

From Dunkirk to Westende, one of the most outstanding dune systems in Europe



Hello, I'm Flandre, the Stonechat
and your guide round
the Flemish coastal dunes.



www.lifeflandre.be



▲ humid dune slacks



▲ wooded dunes

The Flemish coastal dunes are nature areas and landscapes of prime importance. Their ecological and scenery interest warrant the implementation of protective measures.

This diversity benefits from protection as a part of the European Natura 2000 network, as much for the conservation of a number of bird species (European Birds Directive) who find shelter and food in the dunes, on the beach, in the mudflats and salt marshes... as for its specific natural Atlantic coast habitats (European Habitats Directive).



▲ white dunes



▲ fossil dunes



▲ sandy beaches



The stonechat is a passerine bird that nests in the thickets, but it looks for food (insects) in the dune grasslands. It therefore appreciates a varied dune landscape.

It is a particularly fragile environment, that is easily disturbed and in constant evolution.

The prevailing northwest winds have sculpted "Flemish" dunes, i.e. very wide parabol or horseshoe shaped dunes that surround dune slacks.



▲ salt marshes (schorre)



▲ mud flats (slikke)



▲ "parabolic" dunes

Today, the once vast dune belt is fragmented into nature sanctuaries most often surrounded by urban areas. Several factors have led to shrub encroachment which results in a loss of biodiversity.

That is why a large-scale, cross-border conservation project has been set up by French and Flemish authorities, with the support of the European Union: the LIFE + Nature Flandre (Flemish And North-french Dunes REstoration) project with a total budget of €4,066,454, of which 50% co-financed by the European Union and a duration of 5 years from 02/09/2013 to 01/09/2018. LIFE is an acronym in French for the European Funding programme for the environment (L'Instrument Financier européen pour l'Environnement).



▲ dune scrub



▲ grey dunes



⚡ Management by mowing

A broad-reaching, Franco-Belgian partnership to preserve our natural heritage

A large part of the thousands of hectares of nature areas along the Flemish coast has been destroyed for various reasons: urbanisation, industrialisation, intensive farming... In the 70s, the need to safeguard these dune environments on both sides of the border led stakeholders to implement a number of protection and preservation measures. Today, in the cross border Maritime Flanders region, Belgian and French partners, the Nature and Forestry Agency of the Flemish Authority, the Département du Nord and the Conservatoire du Littoral et des Rivages Lacustres, are coming together to step up these measures.



⚡ Fen orchid



⚡ Natterjack toad



⚡ Highland cattle management



grazing



⌘ Stonechat

Moving towards a European, cross-border nature park

The main players in the preservation of Belgian and French nature areas are stepping up cooperation in order to:

- ⌘ restore habitats that are characteristic of coastal environments
- ⌘ reinforce populations of the most remarkable and most endangered species
- ⌘ safeguard natural heritage through the acquisition and management of coastal dunes,
- ⌘ raise public awareness.



⌘ Narrow-mouthed whorl snail

Measures to restore natural habitats and the biotopes of endangered species include among other elements large scale removal of scrub, earthwork and the establishment of grazing areas. The day-to-day management of dune habitats include mowing and grazing by large herbivores (cattle, ponies, donkeys, sheep...).



⌘ Great Crested Newt



⌘ Common seal

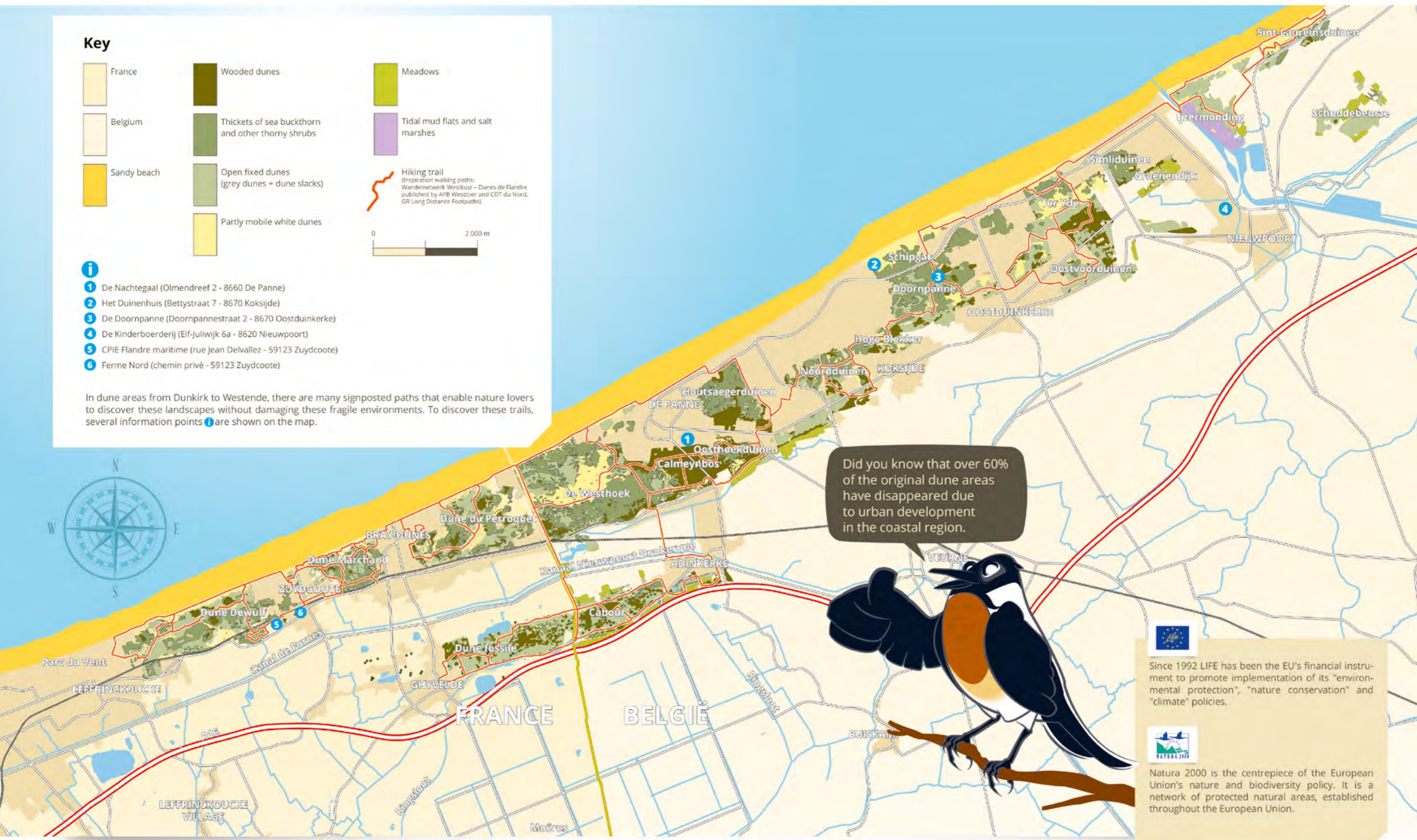
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Key



- i** Information points
- 1** De Nachtegaal (Olmendreef 2 - 8660 De Panne)
- 2** Het Duinenhuis (Bettystraat 7 - 8670 Koksijde)
- 3** De Doornpanne (Doornpannestraat 2 - 8670 Oostduinkerke)
- 4** De Kinderboerderij (Elf-julijwijk 6a - 8620 Nieuwpoort)
- 5** CPIE Flandre maritime (rue Jean Delvallez - 59123 Zuydcoote)
- 6** Ferme Nord (chemin privé - 59123 Zuydcoote)

In dune areas from Dunkirk to Westende, there are many signposted paths that enable nature lovers to discover these landscapes without damaging these fragile environments. To discover these trails, several information points **i** are shown on the map.



Did you know that over 60% of the original dune areas have disappeared due to urban development in the coastal region.



Since 1992 LIFE has been the EU's financial instrument to promote implementation of its "environmental protection", "nature conservation" and "climate" policies.



Natura 2000 is the centrepiece of the European Union's nature and biodiversity policy. It is a network of protected natural areas, established throughout the European Union.



Agency Nature and Forests

www.natuurenbos.be

Département du Nord

www.cg59.fr

Conservatoire du Littoral

www.conservatoire-du-littoral.fr



Conservatoire
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