

# Flatworm Watch

## Engaging gardeners on biological invasions

**Arnaud Jacobs**

**National Scientific Secretariat on Invasive Alien Species**

**Inspiration Day CS, 30 May 2024**

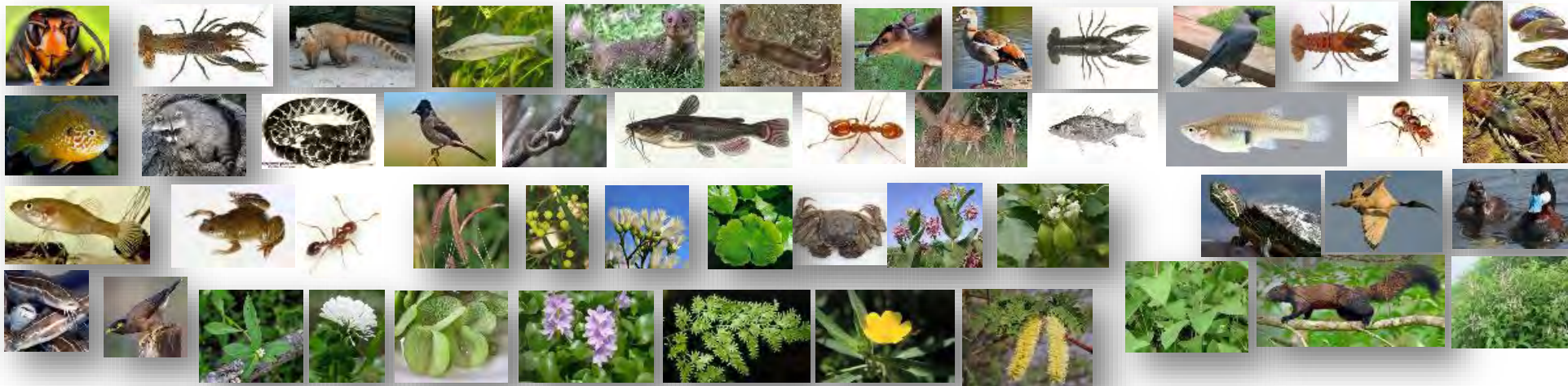


**Invasive Alien Species**  
National Scientific Secretariat

# Context

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- **Biological invasions**, among most important drivers of **biodiversity loss**
- **EU Regulation** on Invasive Alien species
  - List of species of Union concern
  - Obligations of **Prevention, Early warning, Management**



# Context

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- **Flatworms**
  - Native and Non-native
    - **One Union list species**
  - Introduction via plants imports
  - Predators
  - Impact on soil fauna



© Pierre Gros



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© EIS Kenniscentrum Insecten



© Sytske de Waart



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# Objectives

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## 1. Gain a better view on the issue of non-native flatworms in Belgium

- Species identity
- Distribution
- Pathways
- Genetics

## 2. Raise awareness on biological invasions

## 3. Evaluate the potential of citizen science for monitoring unknown species



Partez à la recherche  
des vers plats dans votre jardin

# FLATWORM WATCH

Ga op zoek naar platwormen  
in je eigen tuin



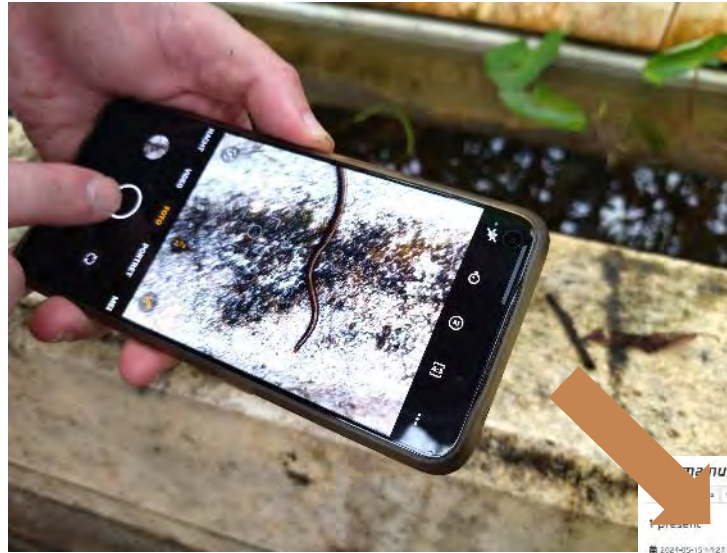
# Protocol

## We ask participants to:

- Search for flatworms
- Take pictures
- Try to identify them
- Encode their observations

## The project team will:

- Validate observations
- Provide feedbacks
- Takes samples if necessary
- Synthesize results



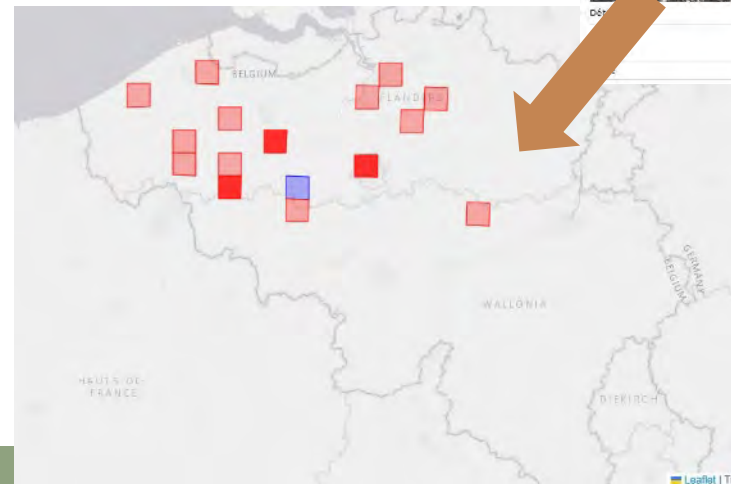
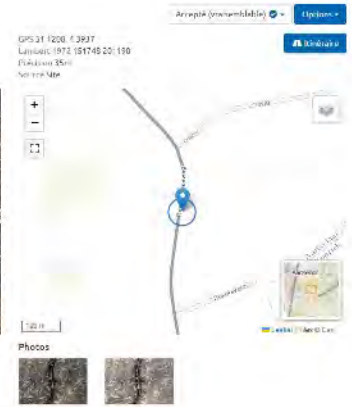
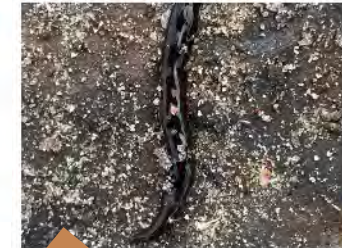
 Observations.be

 Waarnemingen.be

Jan Soors 2024-05-17 09:38

Hallo  
Als je een detail hebt van de kop en eventueel beter belichte foto's, dan geraken we misschien verder in de determinatie. Hoe groot was dit diertje?  
Jan

[Traduire](#)





# Community

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## Target audience

- Gardeners
- Naturalists
- Terrarium hobbyists
- Visitors of botanic gardens

## Mapping

- Questions on profile in registration form



# Communication strategy

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## REACHING OUT

### Social media and mailing

- **Naturalists:** RBINS, INBO, Natagora, Natuurpunt, CNB, Contrats Rivière, Botanic gardens,...
- **Citizen scientists:** Mijntuinlab, Scivil, Iedereen wetenschapper
- **Gardeners and terrarium:** Facebook groups, Federations, Magazines

## ENGAGING FLATWORMWATCHERS

- Newsletter
- Feedbacks on Waarnemingen.be
- Online training
  - Creation of a core group?
- Visit in Meise
- Results: Maps and highlights







# Challenges

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- Sample collection
- Treatment of observations
- Keeping the community engaged
  - Rare species
- Limited support and interdisciplinarity
- 1<sup>st</sup> Citizen Science project



Pictures: Jan Soors, Tom Van den Neucker





PARTICIPER



DOE MEE



[www.iasregulation.be/flatwormwatch](http://www.iasregulation.be/flatwormwatch)

# Thank you for your attention !

## PARTENAIRES



RESEARCH INSTITUTE  
NATURE AND FOREST



## AVEC LE SOUTIEN DE



Invasive Alien Species  
National Scientific Secretariat