

## The return of the twaite shad in the Zeeschelde

Jan Breine<sup>1</sup>, Erika Van den Bergh<sup>1</sup>, Ine Pauwels<sup>1</sup>, Pieterjan Verhelst<sup>2</sup> and Johan Coeck<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Research Institute for Nature and Forest (INBO), Dwersbos 28, 1630 Linkebeek, Belgium  
E-mail: [jan.breine@inbo.be](mailto:jan.breine@inbo.be)

<sup>2</sup> Research Group Marine Biology, Gent University, Krijgslaan 281, 9000 Gent, Belgium

Twaite shad (*Allosa fallax*), an Annex species of the Habitats Directive, was reportedly extinct in the Schelde estuary. In March 1995 adult twaite shad was caught for the first time in the cooling water of the nuclear power station in Doel, after decades of complete absence of the species in the Zeeschelde. Regular fykenets sampling between Zandvliet and Kastel, started in 1995 and the first adult shad was landed in the 1996 surveys in Zandvliet. In the fresh water reaches volunteers caught the first adult in 2011. Since then shad catches increased yearly. In 2012 anchonet surveys caught the first juvenile shad, as evidence of reproduction in the estuary, and in 2014 spawning activities of twaite shad were observed between Branst and Briel. In 2015 we tagged 8 shads with V7 or V9 tags. A complex migration pattern between April 22th 2015 and June 28th 2015 was revealed. In the spring of 2016 many adult shads were caught again, some more specimens were tagged and with the help of many volunteers an attempt was made to map spawning activities in space and time.