

# Data Sharing as a Win-Win for Wildlife and Infrastructure

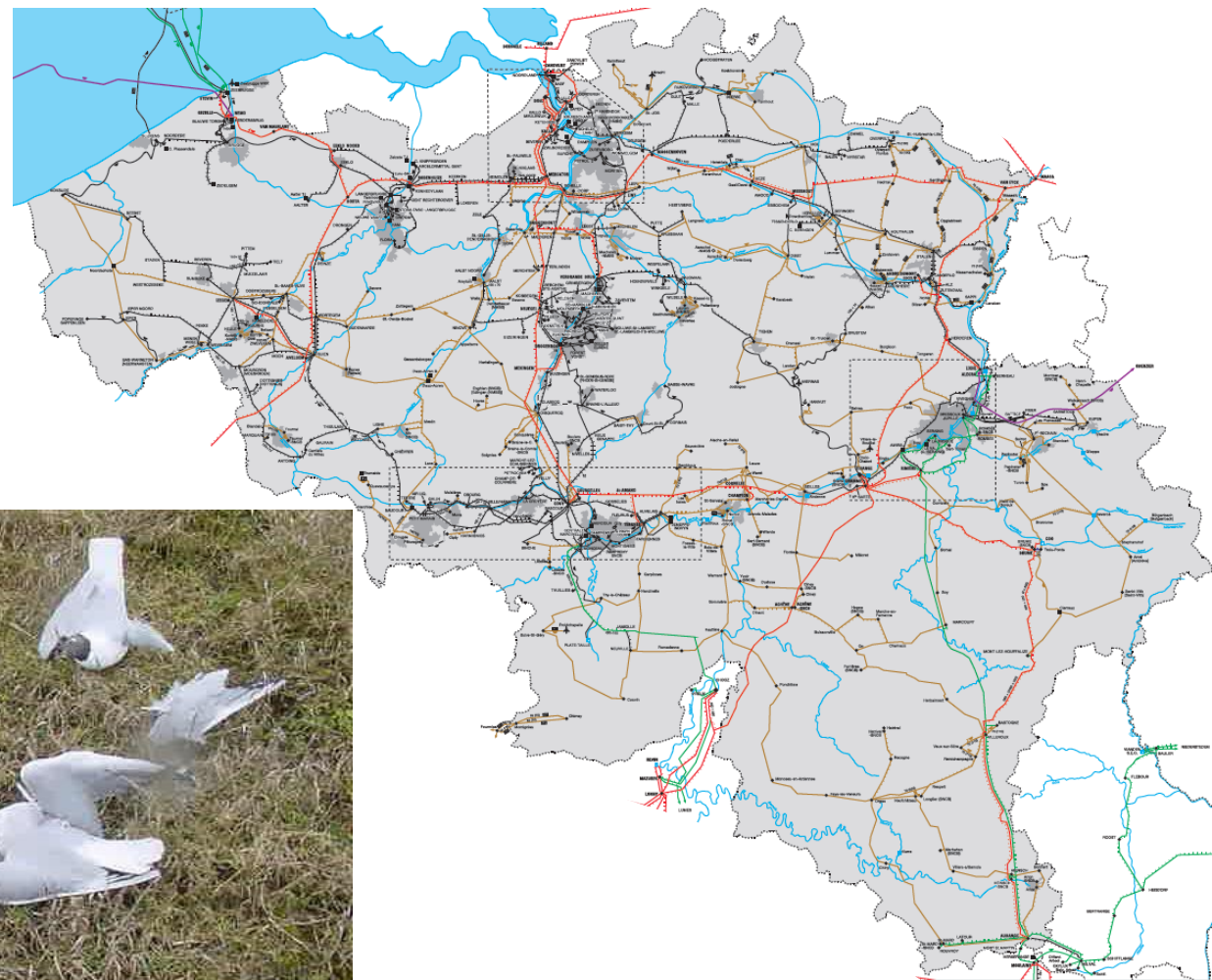
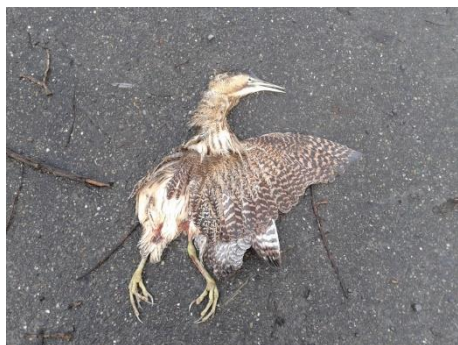
RGI Webinar - Elia

12 May 2026 | Olivia Geels

# Elia is the Belgian Transmission System Operator

Elia manages a network of 5.400 km of powerlines (70 kV to 380 kV)

Overhead lines represent a risk of collision for birds  
→ 500.000 birds killed yearly in Belgium due to our lines, according to estimates from nature NGO's



## The collision risk map allows targeted efforts for bird conservation

First risk map : 2012, updates : 2020, 2026

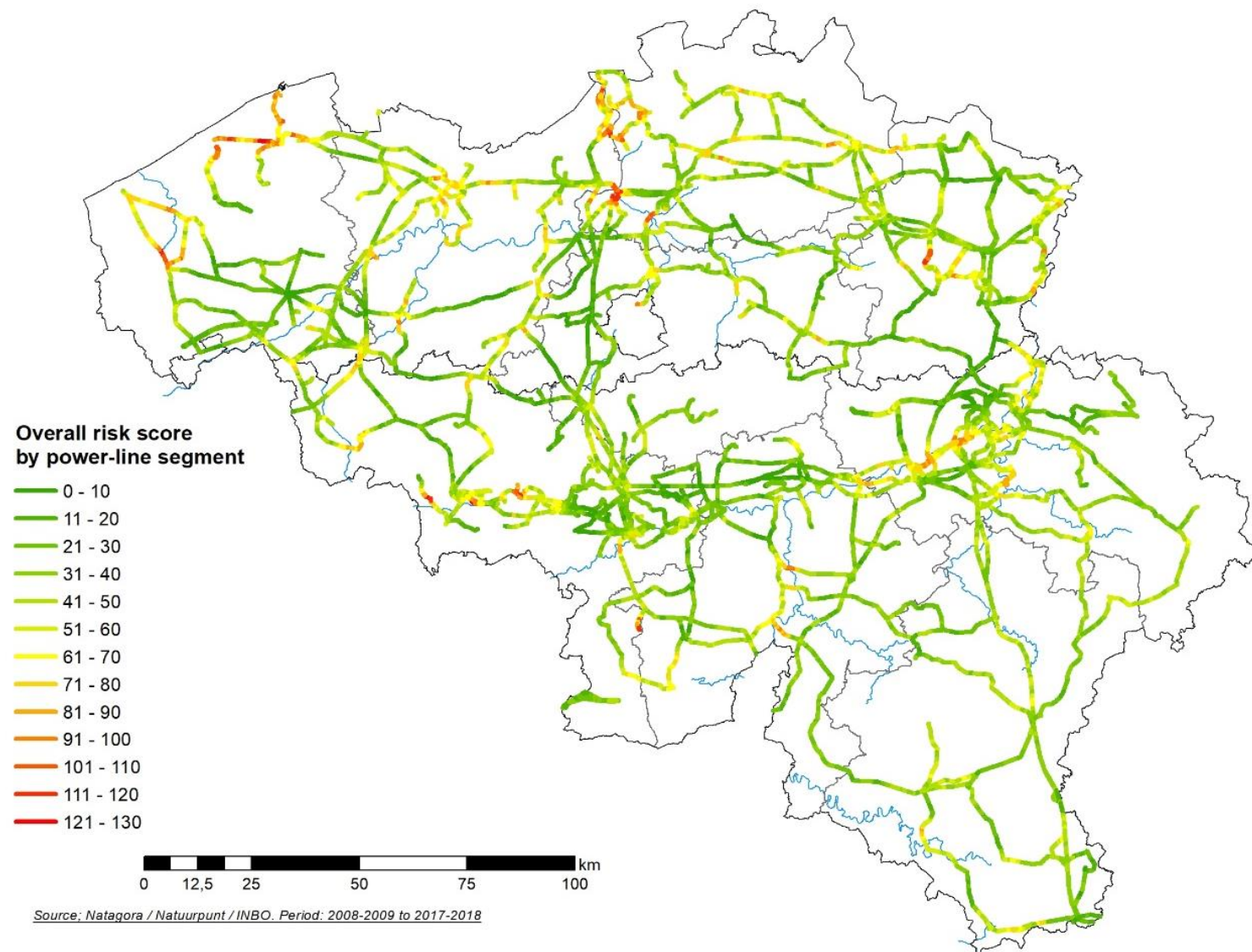
Made by Natagora, Natuurpunt and Flemish Research Institute for Nature and Forest

Gives a risk score for each place (1km<sup>2</sup>)

Not based on mortality data but :

- Waterbirds sites
- Roosts and colonies
- Presence of rare birds
- Presence data and modelling to highlight migration corridors
- ...

Risk map validated by field study, including mortality data



## The collision risk map allows targeted efforts for bird conservation

Elia installs bird markers since 2016:

- Proactively on existing lines
- Each time a new line is built

Our target : equip the 5% most dangerous lines (risk map)

Impact = bird mortality reduction

- Where more birds are present
- Where sensitive species are the most impacted



# Data-sharing improves mitigation strategy to tackle mortality

Carcass search : a way to collect **mortality data**

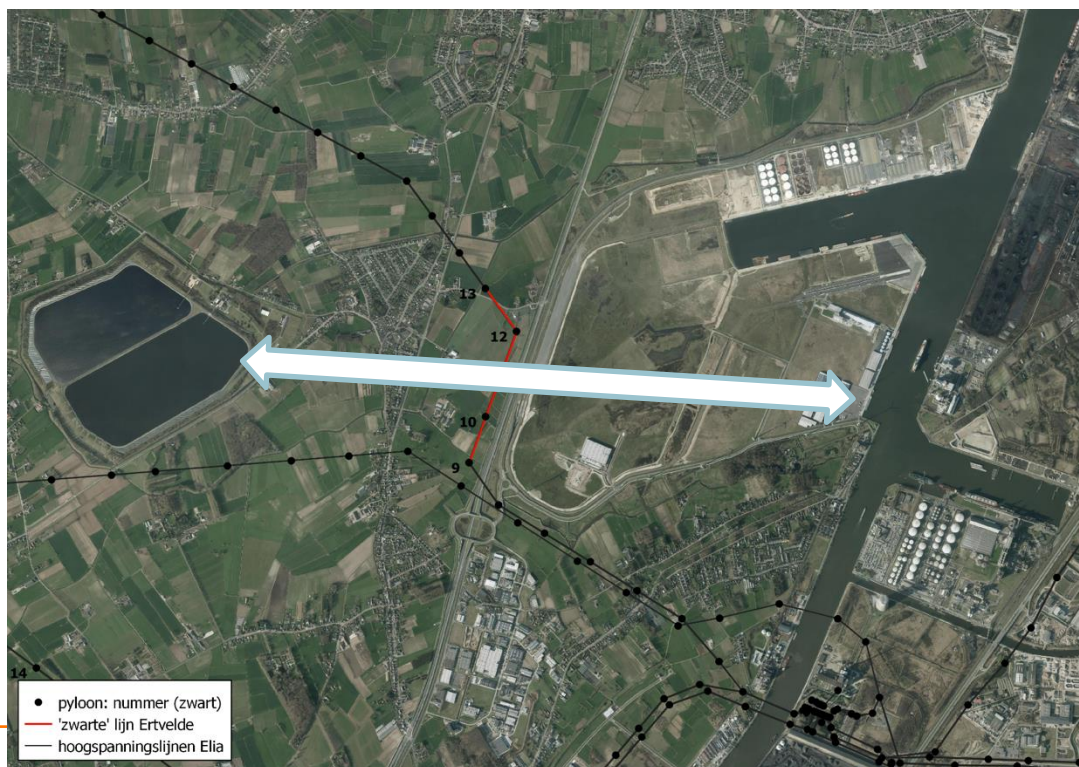
- Ordered by Elia to Natuurpunt & Natagora: data of Elia but shared with NGO's
- Data is also entered in the *observations.be* portal (citizen science platform)
- **Helps to**
  - **Identify species more prone to collision**
  - **Validate efficiency of bird markers installation**
  - **Adapt approach if necessary**



# Data-sharing improves mitigation strategy to tackle mortality

## Examples

1. Noordschote line : up to 95% reduction with Firefly's
2. Ertvelde line : carcass search showed an increased mortality rate after installation of bird markers, due to wrong way of installing (no earth wire equipped)



## Key take-aways

With the energy transition, the development of electricity networks is a must, but it can be done in a way that is less harmful for nature.

Data-sharing with nature organizations is a win-win :

- We better know how birds are impacted
- As a TSO, we know how and where to put bird markers
- More birds can be saved from collisions

This is only possible thanks to a trustful and open collaboration between partners.

