Scrub (20%; brush heath), Grassland (1%; humid grassland; mesophile grassland), Wetland (1%; standing fresh water; river/stream; raised bog; water-fringe vegetation; fen/transition mire/spring), Rocky areas (creeks/boulders; caves), Artificial landscape (70%; highly improved reseeded grassland; perennial crops/orchards/groves; forestry plantation; urban parks/jardens; other urban/industrial areas; ruderal land)

Land-use Agriculture (40%), Fisheries/aquaculture (1%), Forestry (15%), Hunting, Nature conservation/research (1%), Tourism/recreation, Urban/industrial/transport (5%), Water management (1%)

---

**Sinémurienne**

Admin region Région Wallonne

Coordinates 49°38’N 5°32’E

Altitude — Area 32,541 ha

**Site description**

The area includes forests on sandstone in the Sinémuriennesen region, and the marshes of the upper Semois river.

Habitats Forest and woodland (50%; broadleaved deciduous forest; alluvial/very wet forest), Scrub (1%; scrub heath), Grassland (1%; steppe/dry calcareous grassland; dry siliceous grassland; humid grassland; mesophile grassland), Wetland (1%; standing fresh water; river/stream; raised bog; water-fringe vegetation; fen/transition mire/spring), Artificial landscape (40%; highly improved reseeded grassland; perennial crops/orchards/groves; forestry plantation; urban parks/jardens; other urban/industrial areas; ruderal land)

Land-use Agriculture (40%), Fisheries/aquaculture (1%), Forestry (50%), Hunting, Military (8%), Nature conservation/research (2%), Not utilized (1%), Tourism/recreation, Urban/industrial/transport (5%)

---

**Haute Sûre/Ardenne méridionale**

Admin region Région Wallonne

Coordinates 49°44’N 5°28’E

Altitude — Area 89,443 ha

**Site description**

An important area of woodland at the southern limit of the Ardennes and the upper basin of the Sûre river, with many old humid grasslands.

Habitats Forest and woodland (40%; broadleaved deciduous forest; alluvial/very wet forest), Scrub (20%; scrub heath), Grassland (1%; humid grassland; mesophile grassland), Wetland (1%; standing fresh water; river/stream; raised bog; water-fringe vegetation; fen/transition mire/spring), Rocky areas (creeks/boulders; caves), Artificial landscape (50%; highly improved reseeded grassland; perennial crops/orchards/groves; forestry plantation; urban parks/jardens; other urban/industrial areas; ruderal land)

Land-use Agriculture (40%), Fisheries/aquaculture (1%), Forestry (15%), Hunting, Nature conservation/research (1%), Not utilized (1%), Tourism/recreation, Urban/industrial/transport (5%), Water management (1%)

---

**Checklist of species listed on Annex I of the EC Birds Directive occurring on passage or wintering**

- *Ciconia nigra* (Black Stork)
- *Bonasa bonasia* (Hazel Grouse)
- *Milvus migrans* (Black Kite)
- *Pernis apivorus* (Honey Buzzard)
- *Caprimulgus europaeus* (Common Nightjar)
- *Circus cyaneus* (Black Kite)
- *Honey Buzzard*
- *Pandion haliaetus* (White-tailed Sea-eagle)
- *Lullula arborea* (Kingfisher)

---

**Protection status**

National Low  International High

239 ha of IBA covered by Nature Reserve (Nature Reserves in Sinémurienne, 239 ha). 32,541 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Haute Sûre/Ardenne méridionale, 32,541 ha).

**Conservation issues**

Threats Abandonment/reduction of land management (C), Afforestation (C), Agricultural intensification/expansion (A), Aquaculture/ﬁsheries (C), Construction/impact of dyke/dam/barrage (C), Disturbance to birds (C), Drainage (B), Extraction industry (C), Filling-in of wetlands (B), Groundwater abstraction (B), Industrialization/urbanization (B), Infrastructure (C), Recreation/tourism (B), Selective logging/cutting (B)
Côte Bajocienne
Admin region Région Wallonne
Coordinates — 49°33’N 5°30’E
Altitude — Area 8,287 ha

### Site description

The site comprises the Bajocienne limestone ridge, covered mainly by woodlands, dry grasslands, copses and marshes.

| Habitats | Forest and woodland (20%) | broadleaved deciduous forest; alluvial/wet forest. | Scrub (1%) | Grassland (1%) | steppe/dry calcareous grassland; dry siliceous grassland; humid grassland; mesophile grassland; Wetland (1%) standing fresh water; river/stream; water-fringe vegetation; fen/transition mire/moor); Rocky areas (caves), Artificial landscape (80%); highly improved reseeded grassland; perennial crops/patches/fields; forestry plantation; urban parks/gardens; other urban/industrial areas; ruderal land. | Land-use | Agriculture (65%), Fisheries/aquaculture (1%), Forestry (25%), Hunting, Nature conservation/research (1%), Not utilized (1%), Tourism/recreation, Urban/industrial/transport (10%), Water management (1%). |

### Birds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pop min</th>
<th>Pop max</th>
<th>Acc Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lanius collurio Red-backed Shrike</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Species listed on Annex I of the EC Birds Directive occurring on passage or wintering include *Circus cyaneus, C. aeruginosus and Pandion haliaetus*.

### Protection status

National N 8,287 ha of IBA covered by Special Protection Area (Côte Bajocienne, 8,287 ha).

### Conservation issues

| Threats | Afforestation (C), Agricultural intensification/expansion (A), Construction/impact of dyke/dam/barge (C), Disturbance to birds (C), Drainage (C), Filling-in of wetlands (B), Groundwater abstraction (C), Industrialization/urbanization (A), Infrastructure (A), Recreation/tourism (B), Selective logging/cutting (B) |

---

**REFERENCES**


