

Alien species in Belgian marine waters: An information platform and checklist for science and policy support

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Since 2006, data and information on alien species in the Belgian marine and brackish habitats were collected. The work is a collaborative effort of the 'VLIZ Alien Species Consortium', consisting of a network of experts, supported by a secretariat hosted by the Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ). So far (April 2018), 81 alien species from different taxonomic groups, mainly arthropods, seaweed and molluscs, have been reported to have established populations in the area of interest. Scientific information on the species' origin, pathways of introduction, factors influencing spreading, potential socioeconomic or ecological effects, eradication measures, species' morphology, etc. have been gathered from distributed scientific publications and are collected in species factsheets. A first collection of factsheets has been published in a Dutch book in 2012 (Vandepitte et al. 2012) and an updated version is planned to be out early 2019. The update includes a revision of the existing fact sheets, the writing of new species fact sheets and an English translation. A two-way information exchange with the World Register for Marine Species (WRIMS) has been put in place and acts as an important data source for the marine component of the TriAS project (Tracking Invasive Alien Species - BELSPO). Furthermore, the effort aims to tackle the general lack of accessible local/regional alien species data. The alien species list and the factsheets are also online available via the VLIZ Coastal Wiki portal (www.vliz.be/wiki), including full-text references.

Reference

Vandepitte, L.; De Pooter, D.; Lescauwaet, A.-K.; Fockedey, N.; Mees, J. (Ed.) (2012). Niet-inheemse soorten van het Belgisch deel van de Noordzee en aanpalende estuaria. VLIZ Special Publication, 59. Vlaams Instituut voor de Zee (VLIZ): Oostende. ISBN 978-90-817451-9-2. 371 pp.

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