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Newsletter #9

If in 2020, the world has slowed down, the teams and members of the *Life in Quarries* project didn't have time to breathe!

Translocation of amphibians, re-introduction of the Yellow-bellied Toad (an extremely rare species in Wallonia), construction of loose cliffs, development of bat galleries, but also training of staff from the various sites and biological monitoring in the field set the pace for this scorching summer.

Lock-down has its reasons that nature ignores ...

And to bring you ever closer to the actions carried out on the ground, we took advantage of the pandemic to develop our Instagram page and continue to prepare the rest of this ambitious Belgian-European project which is, slowly, coming toward its end.

LIFE in quarries in action:

Bees, Toads & batcaves

Solo bees

This summer several loose cliffs for solitary bees were built in quarries members of the project. Because if we all know the "classic" bees that live in swarms, hundreds of species of wasps and bees prefer to live without it. That's why they are called "solitary" or wild.

This insects that have preferred, during evolution, to do without a colony, nest on the ground on sandy sites, poor in vegetation and benefiting from good exposure to the sun. Natural habitats increasingly rare in our modern landscapes except... in extractive sites!

This is why, among the various actions proposed by the *Life in Quarries* project, we find the construction of cliffs and sandy slopes for the bank Martins ... but also for these solitary bees like the *Andrena vaga*.



Roaming toads

Classified on the red list of amphibians of Wallonia, the Natterjack Toad (*Bufo calamita*) is easily recognizable by the thin yellow line that crosses its back over its entire length.

It is one of three amphibians, along with the Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*) and the Yellow-bellied toad (*Bombina variegata*), to have benefited from the translocation campaign led by *Life in Quarries*.

The goal? Bring the species to sites suitable for its development and where it has no chance of reaching without a helping hand.

Since 2018, a total of 5 sites in operation will have received Natterjack toad eggs with the objective of creating new populations.

An ambitious approach which required meticulous preparations spread over several years and multiple stages such as defining the quarries in which the target species are absent, studying the populations present in each "source site", drawing up inventories to ensure that the samples would not have negative impacts on the base population, test these populations using genetic analyzes to verify the absence of several pathogens, locate on each translocation site the most appropriate water points for each species or - in their absence - dig them by organizing them into networks of ponds protected from construction machinery by natural defenses ...



Facilities to make batman envious

Quarry outbuildings, such as old lime kilns, technical galleries or old houses and farms can, with the right arrangements, offer a choice refuge during the nesting or breeding season for several bat species.

During this summer, several sites have made the necessary arrangements to offer these bats a comfortable landmark that has nothing to envy to the "bat-cellar" of a certain hero ...



The administrative side

Although many target species of the project are protected because of their rarity or vulnerability by various international, European and internal texts, these laws are not necessarily adapted to regularly disturbed environments such as active quarries so that they can be sources of administrative complications and even, when they are not anticipated, sources of costs for the companies concerned.

The *Life in Quarries* project has been working since 2015 on the implementation on each site of "dynamic management of biodiversity" measures aimed at welcoming and maintaining protected species on operating sites while ensuring the necessary legal certainty. the smooth running of extraction operations until the end of the period.

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This legal security involves a long-term commitment thanks to the definition of a specific management plan for each participating site giving the right to an exemption authorizing the dynamic management of the habitats created according to precise management criteria developed by the experience of the LIFE project. The habitats concerned by this management plan are in addition to any biodiversity development constraints imposed by existing permits.

This approach allows operators to welcome protected species through proactive and scientifically validated measures, in order to participate in conservation issues at the regional level with the legal security necessary for the continuity of their exploitation.

The sustainability of the *Life in Quarries* project lies in the signing of commitment charters for each participating career with the SPW (DNF) over a minimum period of 15 years.

The novelty on the communication field

Life in Quarries est sur Instagram

Quarries offer pictures of great beauty.

What's better than the free Instagram app to share them?

Join us on "liq_belgium" and discover exclusive pics ,taken during our missions in the field, which illustrate the splendor of these extractive or vegetal and mineral sites intermingle to form grandiose pictures.

You can also follow us on Linkedin and on our Facebook page and discover, day by day, anecdotes about the target species that live in our quarries and the actions in favor of biodiversity carried out within the framework of the project.

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282 publications

141 abonnés

517 abonnements

Life in Quarries Belgium

The goal of this belgo-european project, is to protect & develop biodiversity (rare animals & plants) in operatives extractives sites in Belgium.

www.lifeinquarries.eu

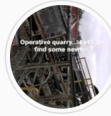

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The beginning of the end

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, we were forced to cancel the second edition of the international conference “Quarries alive” which was to be held at the University of Liège in June 2020 on the theme “Careers as an opportunity for biodiversity and ecosystem services - A European approach ”.

Given that the *Life in Quarries* project is entering its final phase this year, we are pleased to announce that - except in the event of a change in health measures - the closing conference scheduled in Liège in June 2021.

On the program: a pictorial and quantified summary of the various actions carried out over the past 6 years, a review of the positive impacts of the project, numerous interventions by our various partners with several field visits to better understand the multiple actions carried out in the project context

Practical information will follow ...

The entire *Life in Quarries* team wishes you a safe return to school and a good continuation in these special times.

For any questions or additional information, do not hesitate to contact us or follow us on

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Thank you for your interest and see you soon!



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