

Opiliones in Belgium



Luc Vanhercke

(date of publication 14.VI.1999)

Introduction

While the Belgian community of eight-legged animals shudders with fear in view of the next excursion of the flourishing Arabel (Arachnologia Belgica), one little group keeps his peace of mind: the Harvestmen. The majority of arachnologists has lost interest since some simple youth experiments with the legs. I couldn't beat the knowledge of the Arabel-people, so I took the Opiliones as my territory.

Dr. Baert (Royal Institute of Natural Sciences) kindly put the relevant collections at my disposal. Although Opiliones were never the object of a sampling session, the bottles were rich enough to keep me happy for several years on row. I added some material from my own entomological studies and from the former Laboratory of Oecology (State University Ghent).

When finally the number of Opiliones minded people doubled with W. Slosse, I knew that distribution maps with not too many blancs were within reach. His umbrella sampling-method is very succesful, as proved by the explosion of recent observations in the western part of the country.

Species list and Distribution maps

Trogulidae

Anelasmaocephalus cambridgei (Westwood)

Trogulus nepaeformis (Scopoli)

Trogulus tricarinatus (Linnaeus)

Phalangiidae

Homalenotus quadridentatus (Cuvier)

Rilaena triangularis (Herbst)

Platybunus pinetorum (C.L.Koch)

Phalangium opilio Linnaeus

Opilio parietinus (Degeer)

Opilio canestrinii (Thorell)

Opilio saxatilis (C.L.Koch)

Mitopus morio (Fabricius)

Lacinius ephippiatus (C.L.Koch)

Lacinius horridus (Panzer)

Nemastomatidae

Mitostoma chrysomelas (Hermann)

Paranemastoma quadripunctatum (Perty)

Nemastoma bimaculatum (Fabricius)

Nemastoma lugubre (Müller)

Lophopilio palpinalis (Herbst)

Odiellus spinosus (Bosc)

Paroligolophus agrestis (Meade)

Oligolophus hansenii (Kraepelin)

Oligolophus tridens (C.L.Koch)

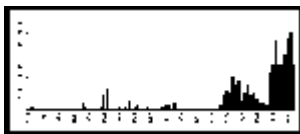
Leiobunum rotundum (Latreille)

Leiobunum blackwalli Meade

Amilenus aurantiacus (Simon)

Dicranopalpus ramosus (Simon)

Some words about the samples



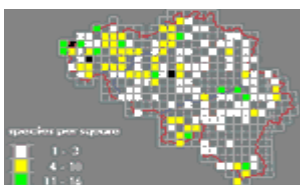
In short:

We have almost no old observations.

Recent sampling forgets the southern part of the country.

[Read more about the samples](#)

More about the number of species



In short:

The species richness is mostly a reflection of the sampling effort.

[Maps and discussion](#)



The legit names

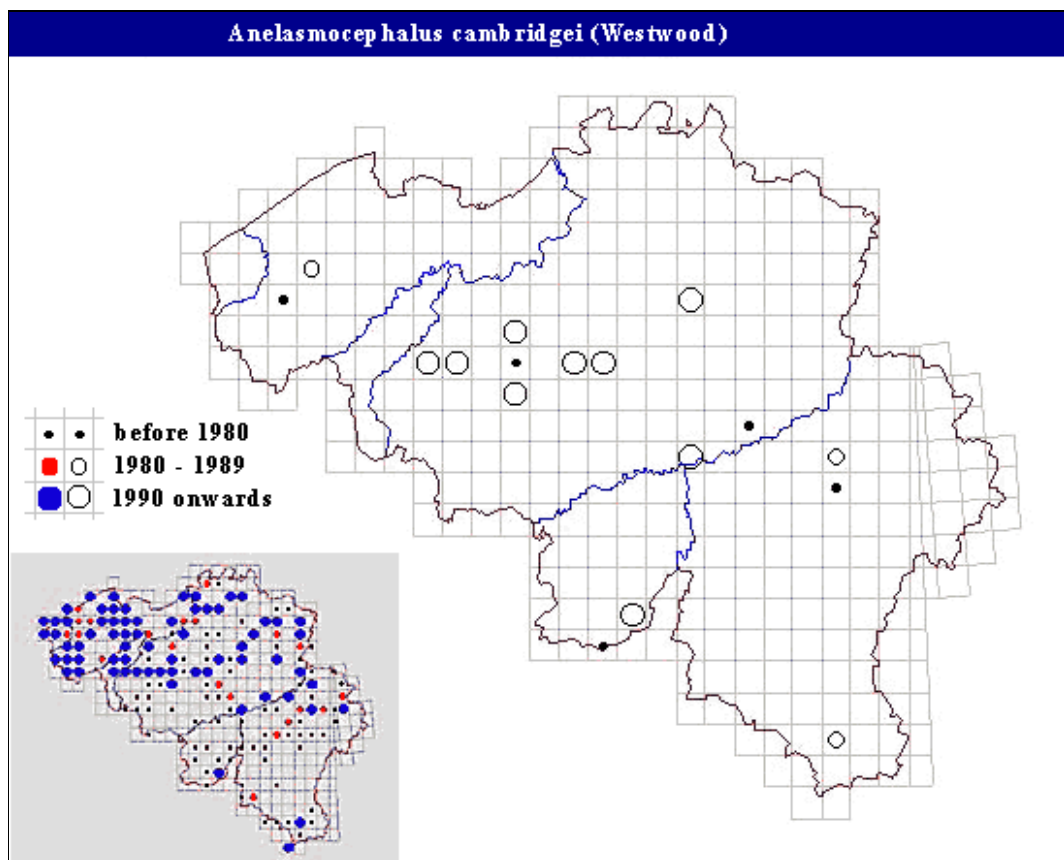
I would be nowhere without the collections of the Royal Institute of Natural Sciences and the people submitting their samples. If you ever donated even only one sample to the R.I.N.S., your name can be on [this list](#).

The Arachnological Hub of the World Wide Web

Visit the [Arachnological Hub](#) of the World Wide Web

Path: Opiliones in Belgium

Observations



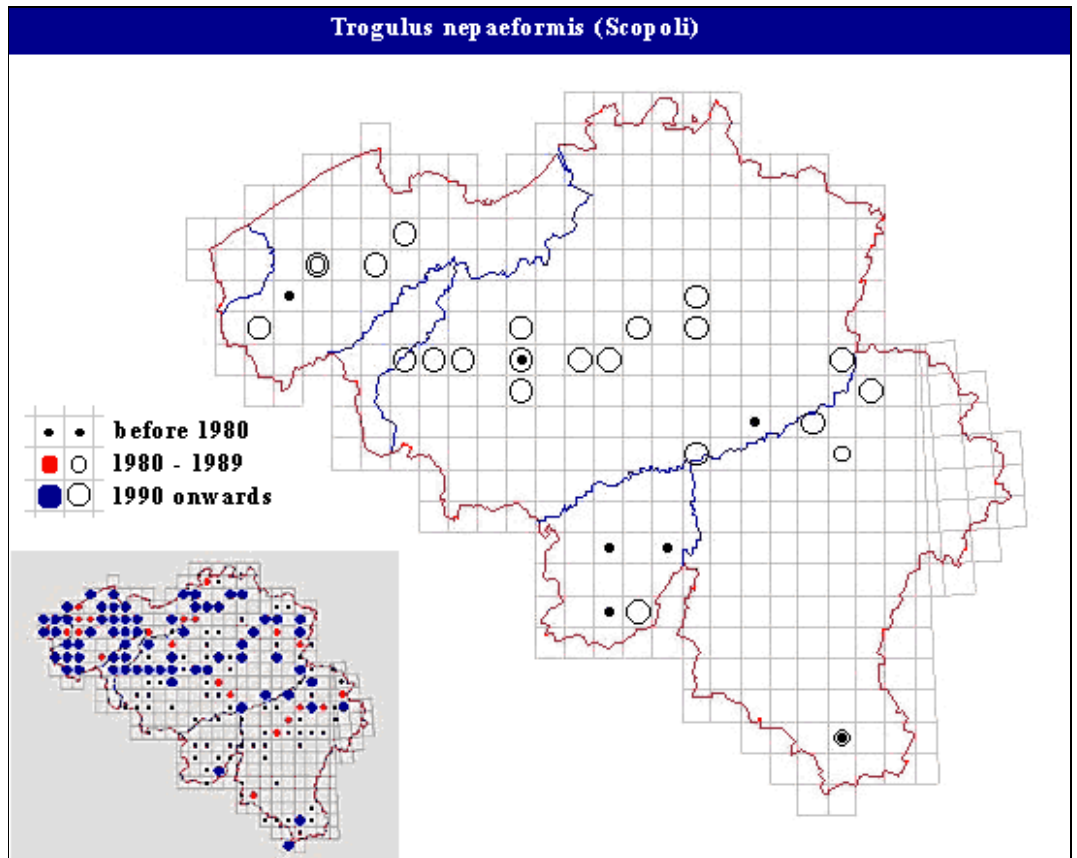
inset: latest sample in square; map based on data known in July 1998

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Path: [Home](#) / [Opiliones in Belgium](#) / [Anelasmacephalus cambridgei \(Westwood\)](#)

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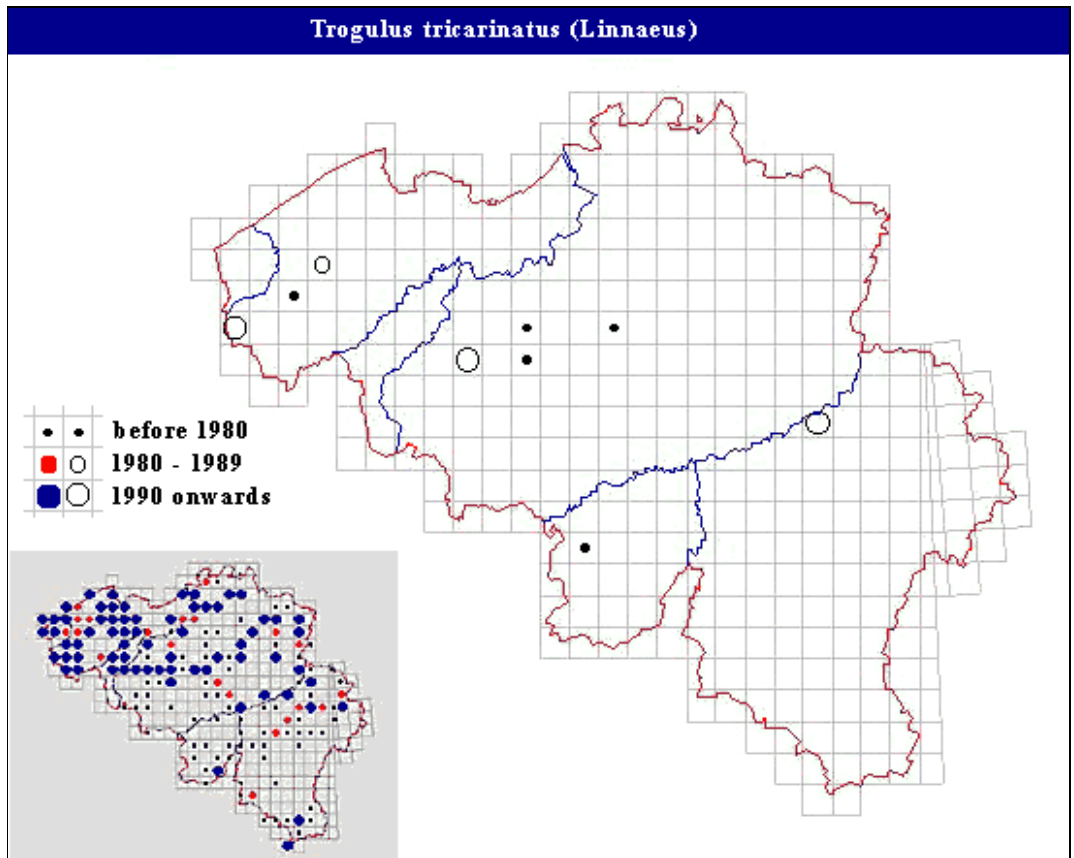
Observations



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Observations



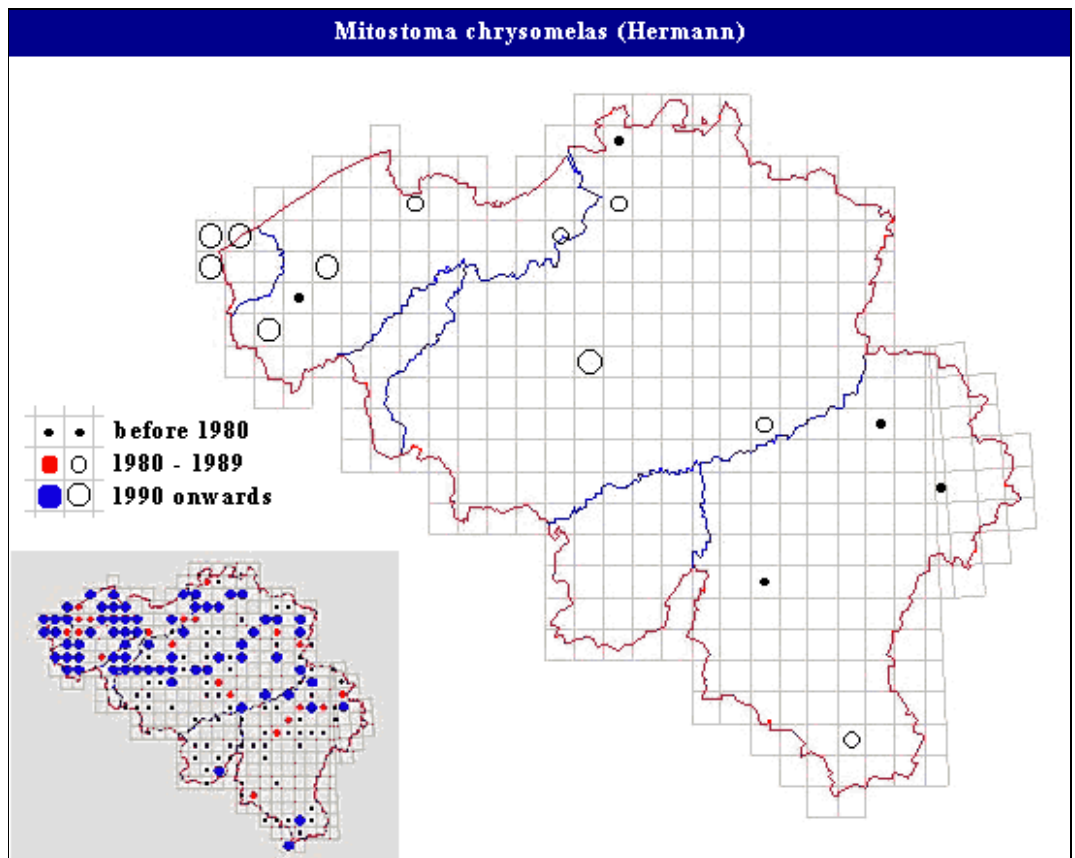
inset: latest sample in square; map based on data known in July 1998

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Observations

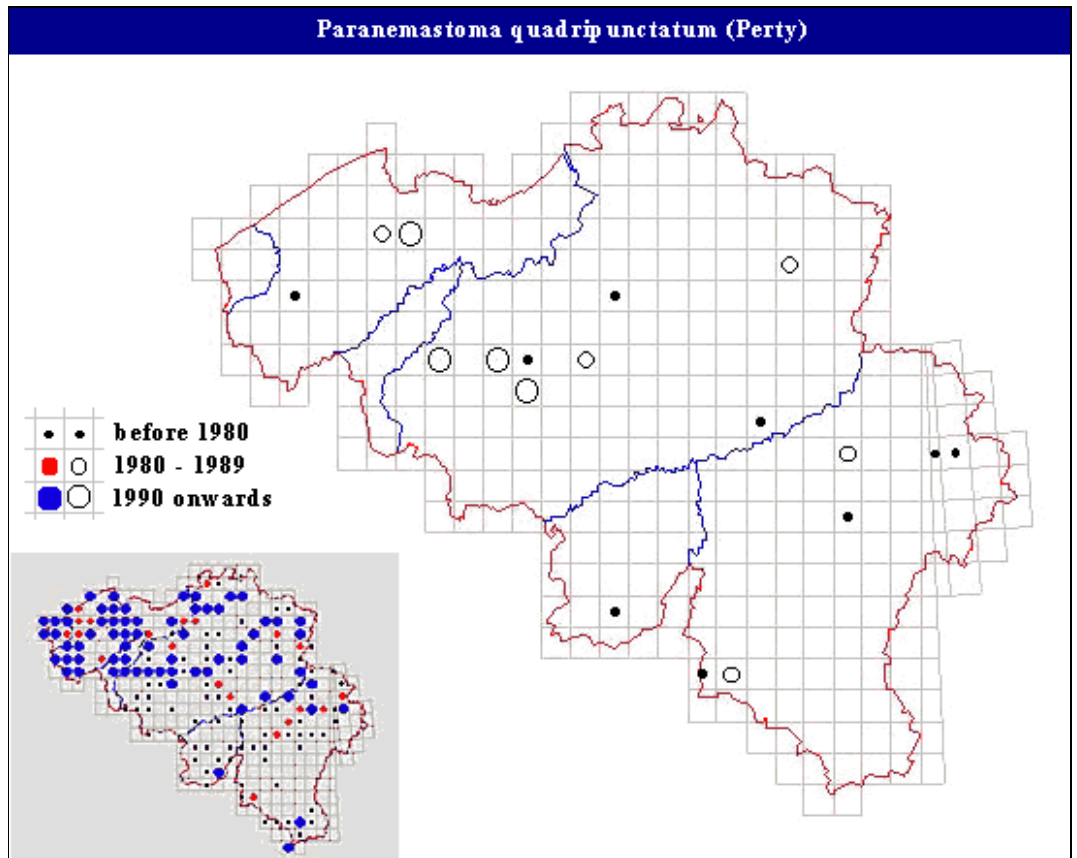


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Path: [Home](#) / [Opiliones in Belgium](#) / Mitostoma chrysomelas (Hermann)

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Observations



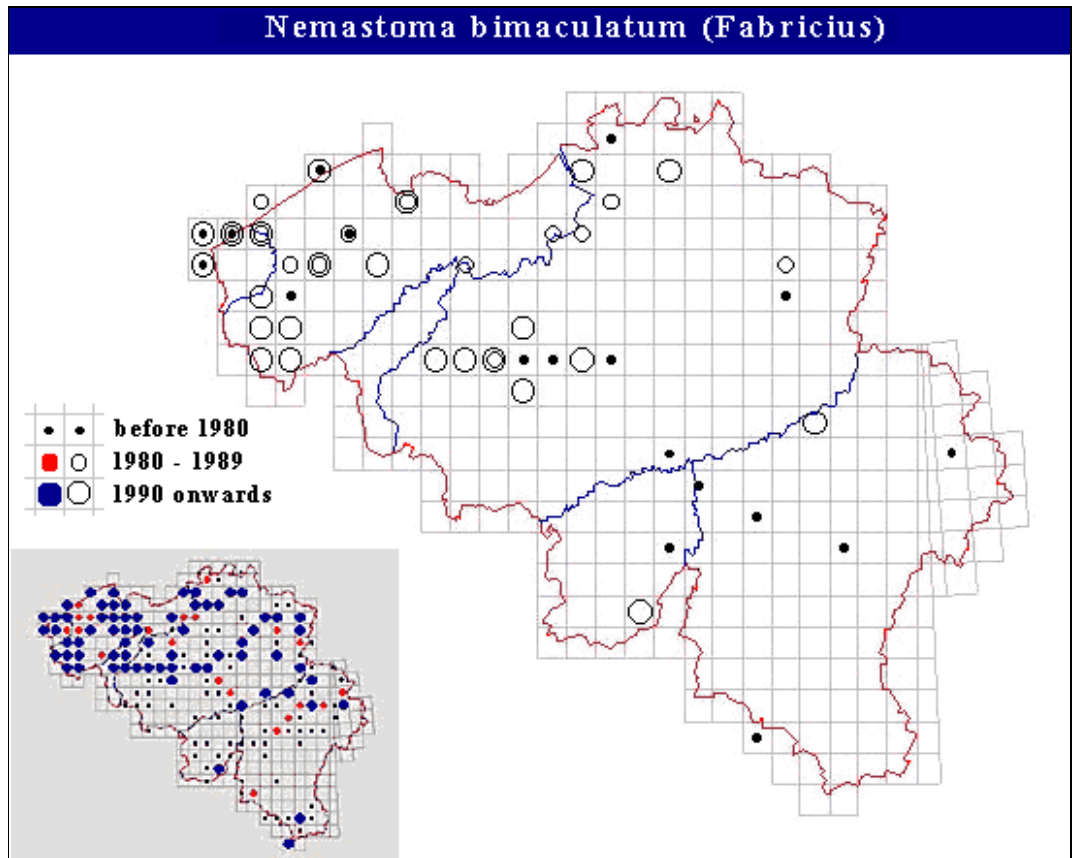
inset: latest sample in square; map based on data known in July 1998

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Observations

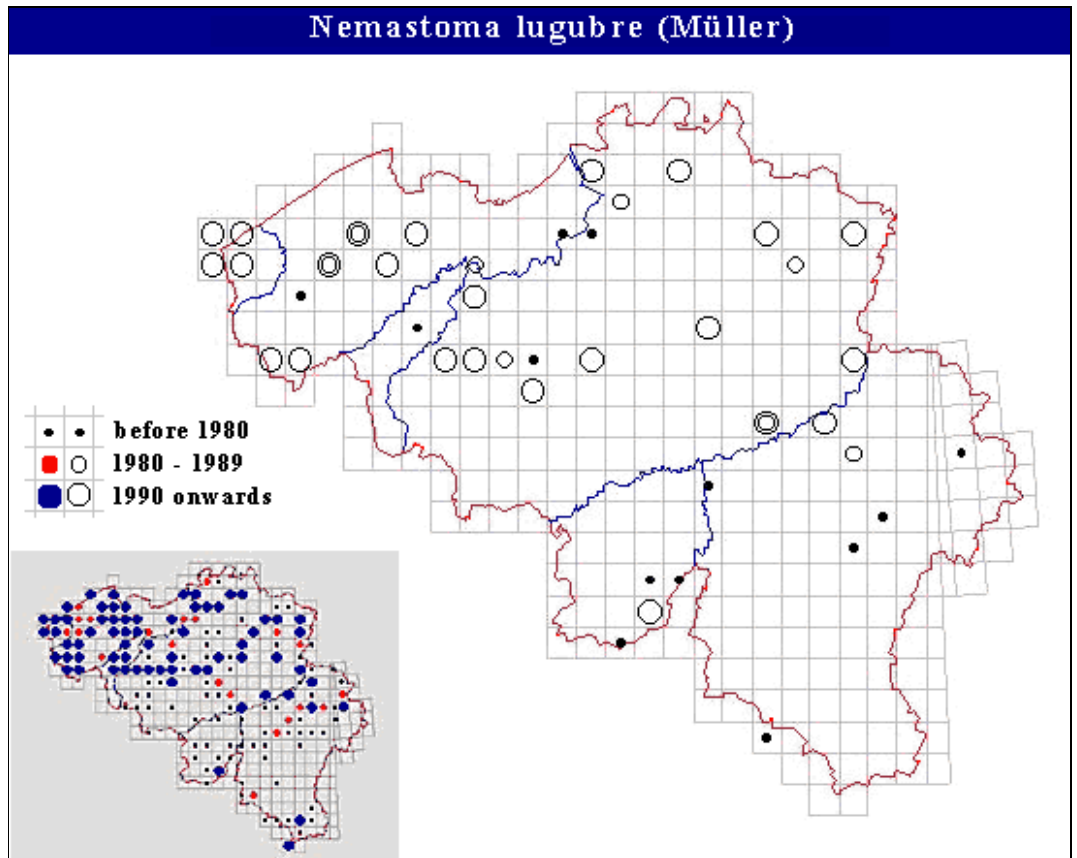


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Observations

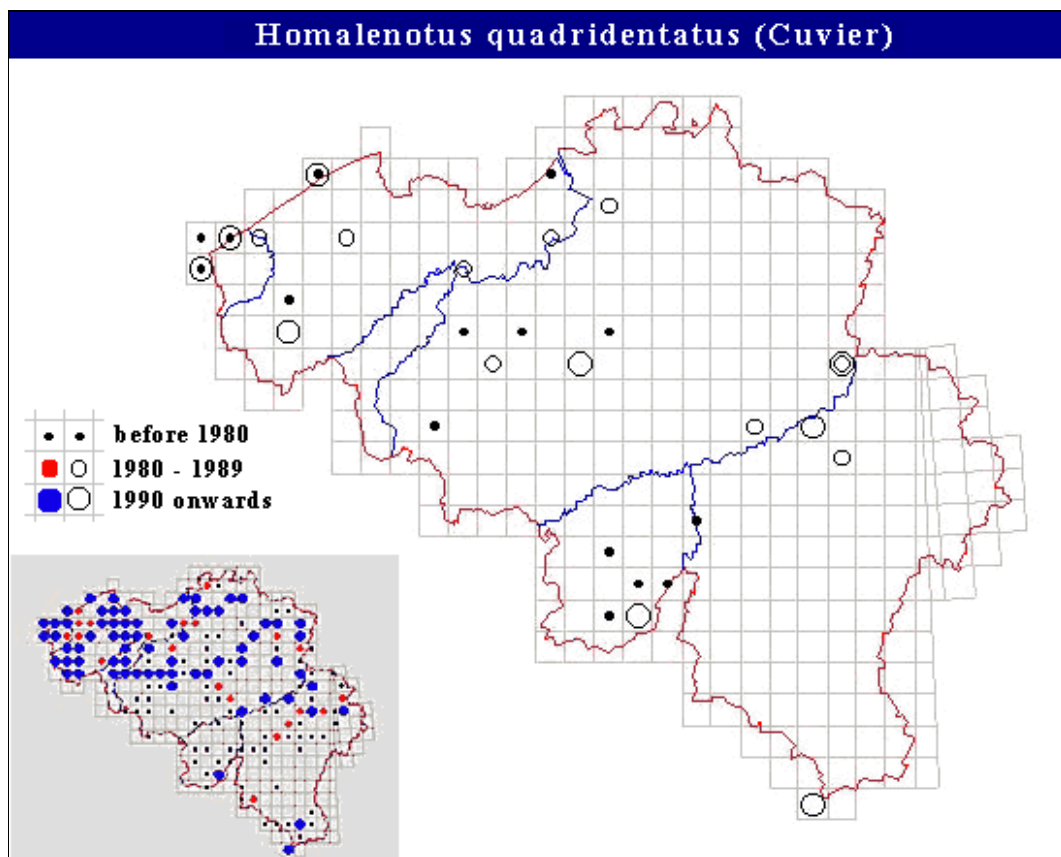


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Observations

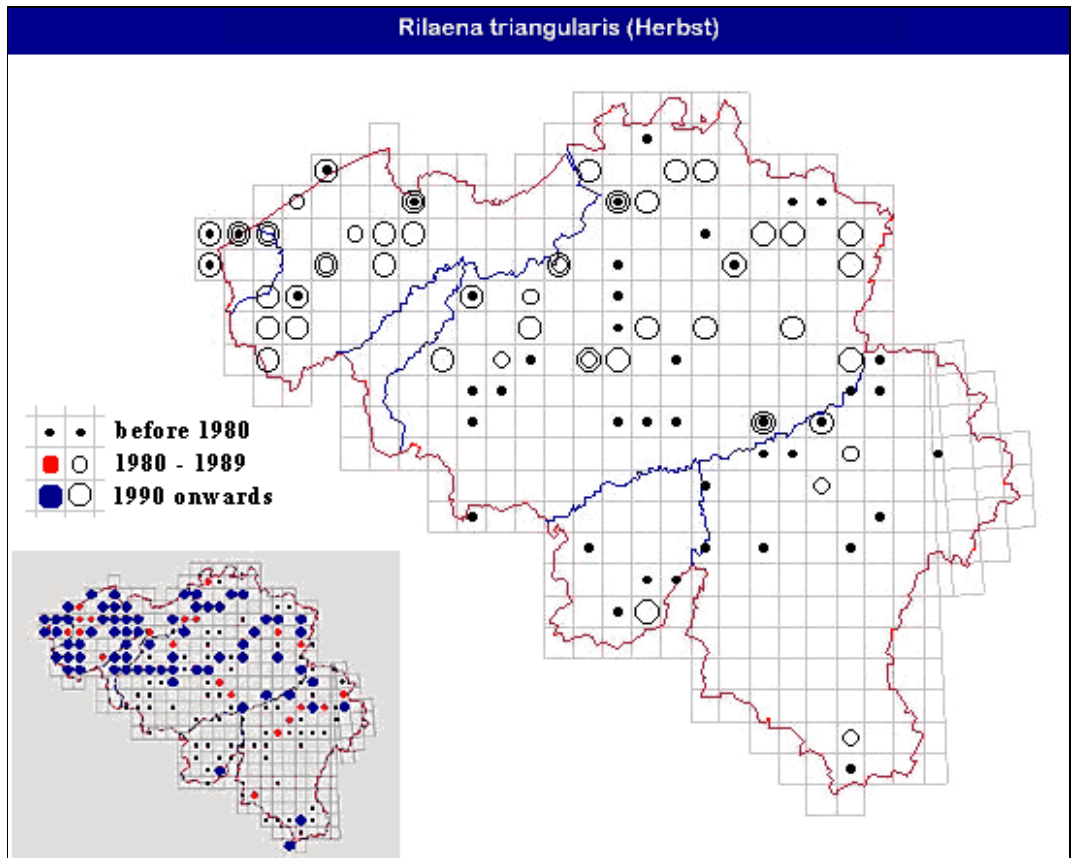


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Observations



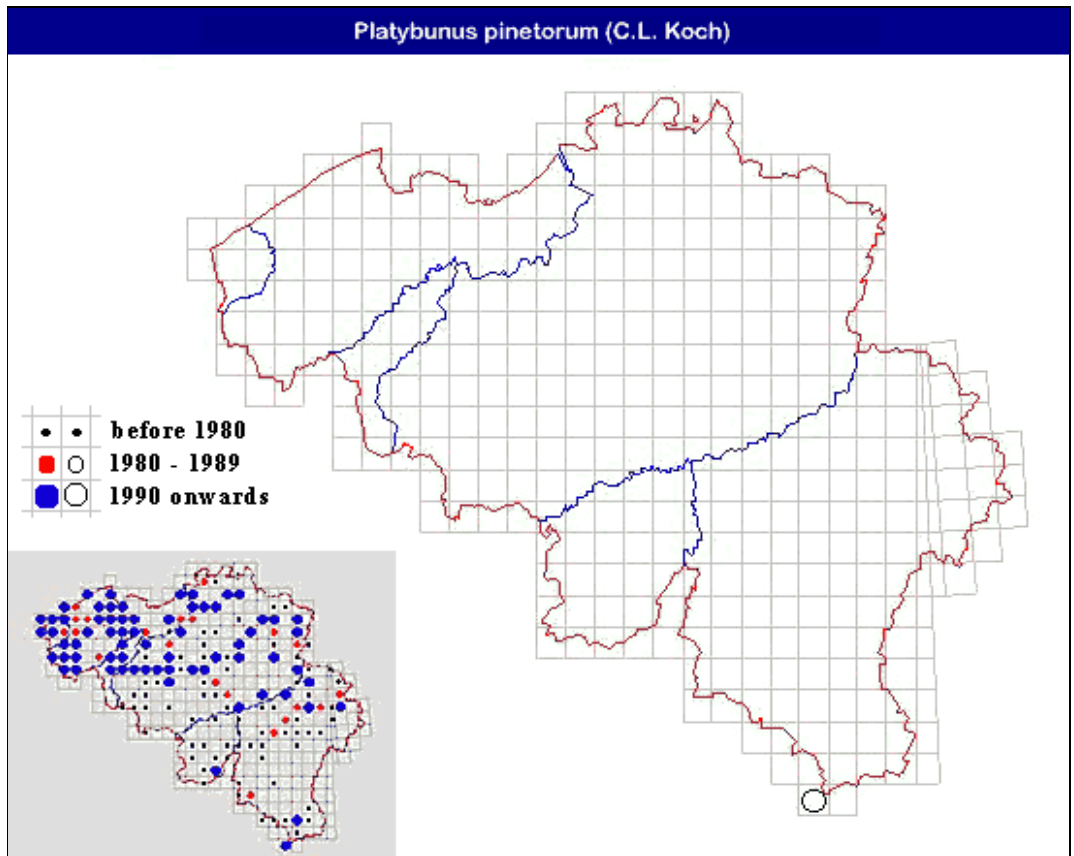
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Observations

Only one female:
FQ78: 16.VI.1992
Torgny forest
leg. Léon Baert
det. Luc Vanhercke

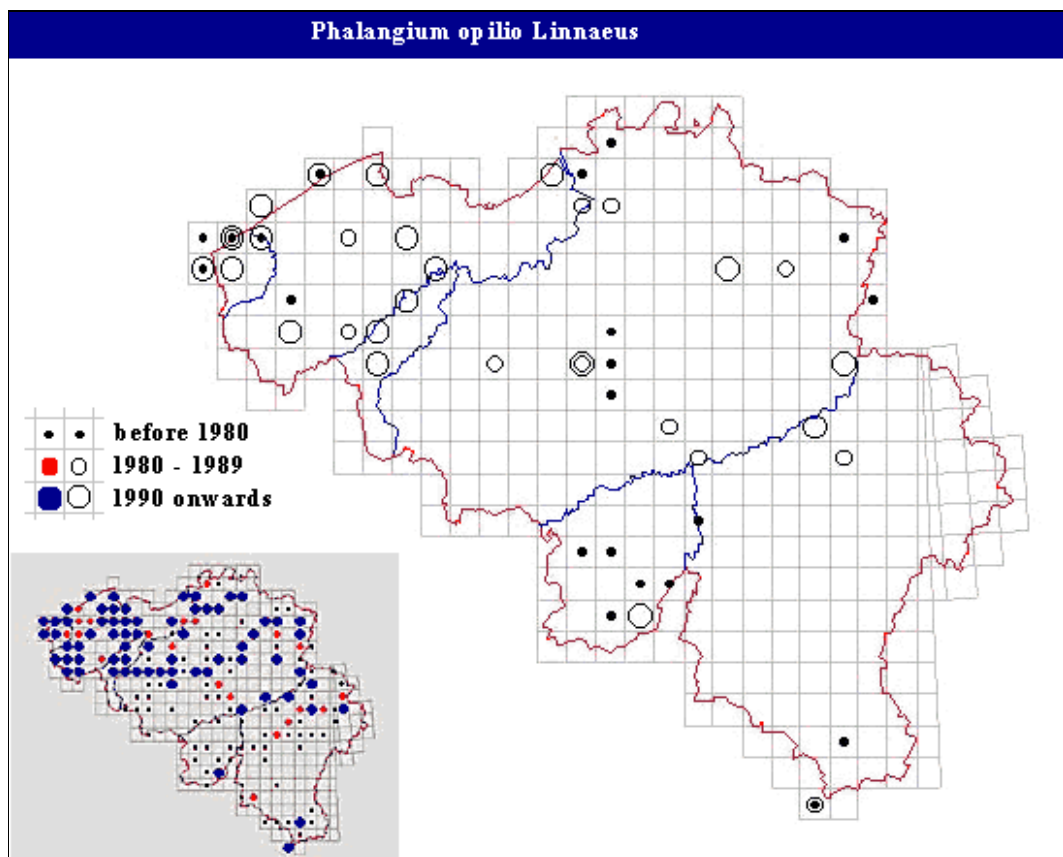


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Observations



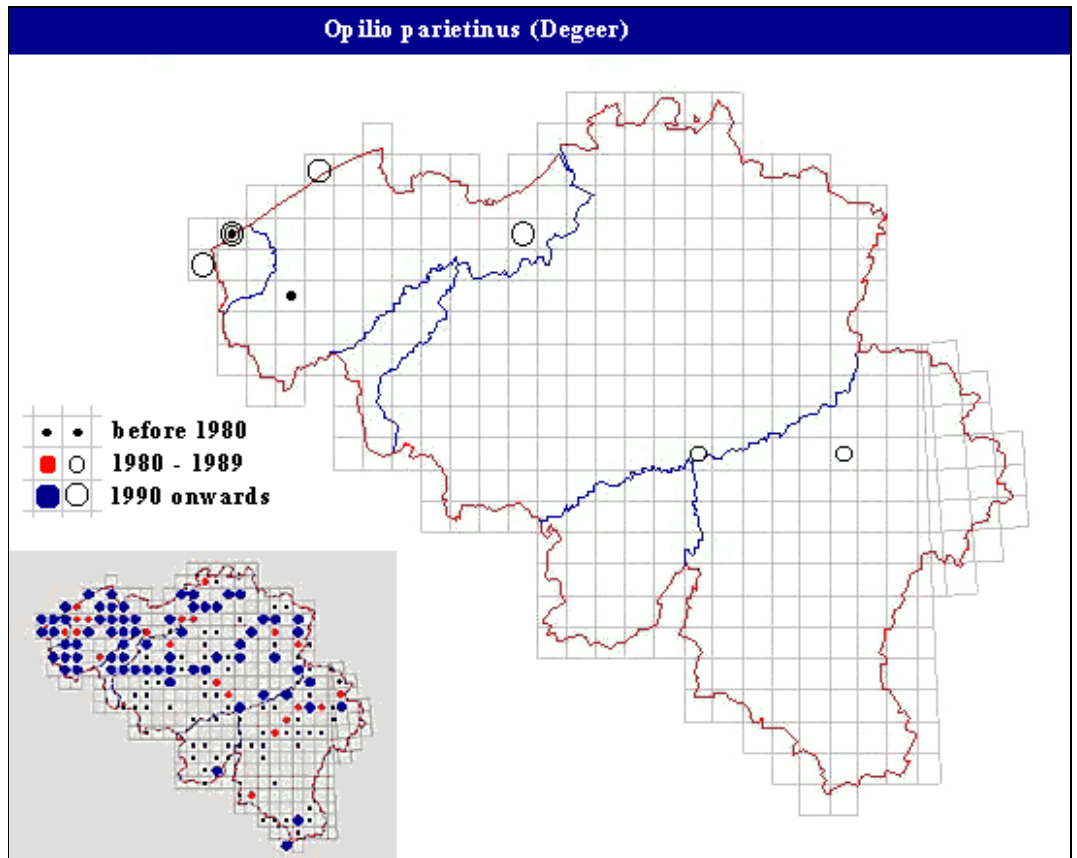
inset: latest sample in square; map based on data known in July 1998

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Path: [Home](#) / [Opiliones in Belgium](#) / [Phalangium opilio Linnaeus](#)

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Observations



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Path: [Home](#) / [Opiliones in Belgium](#) / [Opilio parietinus \(Degeer\)](#)

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Observations**First specimen:**

FS07; IX.1983

leg. H. Vanuytven

det. W. Slosse

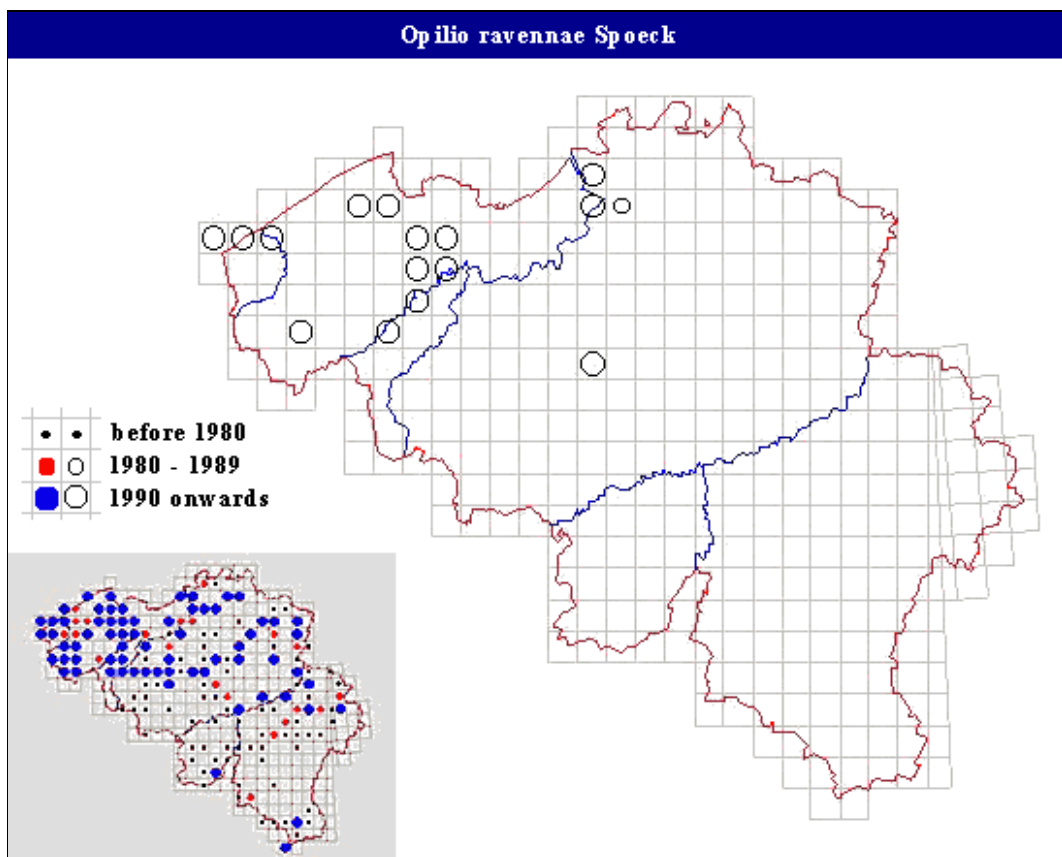
Second specimen:

ES92; 19.X.1992

leg. R. Kekenbosch

det L. Vanhercke

coll. KBIN

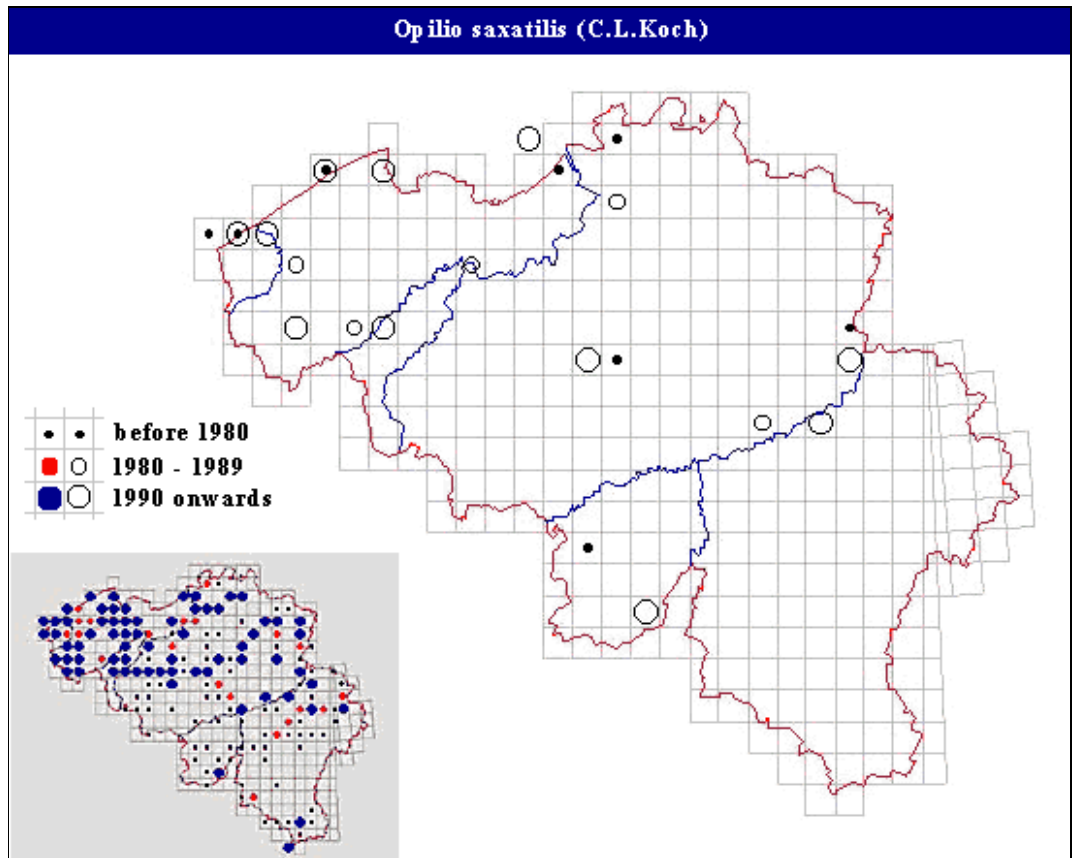


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Observations



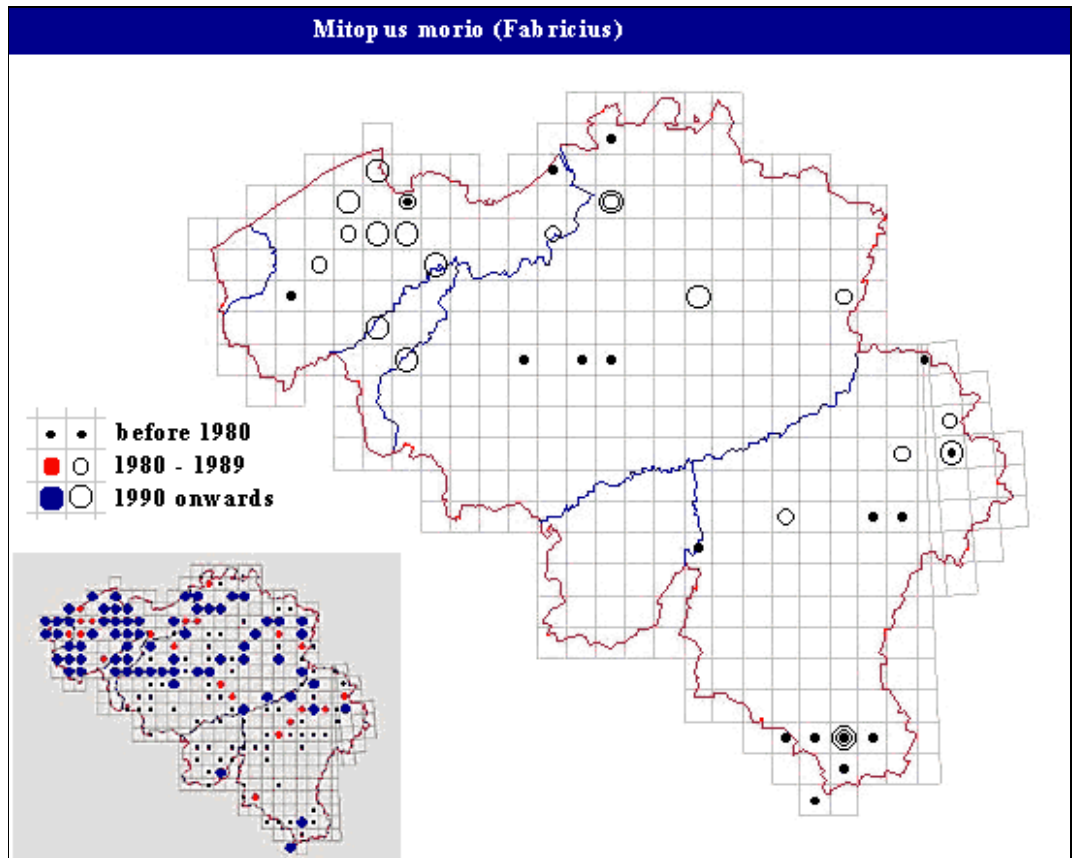
inset: latest sample in square; map based on data known in July 1998

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Observations

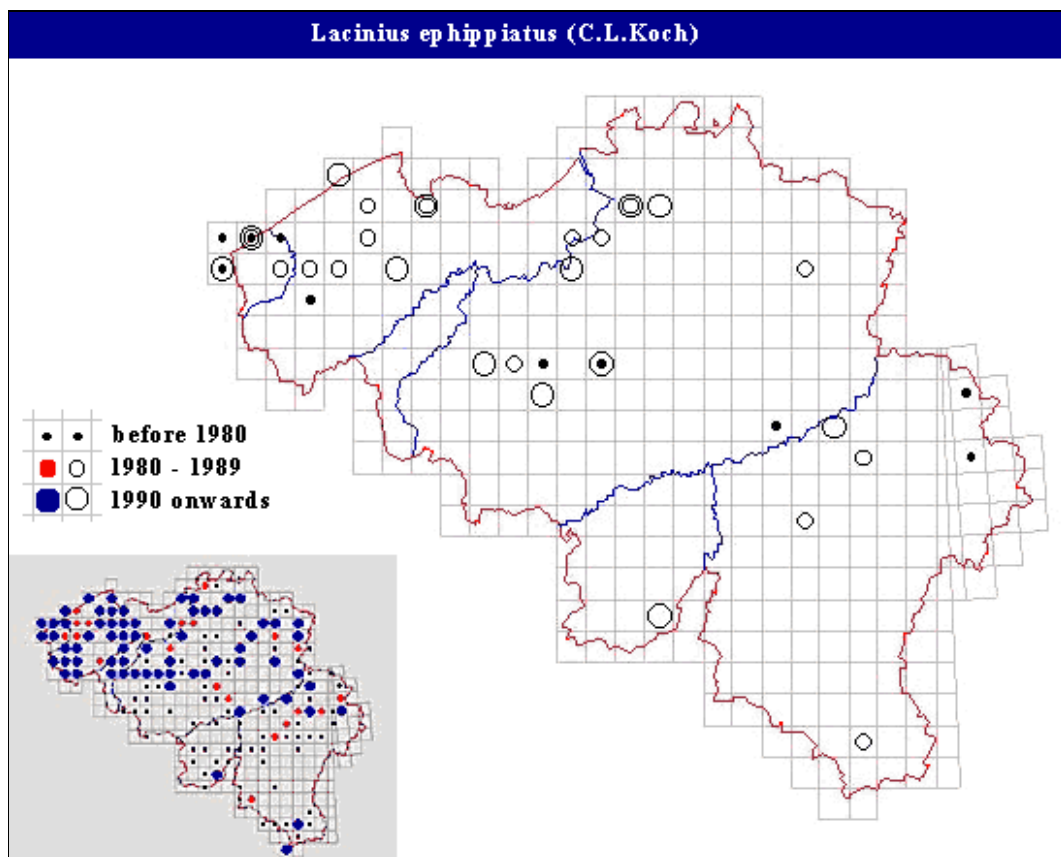


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Observations



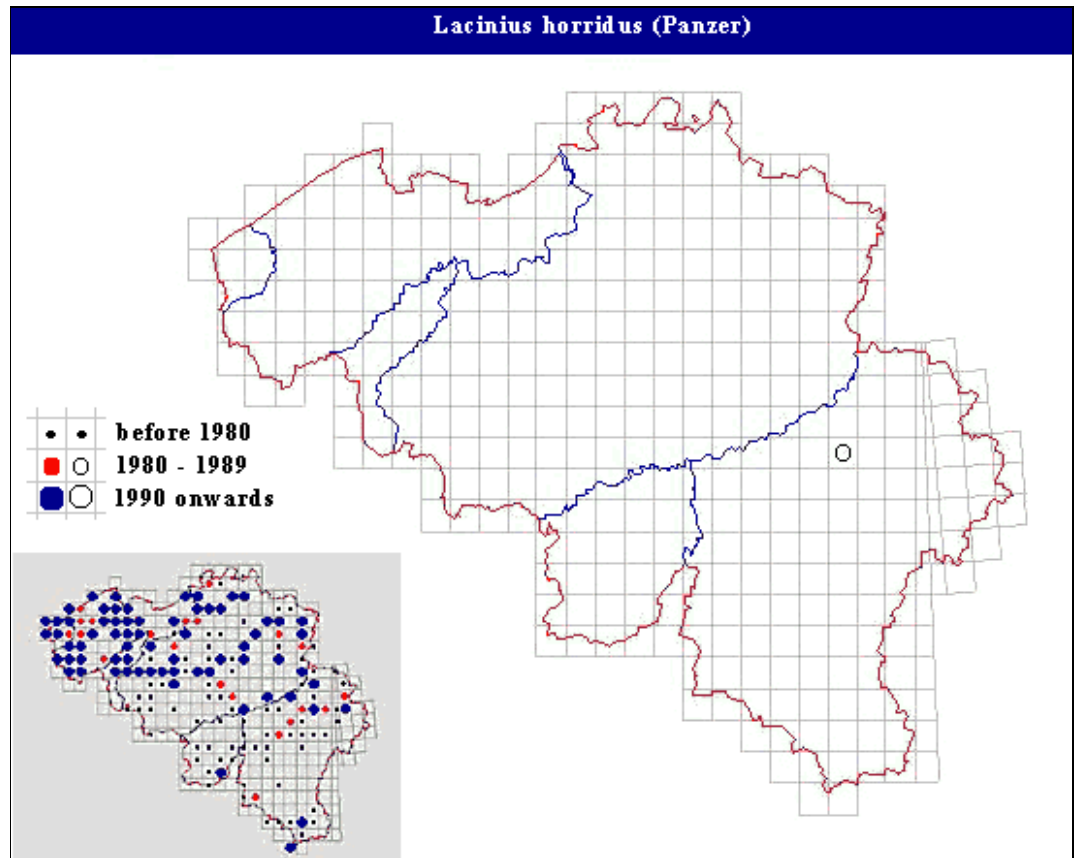
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Observations

FR89; pit-fall captures
from Xhoris-Ferrières
between 22.IV and
29.VII.1983
14 ex. coll. KBIN & lv

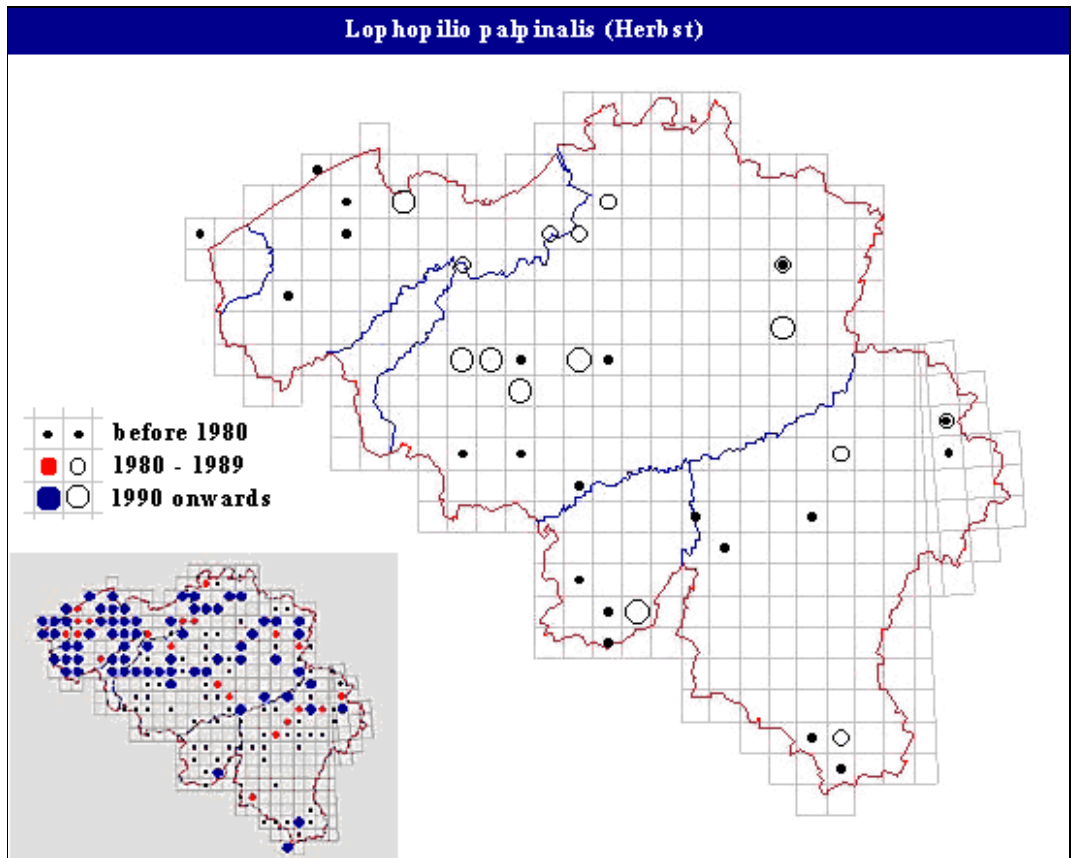


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Observations



inset: latest sample in square; map based on data known in July 1998

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Observations

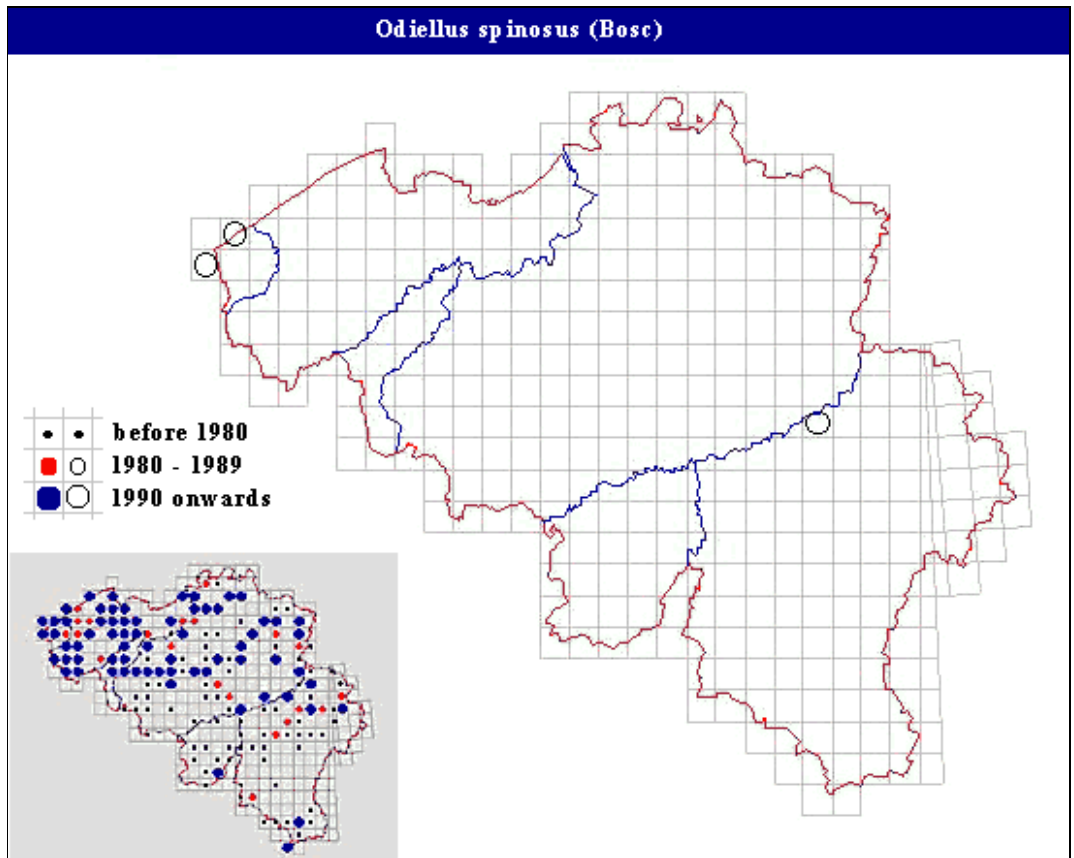
DS76: Koksijde,
15.X.1990;
1 fem.
leg. & det. W. Slosse

FS70: Chokier, pit-fall;
many
from 17.V.1991 -
20.III.1992
leg. R. Detry
det. L. Vanhercke

DS76: 1 ind. captured
during 1993 and 1994
leg. & det. W. Slosse

DS76 and DS65: 1995
18 ind. with
umbrella-method
leg. & det. W. Slosse

No observations in 1996



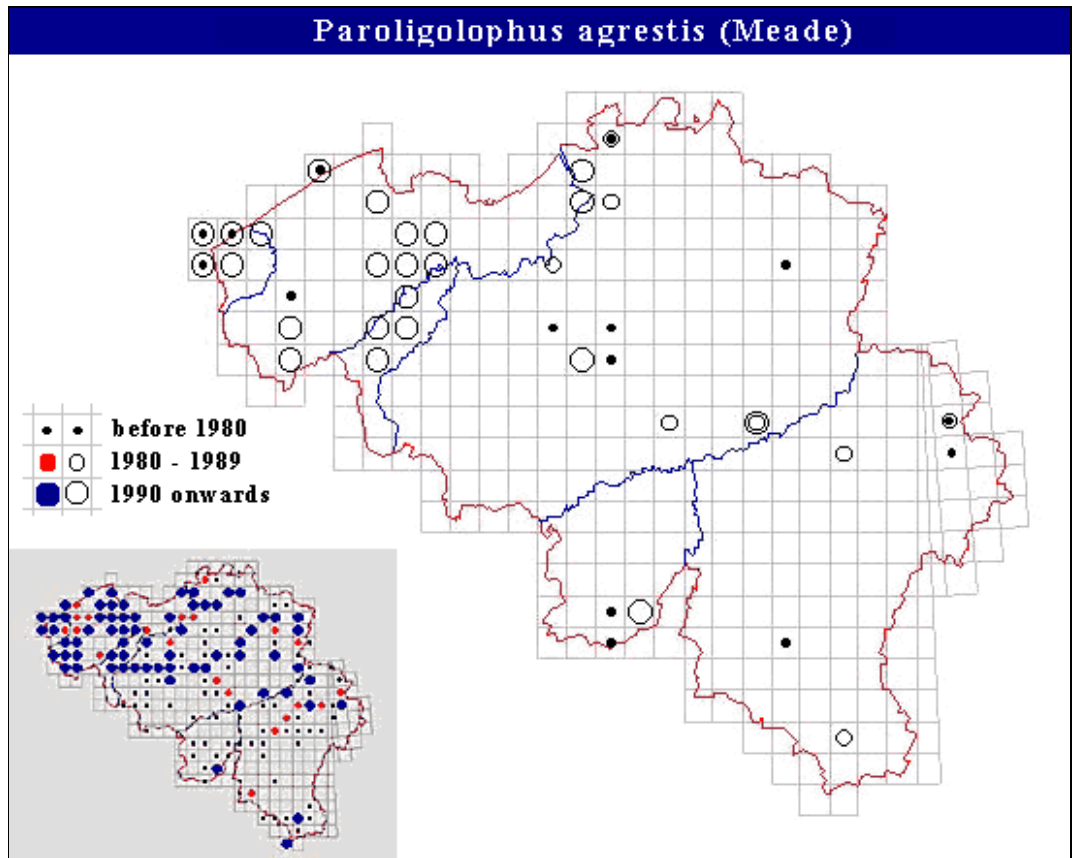
inset: latest sample in square; map based on data known in July 1998

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Path: [Home](#) / [Opiliones in Belgium](#) / [Odiellus spinosus \(Bosc\)](#)

e-mail: [Luc Vanhercke](#)

Observations



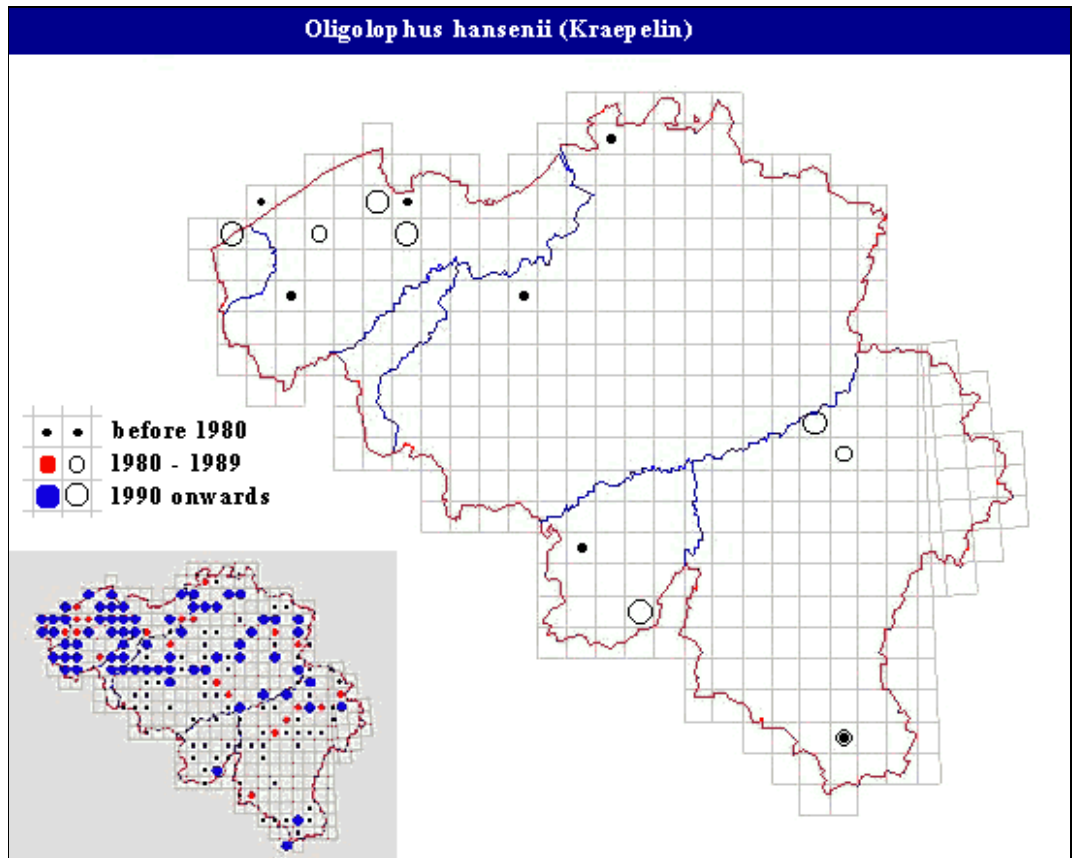
inset: latest sample in square; map based on data known in July 1998

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Observations

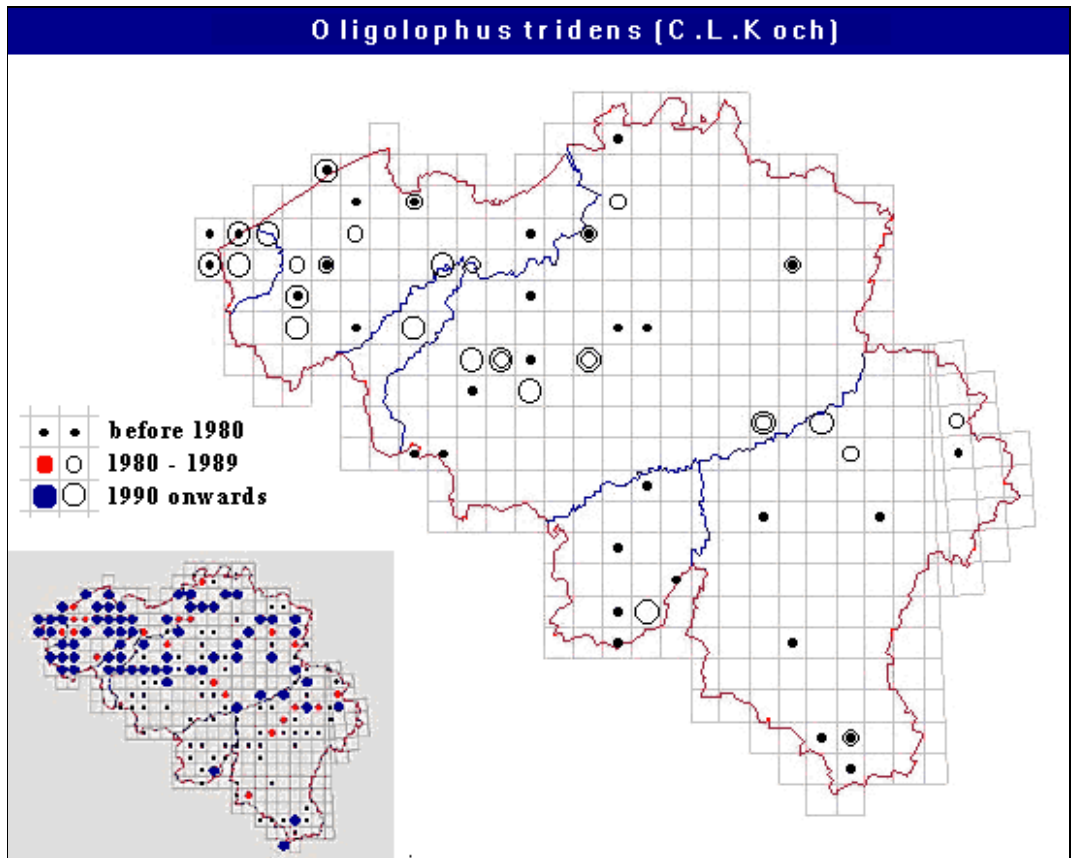


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Observations

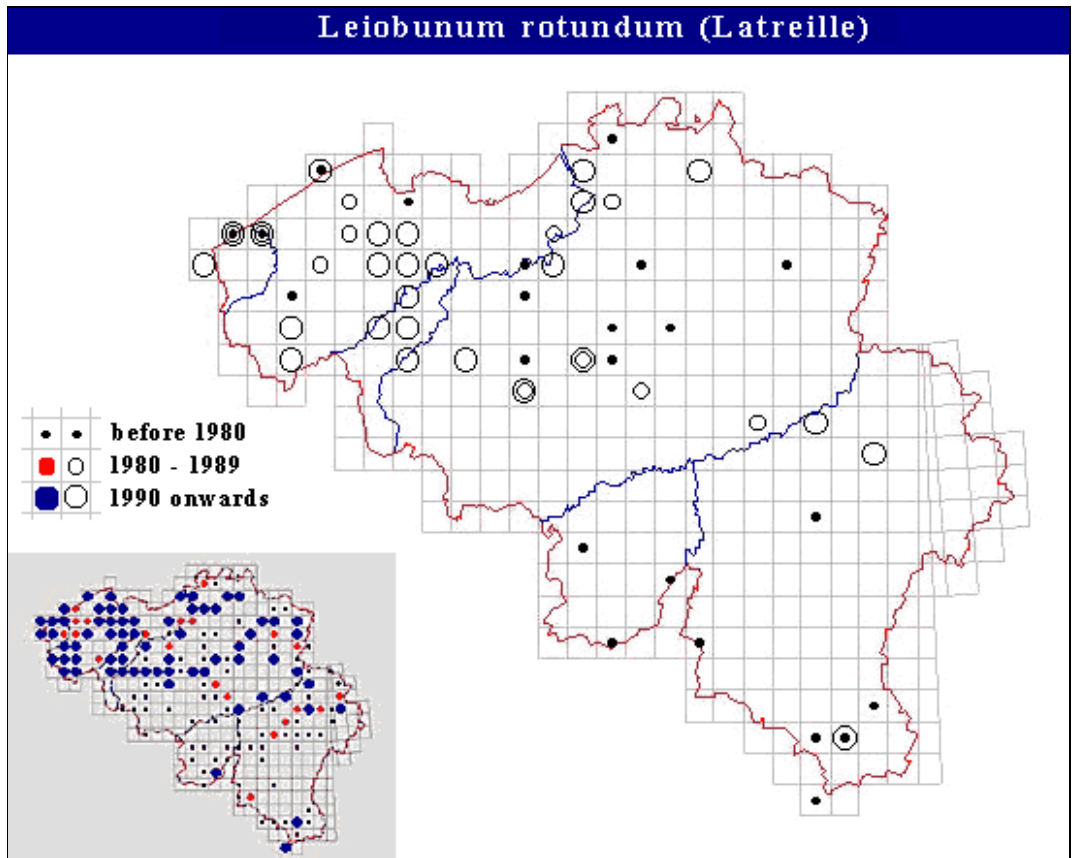


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Observations

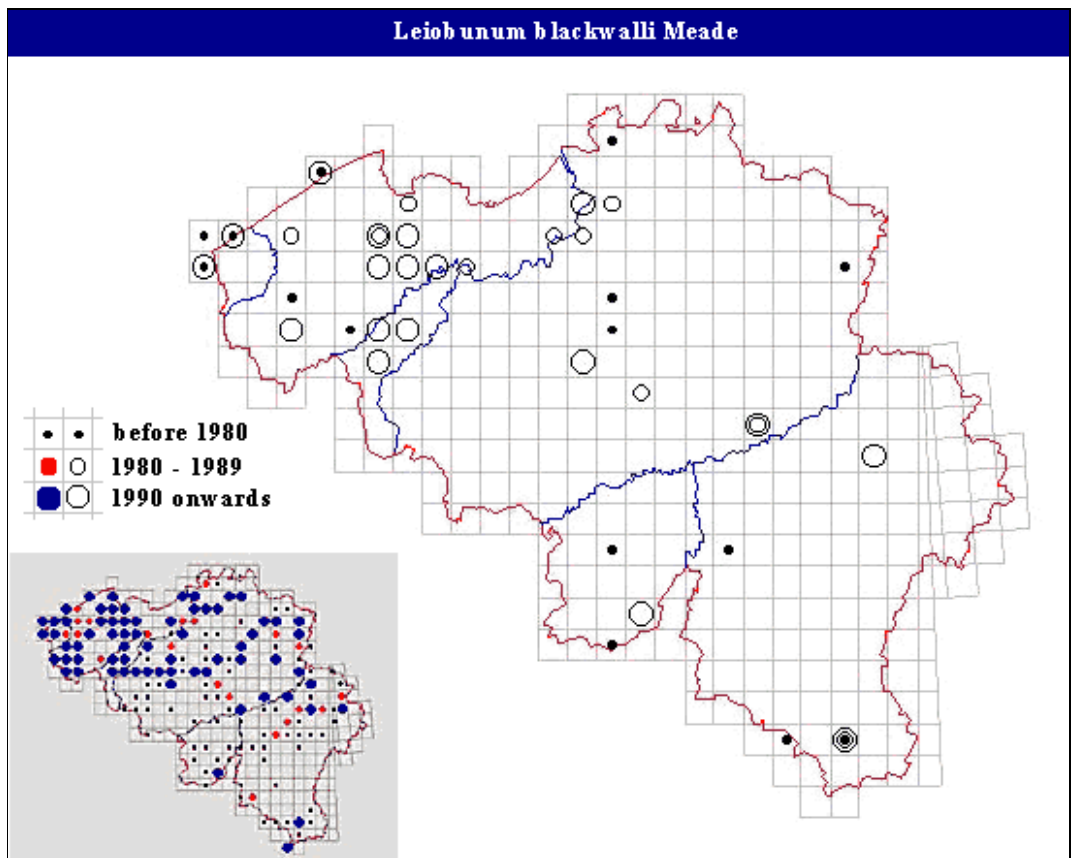


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Path: [Home](#) / [Opiliones in Belgium](#) / [Leiobunum rotundum](#)

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Observations

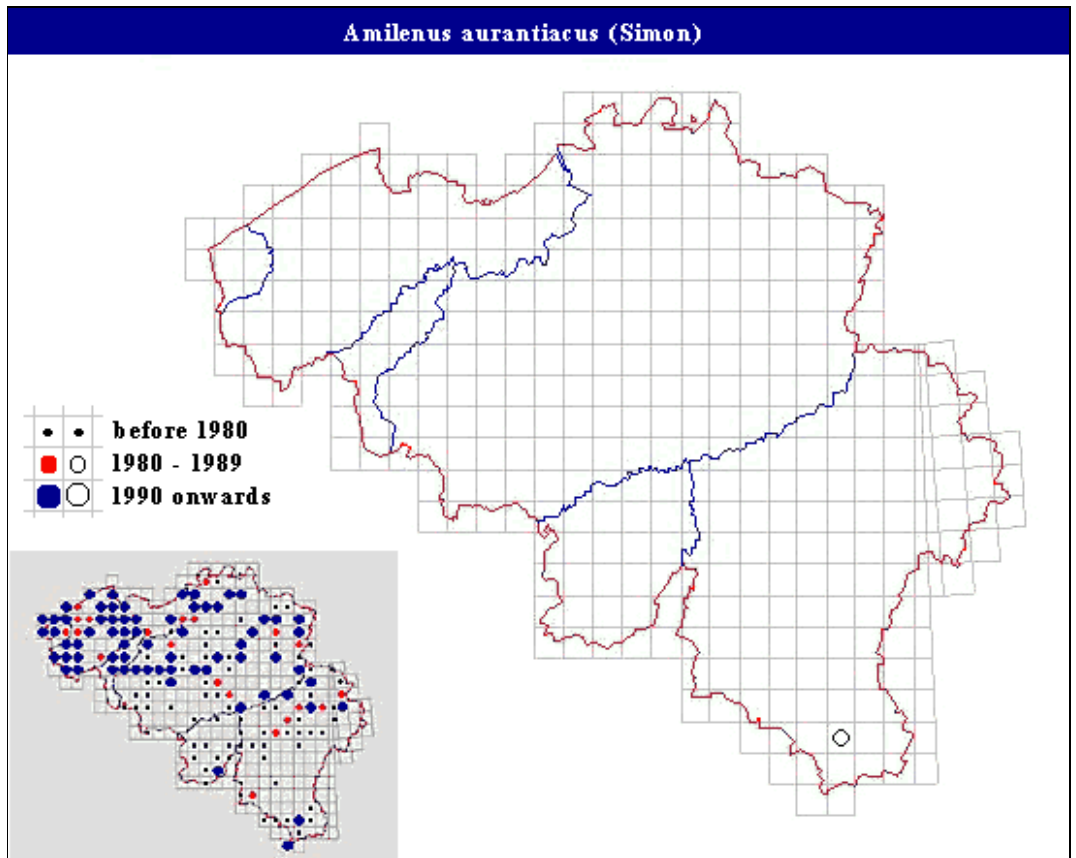


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Observations



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Observations**DS76**

VI-X.1996; Koksijde
leg. W. Slosse

DS66

X.1996; De Panne
leg. D. Bonte

ES17

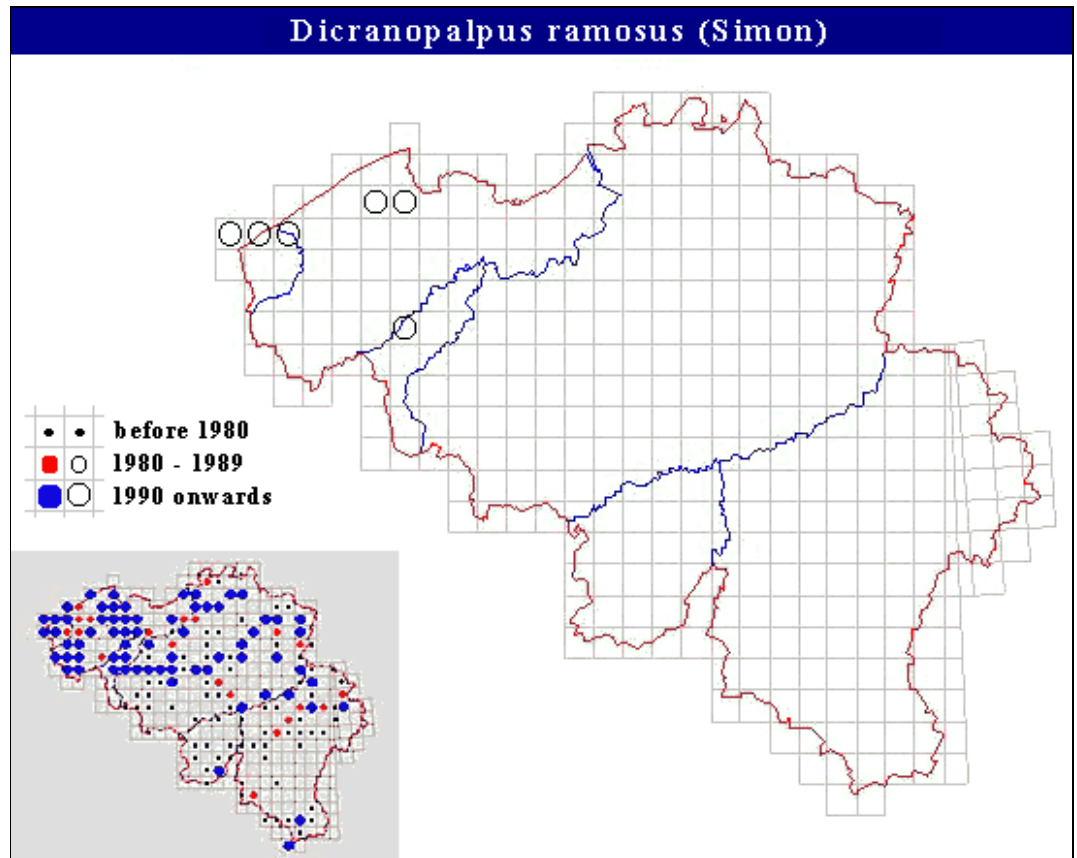
15.X.1995;
St-Andries-Brugge
leg. L. Vanhercke

ES27

11.X.1996; Ryckevelde
leg. I. Hoste

ES23

1997; several places
leg. M. Tailly



inset: latest sample in square; map based on data known in July 1998

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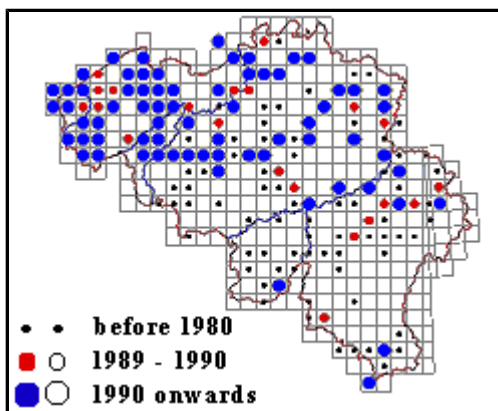
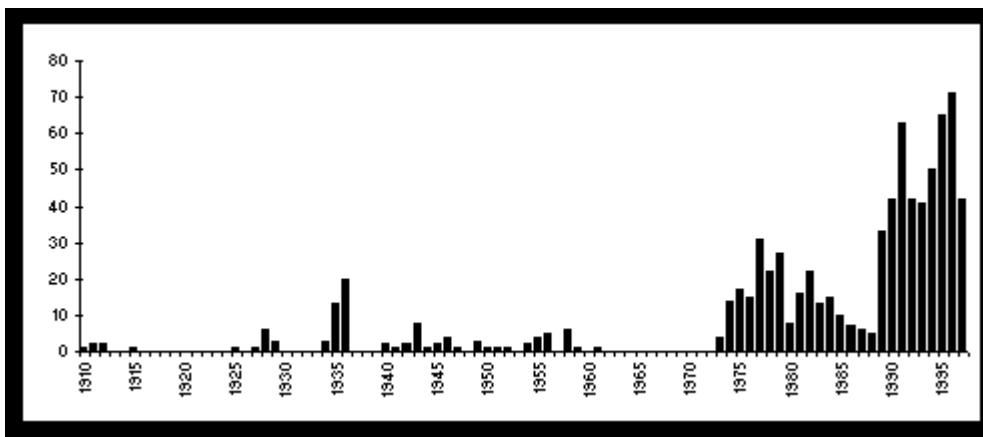
Opiliones in Belgium: a word about the samples

Our Opiliones clearly don't face extinction caused by intensive sampling.

The graph shows the number of samples from each year starting with the oldest bottle I have seen.

The first captured (and preserved in the collections in the Institute) is a male *Trogulus nepaeformis* taken on April 29th of 1910 in Hastière (UTM=FR26). There was no legit-name on the label.

This first male did not give birth to a wide interest in Belgian Opiliones. For many years harvestmen were only sampled by accident, it seems. It took sixty more years before they were studied on a more regular base. And even now the number of data is not really impressive. I resisted the temptation to add recent year-round pitfall actions: they count for only one sample.

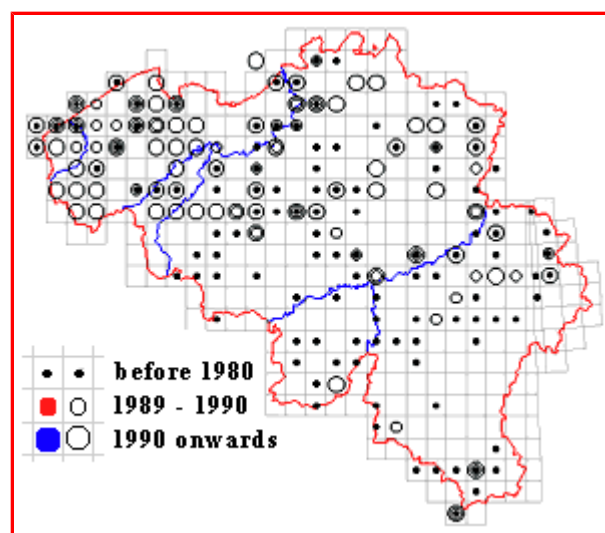


A further point is that we have almost no recent information on the southern part of the country.

My conclusion is that the maps on this site give only a picture of our sampling effort and nothing more. When a map shows a species present in some square, we know it is there. The reverse is not true.

Because we can safely state that we have no real information on the years before 1975, the

Although the situation did improve, we still have no reason for outburst in congratulations. The map (left) shows when a square has been sampled for the last time. For many squares this coincides with the first time! Check it out on the map below. Only 12 squares have been sampled in all three periods. A meagre 35 enjoyed two times the visit of an opilionologist.

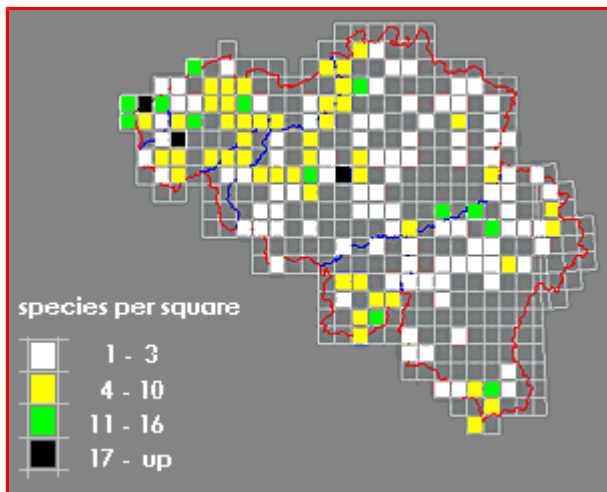


maps
are not suited for studies on trends.
Take f.e. Trogulus nepaeformis. The map
suggests
big succes for this formerly rare species.
You know better: we simply put some
targetted
pitfalls during 1997.

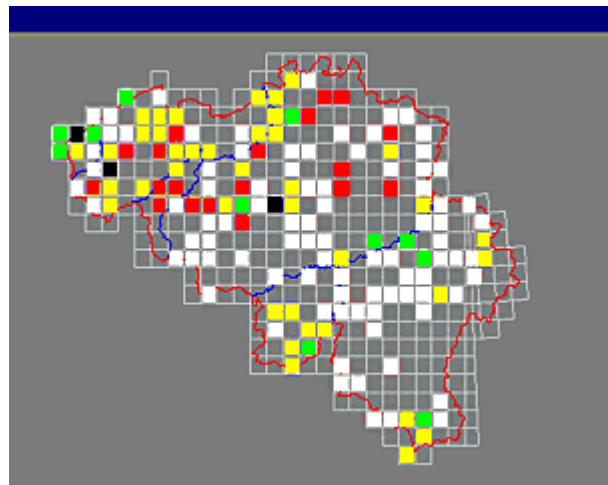
Path: [Home](#) / [Opiliones in Belgium](#) / Some words about the samples

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Opiliones in Belgium: number of species



Number of species in each square
Based on data known July 1998



Red squares have changed since september 1997
Number of species in each square as known in 1997
(below)

Really nothing exceptional if you remember the section on sampling. Most visited squares are sampled only once, and not with harvestmen in mind.

The extremely rich (black) squares are easily explained. They are (from left to right) where W. Slosse had pitfalls, where I had pitfalls during the eighties and where R. Kekenbosch still continues his pitfall campaign.

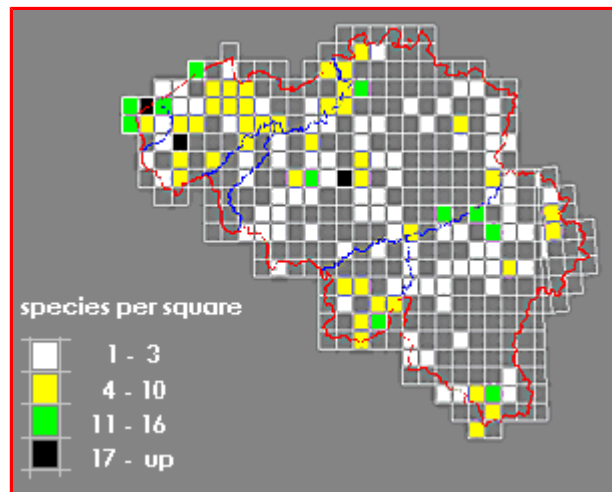
Green squares stand mostly for campaigns where the positioning of the pitfalls did not cover the whole diversity of the site.

Yellow squares are easy: use the umbrella, or visit a second time.

My conclusion is that the species richness as we see it today is a reflection of our sampling effort and nothing more.

Every species is probably present in every square.

I love numbers; show me the map with the numbers.

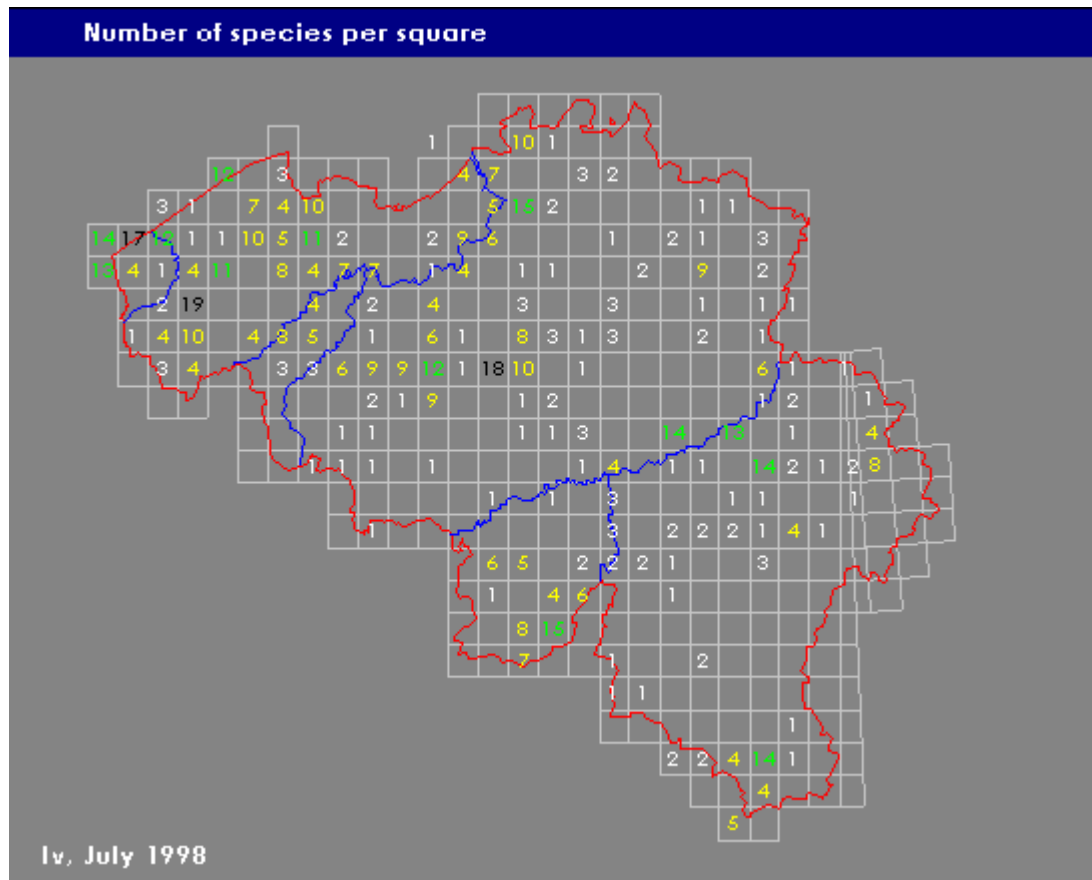


Path: [Home](#) / [Opiliones in Belgium](#) / map with number of species

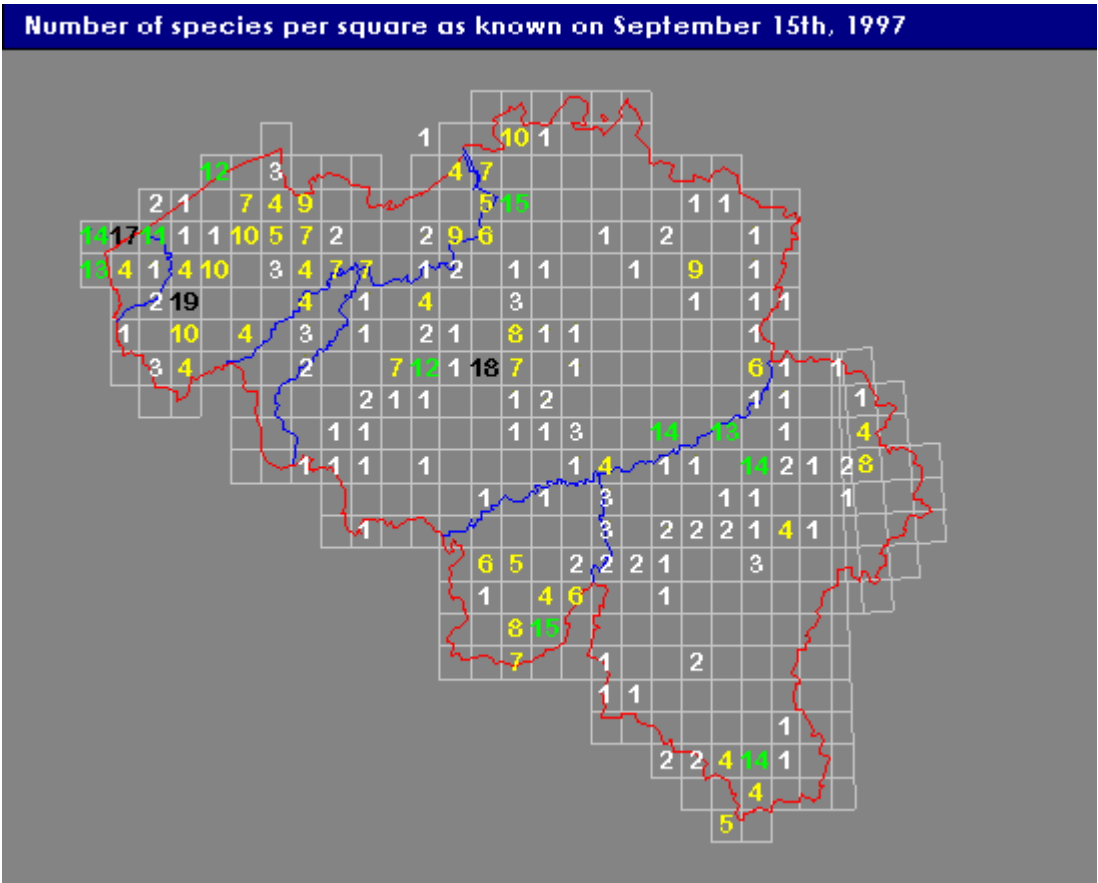
e-mail: [Luc Vanhercke](#)

Opiliones in Belgium: number of species

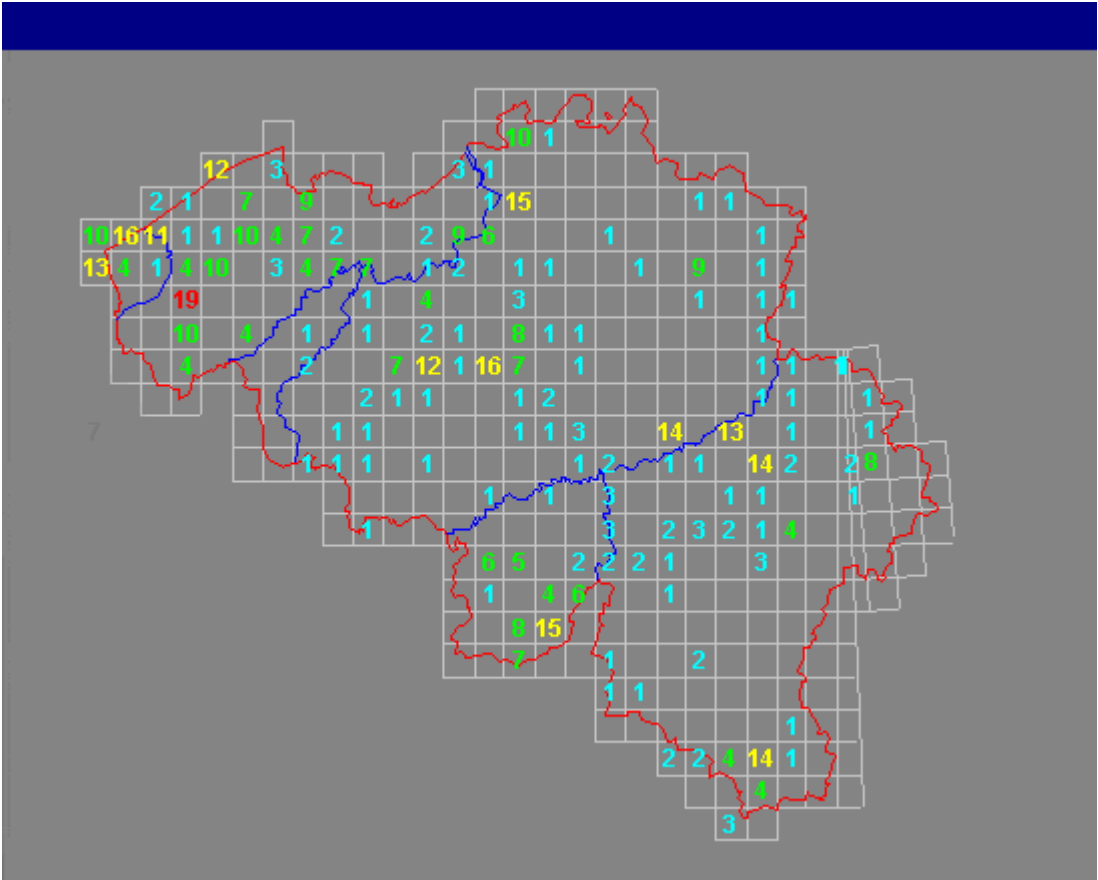
Map based on data known in July 1998



Map drawn on 15.IX.1997



Map drawn on 21.XI.1996





Opiliones in Belgium: The legit names

1910-1919	A. Koller (1915)
1920-1929	A. Ball (1925, 1928, 1929), A. Gillat (1927)
1930-1939	S. Jacquemart (1934, 1935, 1954, 1955), J.M. Vrijdagh (1936, 1956)
1940-1949	Catelin (1943), A. Collart (1941, 1942, 1943, 1946, 1949), R. Laurent (1940), N. Leleup (1946), G. Marlier (1947), J. Verschueren (1944)
1950-1959	G. Demoulin (1955), E. Derenne (1958), J. Doucet (1951, 1961), V. Hendrickx (1956), Hoevenagel (1959), D. Streel (1956), F. Van Camberg (1956)
1960 onward	A. Anselin, D. Bonte, R. Bosmans, K. Decler, K. Desender, P. Dessart, R. Detry, J. De Walsche, A. Doucet, J. Doucet, T. Dewitte, C. Fassotte, L. Giltay, R. Goossens, G. Haghebaert, I. Hoste, Dienst Huble, A. Huysseune, R. Kekenbosch, Liane, N. Magis, M. Meisch, A. Muylaert, M. Pollet, C. Puts, J. Schuyts, R. Segers, W. Slosse, M. Tailly, L. Vanhercke, H. Vanuytven, P. Verdyck, Wendelen.

Path: [Home](#) / [Opiliones in Belgium](#) / The legit names

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