



space in restored grasslands.

In Schuylensbroek, nature has been managed for 30 years by Natuurpunt. Friends van het Schuylensbroek, Step by step, volunteers restored the area into what it is today. Together with local farmers, who apply mowing and grazing by sheep and cattle, the typical open meadow landscape is maintained. With the LIFE Delta project, a next step has been taken to demonstrate the full potential of the Schuylensbroek to future generations. Rare meadow birds such as Black-tailed Godwit, Corncrake and Curlew are living proof of this. They all enjoy much-needed extra

Schuylensbroek shows full potential

water safety and additional recreational value.

visitors and local residents benefit from the improved species present in the area benefit from this, but also nature reserves. First and foremost, the animal and plant Delta project we were able to restore a large part of these

Webbekomsbroek-Borchbeemden. With the LIFE nature reserves of Schuylensbroek and a floodplain where you can visit the Black-tailed Godwit Lummien and Herk-de-Stad they form confluence. Between Diest, Halen, from Limburg and Vlaams-Brabant in the Demer Delta various streams



Welcome



LIFE DELTA

Schuylensbroek
Webbekomsbroek



With handy hiking map

Webbekomsbroek-Borchbeemden has been a very valuable valley area managed by the Nature and Forest Agency (ANB) for decades. Here, the Flemish Environmental Agency (VMM) ensures water safety and manages the water system, in the lowest parts of the valley there are wet, clayey valley grasslands. The intention is to create an open landscape with floodland meadows there. On the central and higher river banks of the Demer, a small-scale landscape with grazing lands, hedgerows and hedges is being restored. Whereas in Robroek and Gorenbroek the focus is on swamp and peat restoration. Finally, there are some higher 'Diestiaon hills' on the valley edges, such as the Sint-Jansberg, where you will find a mix of historic and new forests. Thanks to the LIFE Delta project, the landscape in Webbekomsbroek-Borchbeemden has been beautifully restored. Poplar plantations have been cut down and historic grasslands can revive. In those places there is a transition from reeds to moist grasslands.

Rare birds in Webbekomsbroek

A network of ditches and open water runs through the marsh providing ideal spawning grounds for fish species such as European Weather Loach and Pike.

Horrier and Bluethroat feel at home. From three new lookout towers, visitors have a beautiful view of central resting zone has been created for the many breeding birds. Because the former path is now no longer accessible, a path. Since then, Webbekom has been connected to Zelen by a walking bridge over the Zwortwater and a picturesque new has upgraded the long walking route in the Webbekomsbroek also been created in the project to satisfy these visitors. LIFE Delta attract many visitors every year. And recreational facilities have The visitor centres of both Schuylensbroek and Webbekomsbroek



“The return of the charm of yesteryear”

Piet Rymen,
conservator Schuylensbroek

The Schuylensbroek is a child with many (that wish to be) parents. Initially, those were not all on the same page. But in the meantime the child is so beautiful that it has won everyone over. The Corncrake has called, the sponge effect of the area has been restored, fish can spawn again in the reed zones... In short: thanks to LIFE Delta, Schuylensbroek is gradually radiating the charm of yesteryear again. And that is very important to me. I also wish that generations after us can experience meadows full of Black-tailed Godwits and Curlews here. In this respect we have good hope. A bird survey takes place here on May 1st every year. In the last 2 years we counted over 100 bird species, a record, and LIFE Delta has something to do with that.



Marsh Harrier

Finally, a 'Green Stop walk' connects the train stations of Schuylensbroek and Diest via a beautiful walking route of 14 km. In this way you cross the whole of the Schuylensbroek and the Webbekomsbroek. (www.groenehalte.be)

At the Schuylensbroek, a family experience trail was combined with a children's adventure trail. On the west side you walk on a renewed wooden path with a viewpoint over the entire lake. A platform on the roof of the visitor centre gives you a view on the greenness of the created reed marsh. Along the entire north-eastern shore nature-friendly fishing spots have been set up for fishermen.

this unique piece of wet nature. From three new lookout towers, visitors have a beautiful view of central resting zone has been created for the many breeding birds. Because the former path is now no longer accessible, a path. Since then, Webbekom has been connected to Zelen by a walking bridge over the Zwortwater and a picturesque new has upgraded the long walking route in the Webbekomsbroek also been created in the project to satisfy these visitors. LIFE Delta attract many visitors every year. And recreational facilities have The visitor centres of both Schuylensbroek and Webbekomsbroek

A lot of extra experience

“The gradual transitions are an ideal habitat for many (meadow) birds such as Corncrake, Spotted Crane, Common Snipe and Marsh Harrier.”

Walter Martens,

Walter Martens, former VMM employee

Recently I had to look twice when I was presented with a document that was about 60 years old, wherein the idea was raised to manage the watercourses in the Schuylensbroek with pesticides. Just to say that we have made a gigantic turnaround in just a few decades. Ecological management of our waterways is now key in the practice of the Flemish Environmental Agency (VMM). The LIFE Delta project is a good example of this. In Natuurpunt we have found a very good partner to rewet the Schuylensbroek outside the water storage basin. We have saved the area from drying out, among other things, by allowing the Oude Herk to flow in its natural direction again. Fauna and flora benefit greatly from this.



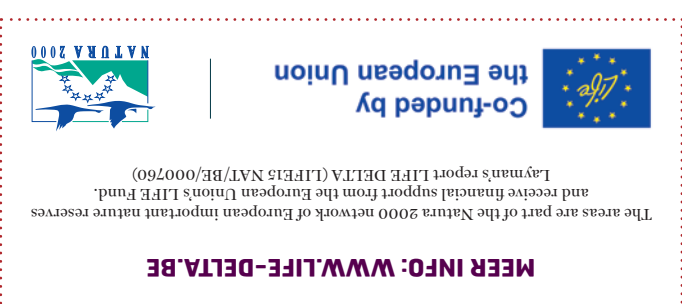
Thanks to works by the Flemish Environmental Agency (VMM), the Demer Valley can now store water better, around 10 million m³ of water in total. Part of it infiltrates into the soil; this prevents flooding and nourishes the groundwater table. This in turn helps to prevent desiccation during periods of long drought. Wet nature reserves such as marshes, peatlands and wet grasslands are very important in the fight against climate change. They remove CO₂ from the air and store it in the soil. Wetlands have disappeared en masse over the past 50 to 60 years and with them the typical species that live within them. Thus, also biodiversity is affected. With the restoration works in the Demer Delta we are trying to tackle both the climate and the biodiversity crisis.

Since ancient times, people have tried to control the water in the Demer Valley – amongst others - by creating a drainage network of ditches and canals and by displacing or strengthening streams. The result: Flood risk in downstream residential areas and desiccation in other places. Since stronger nature goes hand in hand with water safety, special attention was paid to water management within LIFE Delta.

Water: indispensable in the fight for nature and climate

Joke Rymen, secretary ‘Vrienden van het Schuylensbroek’

In a large area like Schuylensbroek, good cooperation is crucial. Natuurpunt, the Flemish Environmental Agency, the Agency for Nature and Forest, the Regional Landscape Haspengouw and Voeren, the 3 municipalities and the province but also the farmers who help us with grazing management, already work together for a long time. There is mutual respect between all partners. This positive dynamic also had an effect on our local volunteer group. Thanks to LIFE Delta we now have a structural management team. We are involved in the aftercare on the site. At the same time, we cultivate pride about the area. And it now even reaches the very youngest. Since the opening of the children's adventure path, we see children here more and more often!



LIFE is a European Union subsidy program for nature restoration. With the LIFE Delta project, Natuurpunt, the Flemish Environmental Agency, the Agency for Nature and Forests, and the Regional Landscape Haspengouw and Voeren impoved the habitat of typical grassland and marsh species, Webbekomsbroek-Borchbeemden already have a very strong and biotope that is very rare in Flanders. Schuylensbroek and Foundation. That is why investments in nature restoration could lead to great results for biodiversity here.

Investing in nature restoration

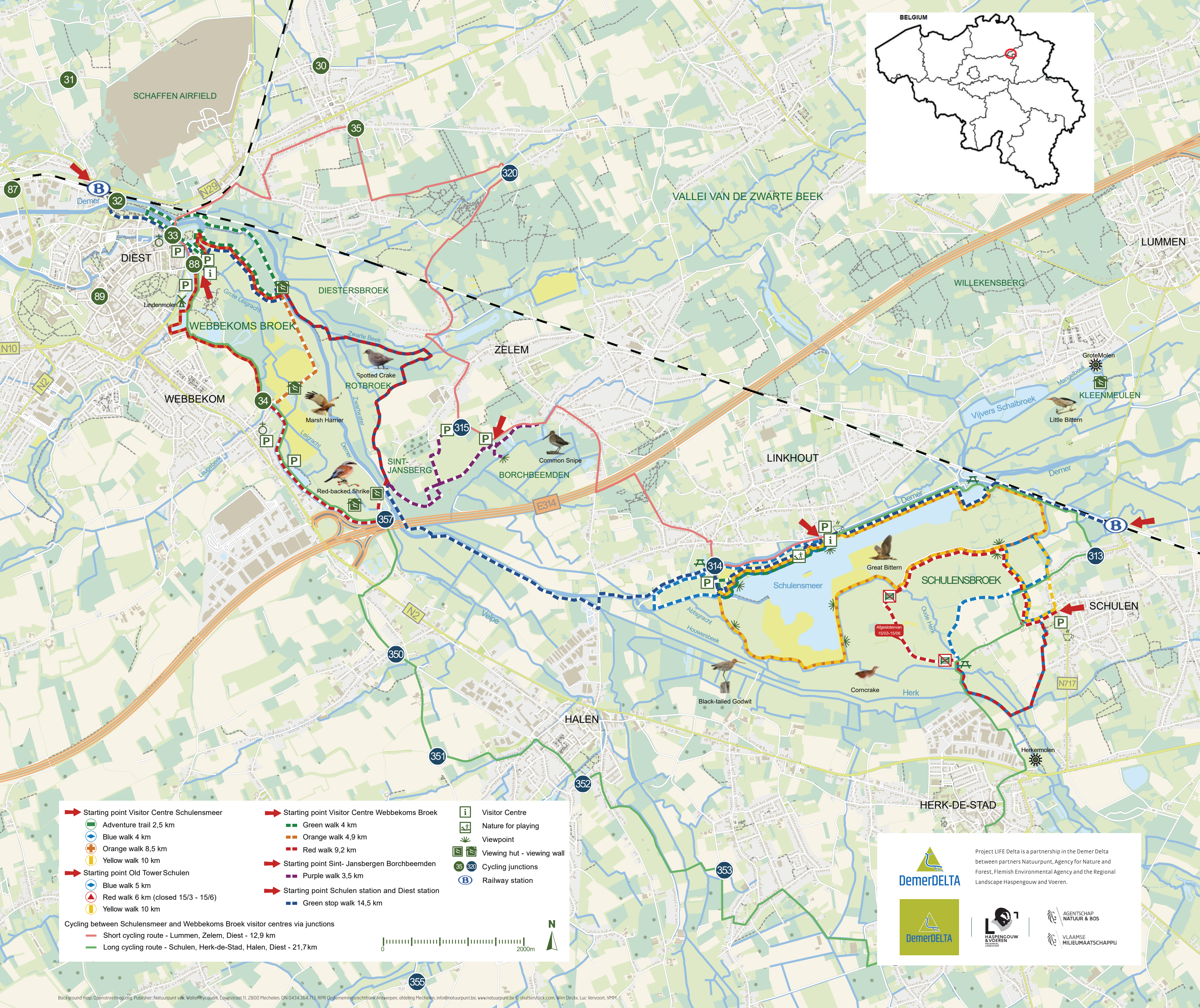


“The support base is growing noticeably”

Luc Cieters,
volunteer Webbekomsbroek

I coordinate the bird observations in the Webbekomsbroek. We have done a number of specific surveys for LIFE Delta, including for the Red-backed Shrike. With these data a report has been drawn up with tailor-made solutions for the species throughout the province of Vlaams-Brabant. In the meantime, Great and Little Egrets and even a group of Spoonbills reside here. To top it all off, Stork are breeding here again for the first time since 1895. This creates a lot of enthusiasm among local people. For us, this interest is an ideal lever to share our vision. Support is growing noticeably. The number of registrations for the nature guide course is living proof of this.





<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starting point Visitor Centre Schuylensmeer Adventure trail 2,5 km Blue walk 4 km Orange walk 8,5 km Yellow walk 10 km Starting point Old Tower Schulen Blue walk 5 km Red walk 6 km (closed 15/3 - 15/6) Yellow walk 10 km 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starting point Visitor Centre Webbekoms Broek Green walk 4 km Orange walk 4,9 km Red walk 9,2 km Starting point Sint- Jansbergen Borchbeemden Purple walk 3,5 km Starting point Schulen station and Diest station Green stop walk 14,5 km 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitor Centre Nature for playing Viewpoint Viewing hut - viewing wall Cycling junctions Railway station
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Cycling between Schuylensmeer and Webbekoms Broek visitor centres via junctions

- Short cycling route - Lummen, Zelem, Diest - 12,9 km
- Long cycling route - Schulen, Herk-de-Stad, Halen, Diest - 21,7km

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Project LIFE Delta is a partnership in the Demer Delta between partners Natuurpunt, Agency for Nature and Forest, Flemish Environmental Agency and the Regional Landscape Haspengouw and Voeren.