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# AECM in Flanders

## Life B4B 20 juni 2023

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# AECM

- Voluntary **management agreements** with Flemish Land Agency = managing authority
- Individual farmer
- Min. 5 years
- Part of the Flemish CAP since 2000

2023: 3320 farmers on 8.900 ha

# Management agreements

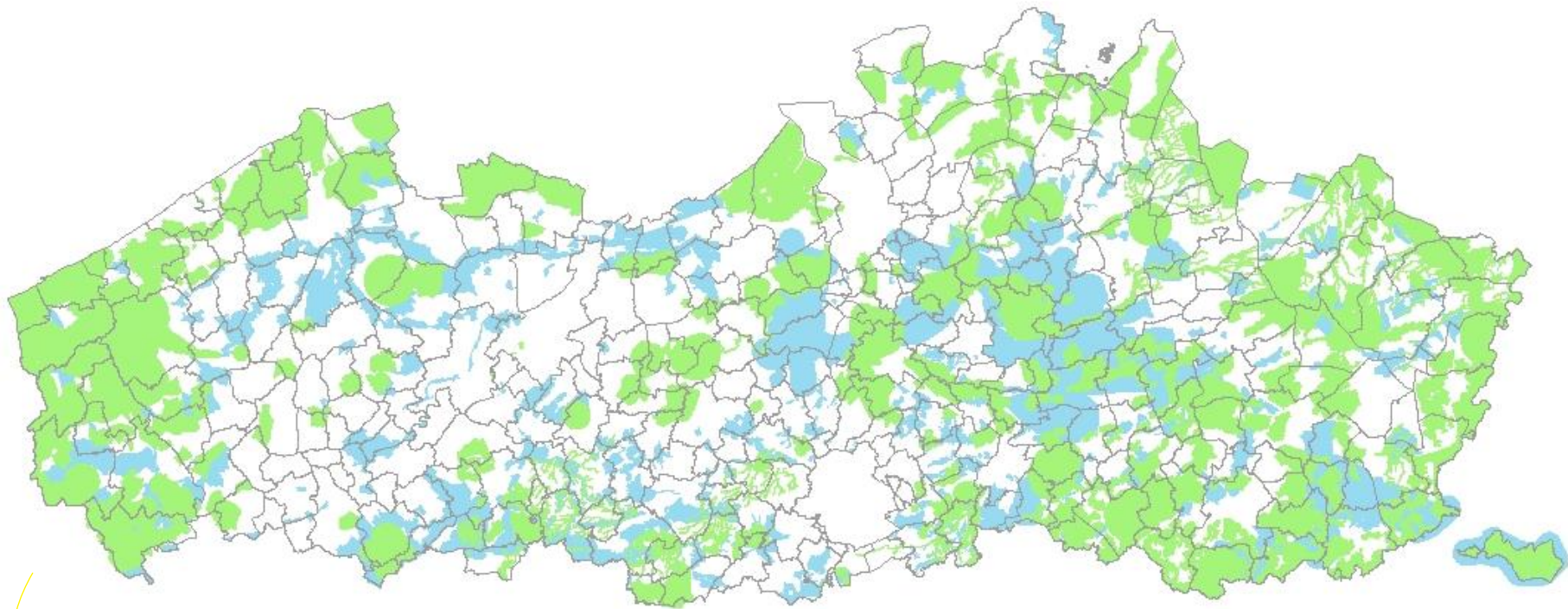
- Implementation species protection programmes
- Buffer and connect vulnerable landscape features
- Maintenance of woody landscape features





# Species protection programmes





Focus area SPP  
Focus area buffering and connecting



- For SPP's
  - Arable- and meadow birds
  - Montagu's harrier
- For buffering and connecting

# Farm advisors (Flemish Land Agency)



- Focused application of AECM (in consultation with farmer)
- Guide the farmer in application/management of AECM
- Integrated within LPIS
- Straight forward one on one approach
- Local collaboration
- Communication
- Knowledge exchange

# One on one approach

- Straightforward and independent
- Clear expectations and good cost/benefit balance
- Transparent
- Government pays individual farmer <> government pays collective (cfr. Dutch approach)
- Collaboration <> collective
  - Eg.: unburdening for mowing (and removal)

Some examples of AECM for Montagu's harrier and other arable birds:

- Extensive alfalfa with grass/flower strips
- Alternating cultivation: cereals with half of the area being re-sown each year (winterfeeding/set-aside)
- Fauna strips with 'phased' mowing management and extra set-aside/flower strip

From 2023 on total ban on the use of pesticides







Fauna strips with 'phased' mowing management



Fauna strips with set-aside and flower strip

# Alternating cultivation



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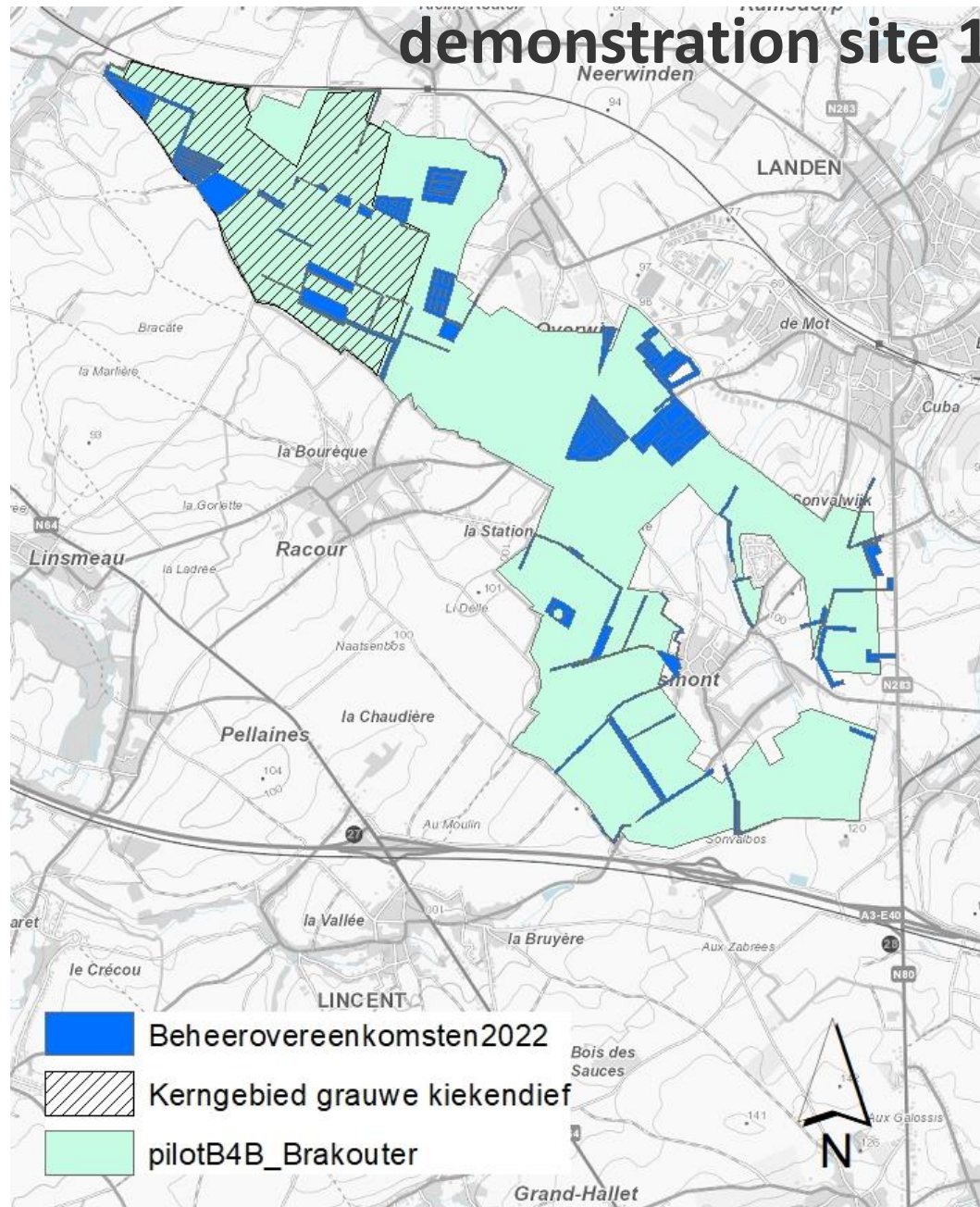
- Focus on Montagu's harrier and arable birds (=farmland birds)
- 2 demonstration sites
- +/- 1000 ha in key focus areas at Walloon border



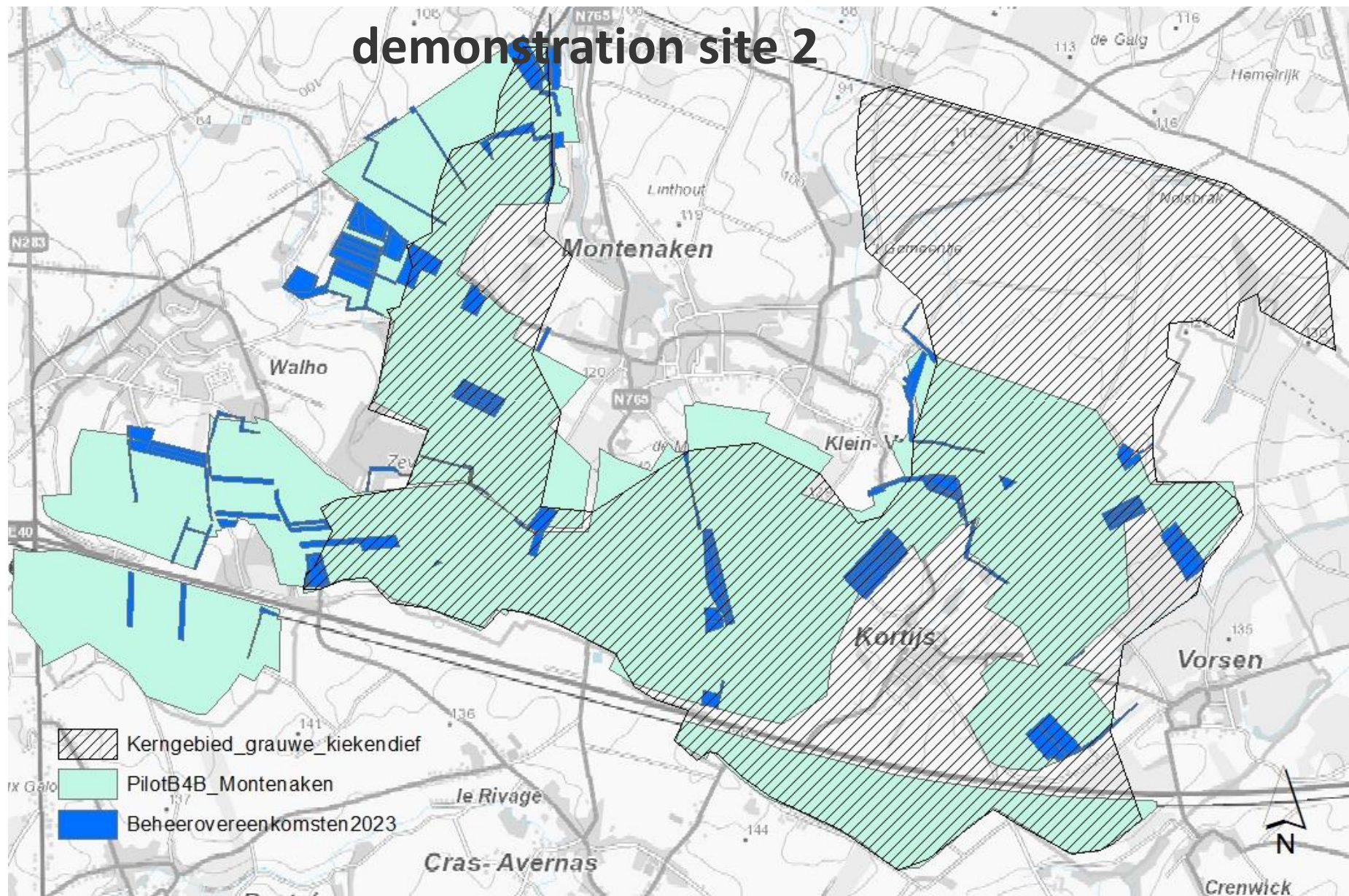
# Life B4B

- Objectives
  - ✦ Increase habitat quality and food resources
    - AECM and ecoschemes
    - Innovative AECM
    - Crop diversity
    - Structural elements
  - ✦ Area specific
  - ✦ Min. cover of 10%

# demonstration site 1



# demonstration site 2





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# Life B4B

- Objectives:
  - Knowledge exchange on an integrated site specific approach (for farmland bird populations)
  - Learning network: farmers, policymakers and monitoring authority
  - Mutual understanding!
- Also demo site on nature-inclusive farming (in collaboration with INBO) within Life B4B

# Community building and mutual understanding



# Opportunities

- Integrated and aligned use of different CAP measures and other national instruments
- Coordination at landscape level (crops, permanent structures, local authorities, AECM,...) for harriers and arable birds in general
- Possibilities for 'nature-inclusive farming'
- Further collaboration with Natagriwal (Life B4B) in a cross-border approach

= Better results for farmland bird populations and better mutual understanding

# Difficulties in Flanders

- Evolutions in farming in general
- Restrictions from other policies
- Sufficient support of farmers



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