

# Not 'Out of the Mire' Yet

Looking to a sustainable peatland future

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[iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org](http://iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org)



Exmoor Mires Partnership



Cranley Moss. C Bain

# A quick look back



## England Peat Action Plan

May 2021



Butterburn Flow. © Iain Dack



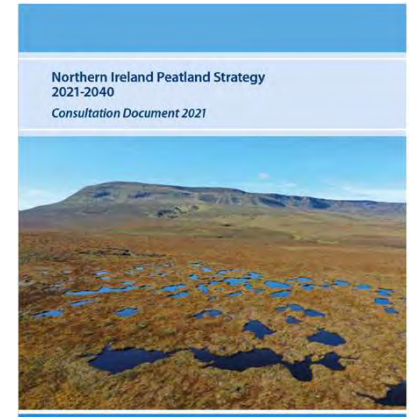
## National Peatland Action Programme, 2020-2025



Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru / Natural Resources Wales, 27 November 2020



## Scotland's National Peatland Plan Working for our future



## Northern Ireland Peatland Strategy 2021-2040 Consultation Document 2021

Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.



## UK PEATLAND STRATEGY

2018-2040

# UK Peatland Strategy and Four National Peatland Plans

## A world leading achievement

# UK Peatland



Convention on  
Biological Diversity



United Nations  
Convention to Combat  
Desertification



CONVENTION ON  
MIGRATORY  
SPECIES

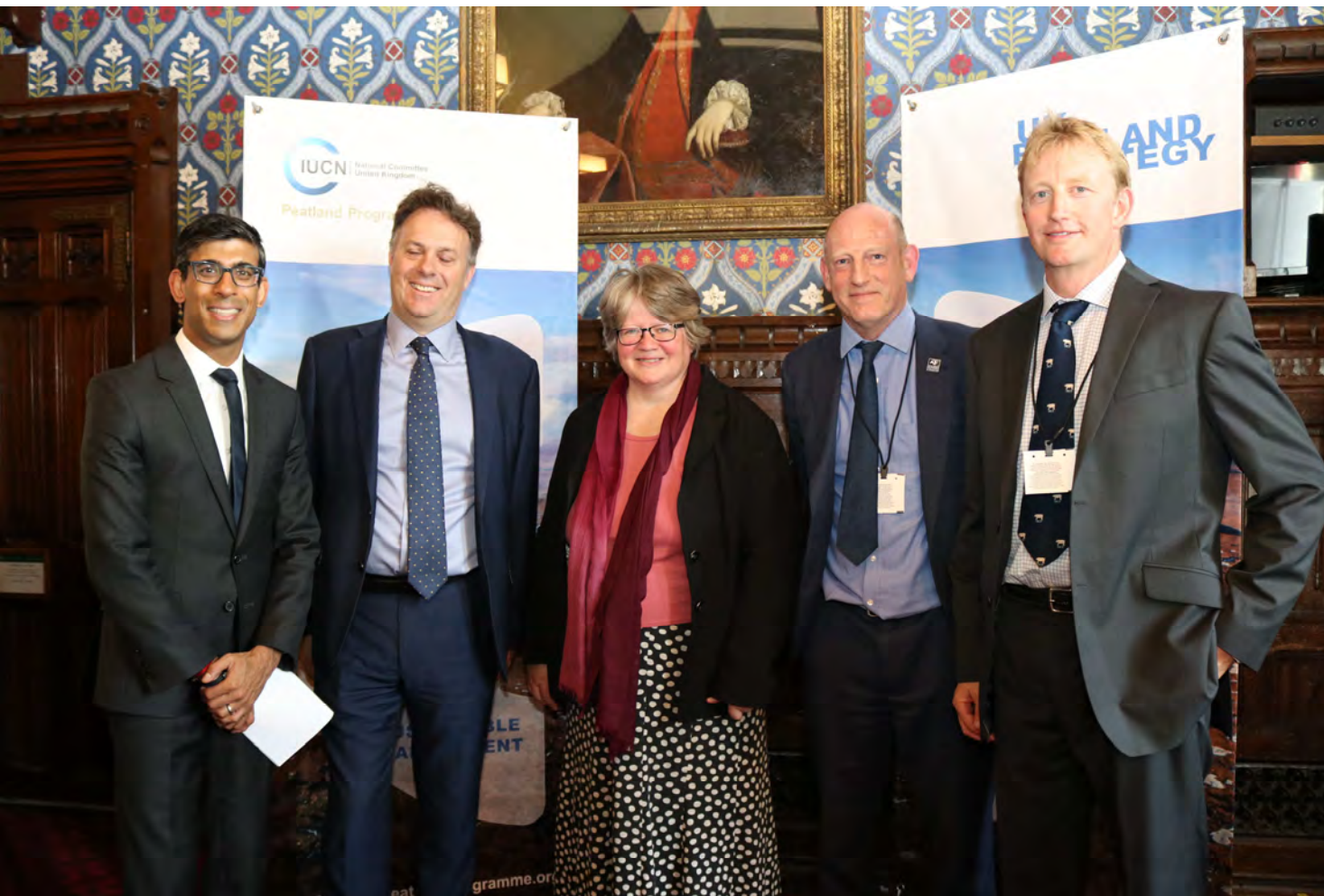


United Nations Framework  
Convention on Climate Change



SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS





Introduce politicians to peatlands early in their careers – you never know where they might end up!

Policy and advocacy depend on:

- Restoration demonstration
- Science and survey

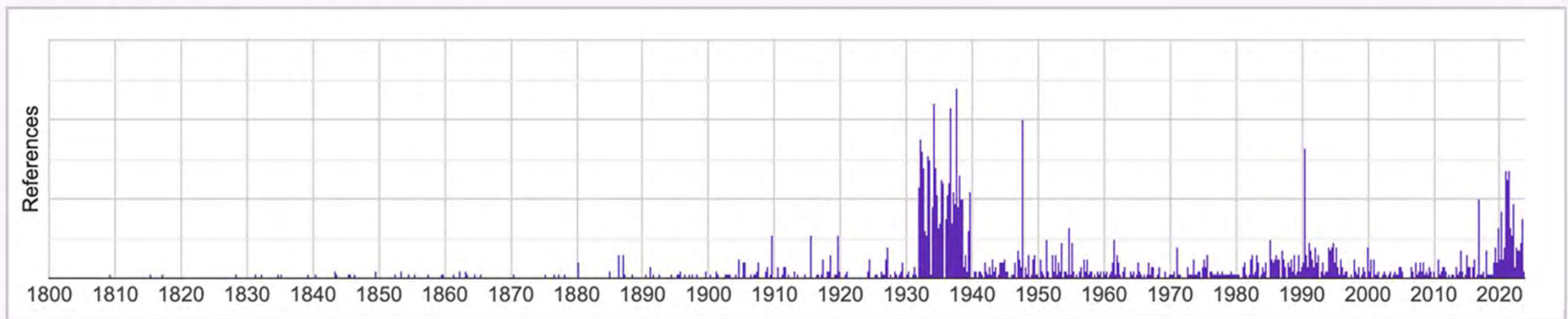




Interpreting the science and bringing field-based experience into an accessible form.

## References to 'Peat' in House of Commons and House of Lords

Results timeline ([accessibility information](#))



From Hansard  
<https://hansard.parliament.uk/search>





Where do we go  
next?

Photo: Pollardstown Fen. C Bain

2 million hectares of peatland in good condition by 2040  
Need to go beyond this to meet our 2050 climate targets

**We have a long way to go!**

25% of peatlands in good condition – State of Nature Report 2023

At current recovery rates – 30% by 2050

Our goal 60% by 2040

Cuilcagh Mountains. C Bain



# The Big Peatland Project – Never Mind the Barracks



Insh Marshes C Bain



Environment Minister visit to Chat Moss. Lancashire Wildlife Trust

[iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org](http://iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org)

## Give decision makers first-hand experience.

Convey the need to align policies and remove perverse incentives

Champion holistic, landscape scale planning

Explain the Big Picture rewards

Monitor and Report on progress

Public payments for public benefits  
vital for

- a) stopping the polarized farming/nature contrast
- b) securing long term commitment from land managers – ‘beyond restoration’





Peatland Programme

## Private Funding and Support alongside, not instead of public funding



PEATLAND  
CODE 

Common goals  
– different  
views on how  
to get there.

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## Skills capacity building

We need a growing peatland workforce to deliver our restoration goals and sustainably manage peatlands for the long term

Early peatland learning

Ongoing training and skills improvement for those delivering peatland goals – across public bodies advisors and practitioners.



Long term monitoring plots: Looking back as well as forward

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# A growing team 2009 – 2023 and a growing partnership



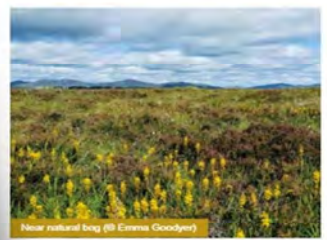


PEAT-FREE HORTICULTURE — DEMONSTRATING SUCCESS

The natural formation of peat is very slow, typically with less than 1mm per year in the UK. Commercial peat extraction is capable of removing thousands of years of peat growth over a few years. Even if a commercially worked peatland is restored, there is no prospect of replacing the peat that has been removed in human lifetimes. Peat extraction is therefore unsustainable.



Peatlands can be restored with the raising of water tables, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and supporting recovery of peatland vegetation and associated wildlife. The UK has many good examples of peatland restoration (Cris et al 2011) including rewetting of former peat extraction sites. The potential for successful recovery of damaged peatlands does not justify further peat extraction as the full range of species and habitats is slow to recover, if it does at all, and the archaeological resource is lost for ever. The sooner restoration can be initiated, the greater the chance of success.





## The Historic Environment





Wicklow Mountains C Bain