

## **THE VLIMAR GAZETTEER**

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Dealing with different names of geographic features or entities, VLIZ is developing a standard, relational list of geographic names, coupled with information on the geographic location of these features. The purpose of the gazetteer is to improve access and clarity of the different geographic, mainly marine names such as seas, sandbanks, ridges, bays or even standard sampling stations used in marine research. The geographic cover is global, however the gazetteer is focused on the Belgian Continental Shelf, the Scheldt Estuary and the Southern Bight of the North Sea. The VLIMAR marine gazetteer is served from a relational SQL server database where different geographic units can have one or more relations between each other. The structure of the database is an open hierarchy where each geographic unit points to one or more other units applying different relation types. Such a structure allows the user to group joint geographic units. At the moment a web interface to have easy access through the gazetteer is being developed. The gazetteer will be linked with the S3 geographic database, consisting of shapes of different geographic features. This database makes use of a "SVG Snippet Server" to generate interactive SVG maps. The end goal will be a hierarchic geographic gazetteer that will be consultable through a web interface and will be linked with a geographic interface. Not only can the VLIMAR marine gazetteer be most valuable as a search tool on its own, but also lots of applications can be derived from it such as linking different datasets, species distributions or sampling campaigns with geographic entities from the gazetteer.