



Source: VMM

Invertebrates tell a multifaceted story

Biological water quality is assessed using the *Belgian Biotic Index (BBI)*, an index based on the presence or absence of aquatic macro-invertebrates, bigger invertebrates which can be observed with the naked eye, such as insects (larvae), molluscs, crustaceans, worms, etc. The BBI assesses the quality of a watercourse as a biotope. The physico-chemical quality of the water column is but a part of that – albeit a very important part. The quality of the watercourse sediment and the structural characteristics of the watercourse are other important elements.

Biological quality still very insufficient

During the 2006 measurement campaign the BBI was determined at 660 measurement points. 30 % of the measurement points scored in the quality classes ‘good’ or ‘very good’ and therefore met the prescribed Flemish basic quality standard ($BBI \geq 7$). This 30 % is still a long way from the 40 % aimed for in 2007. The biological quality of nearly half of the measurement points (44 %) was average, while at 14 % of the measurement points the biological quality was poor. At approximately 11 % of the measurement points the biological quality was very poor. Since the beginning of the 1990s there has been a positive evolution, but in recent years very little improvement can be seen.