INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES

FFH 12

To date, approximately 12,000 exotic species have been observed in Europe. Between 10 to 15% of these are invasive and cause environmental damage (loss of ecological succession, competition with native species, etc.), socio-economic damage and sanitary damage. The presence of these invasive alien species (IAS) apparently costs Europe nearly €12 billion annually[1].

A coordinated fight at the European level

A new regulation[2] intended to prevent the introduction of IAS and counteract them entered into force on 01/01/2015. Its objective is to provide a coordinated response on the part of all Member States to the problem of biological invasions. The three strands of the regulation are:

- the prevention of intentional introduction (bans on keeping, rearing, selling and transporting IAS) or accidental introduction (inspections at main entry routes[3] in partnership with related sectors of activity) of IAS;
- the early detection of new IAS (introduction of a surveillance system) and their rapid eradication;
- the fight against naturalised IAS populations. As regards this last point, the chosen objective (eradication, containment or mitigation) is the responsibility of the Member State.

A list of IAS of Union concern

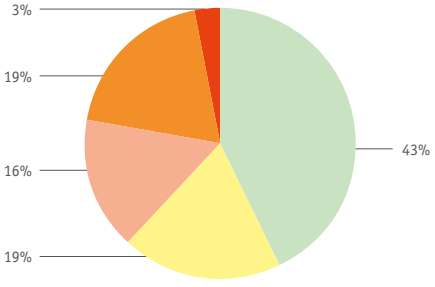
Using risk analyses, the European Commission has drawn up a list of 37 IAS of Union concern for which the above measures are applicable[4] (among these, 20 species are on the Belgian IAS blacklist or watch list[5]). This list could be supplemented in the future by the addition of other species[6] on a proposal from a Member State or the Commission. However, some species, which are widespread in Europe and for which no preventive and effective management measures can be implemented at a reasonable cost, will probably never be listed[7].

14 IAS of Union concern naturalised in Wallonia

Of the 37 species listed in the regulation, 14 are now naturalised in Wallonia (with various distribution patterns), 16 are absent but likely to become established in the near future, and 7 are occasionally sighted but will probably never settle (as they are not adapted to our climate)[8]. The most widespread species from the regulation in Wallonia are northern raccoons, signal crayfish, spinycheek crayfish, topmouth gudgeon, floating pennywort and parrot feather watermilfoil.

[1] http://ec.europa.eu | [2] Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 | [3] Transport of soil contaminated with seeds or rhizomes of exotic plants, fish stocking operations, navigation, etc. | [4] Almost 90% of these species have been deliberately introduced into Europe (domestic animals, aquaculture, aquariophilia, horticulture, fishing, etc.). | [5] http://ias.biodiversity.be. These lists, which are still incomplete but regularly updated, only concern plants and vertebrates. | [6] E.g. giant hogweed, Egyptian goose or muskrat, already well established in Wallonia | [7] Japanese knotweed, e.g., which already occupies the whole of its potential range in Europe | [8] SPW - DGO3 - CiEi, 2016; http://biodiversite.wallonie.be

Fig. FFH 12-1 Status of distribution in Wallonia of the 37 invasive alien species of Union concern* (situation as of 31/12/2015)



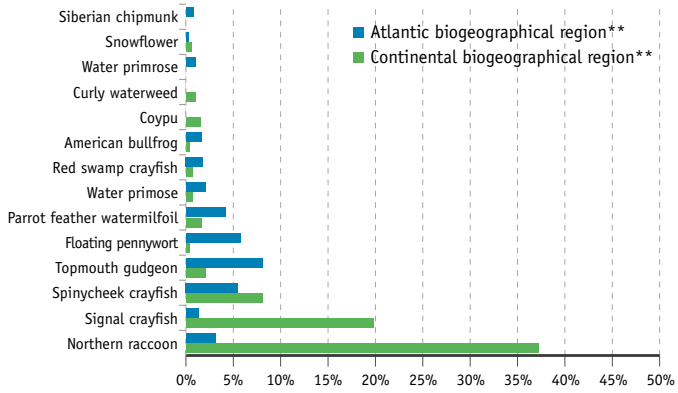
Number of species

Absent species	16
Species occasionally sighted	7
Species present as isolated populations	6
Species confined to part of the region	7
Widely spread species	1

Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014

SOERW 2017 – Source: SPW - DGO3 - DEMNA

Fig. FFH 12-1 Frequency of the 14 invasive alien species of Union concern* and naturalised in Wallonia (situation as of 31/12/2015)



Percentage of IFBL*** squares of 4 km² occupied by the species

** Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014*
*** Wallonia is covered by the Continental biogeographical region (CBR) (70% of the territory) and Atlantic biogeographical region (ABR) (30%).*
**** The IFBL grid is a 1 km² cartographic grid used to reference the location of a sighting.*

SOERW 2017 – Source: SPW - DGO3 - DEMNA