



## Peatlands and the climate emergency

2019 has seen all four devolved governments across the UK declare a climate emergency which will require urgent action and a dramatic reduction in the UK's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to reach a target of Net Zero by 2050 (2045 in Scotland). GHG emissions from UK peatlands are estimated to contribute [around 4% of the UK's total annual greenhouse gas \(GHG\) emissions](#) and therefore represent a significant opportunity to reduce emissions through restoration activity. The four main UK political parties, excluding nationalist parties, register the importance of restoring natural habitats in their Manifesto's with three out of the four specifically featuring "peatland restoration" promises. [Read more...](#)



### Peatlands: Investing in the Future - 9th in IUCN UK Peatland Programme Conference Series

The 2019 IUCN UK Peatland Programme conference welcomed 221 delegates over the three day event held at the Europa Hotel, Belfast. This year we're delighted to broaden our audience reach – with 55% of delegates attending an IUCN UK Peatland Programme conference for the first time.

Working in partnership with the [DAERA](#), [Pennine PeatLIFE](#) and [Northern Ireland Water](#) the event provided a forum for policy makers, scientists, land managers, practitioners, businesses and communicators to connect and share their knowledge, expertise and enthusiasm for peatlands. Delegates felt the conference provided an important convening function (96%) at which they learnt something new about peatlands (94%), met new people and made new contacts (100%)\*figures based on 49 responses to a post-event survey available to all delegates.

[Presentations from the conference are available here.](#)

Image above *left to right*: The conference included peatland field trips © *Dana Thomas*, a formal networking evening at Stormont Parliament Buildings sponsored by Cathal Boylan, Sinn Féin

## Our news



### Commission of Inquiry Update

The [Commission of Inquiry](#) process began in 2011 to highlight the degree of damage to UK peatlands, the scale of restoration needed and the challenges which remain. The process itself helped to build consensus across the scientific, policy and practice communities and set out recommendations and a clear strategy for action to bring UK peatlands back into health and to outline a way forwards to avoid further damage and deterioration.

8 years on from the initial inquiry, there have been significant changes in government and policy and the original 2011 report is in need of an [update](#) to refresh the evidence base – adding additional topics and new scientific evidence where relevant; inform the next government spending review and support the current policy interest in peatlands and support long-term, future delivery of peatland restoration and sustainable management.

We were delighted to be able to share summaries of the six scientific topic reports, the findings of which will feed into the main Commission of Inquiry report alongside wider practical and policy contexts at the [IUCN UK Peatland Programme Conference](#) ([click for presentations from the report authors](#)).

Following panel review we aim to publish the Commission of Inquiry Update report in Spring 2020. [Download summaries of the topic reports or feed into the main Commission of Inquiry report update.](#)

### European Peatland Strategies workshop - Bonn, Germany (28th - 29th October 2019)

Over 30 representatives from across 12 European countries attended a workshop to examine existing and developing national peatland strategies. Emma Goodyer (IUCN UK Peatland Programme Manager) and Steven Grady (IUCN UK National Committee Chair and EU Policy Advisor for the JNCC) attended the workshop to feed in experiences of developing and delivering strategic action for the UK's peatlands.

[Read full article...](#)

## Investing in the future: IUCN UK Peatland Programme

The IUCN UK Peatland Programme is delighted to welcome [Baillie Gifford](#), global investment managers, as a new sponsor. Alongside current funders, Baillie Gifford's support will help the Programme make a [real positive difference to peatland restoration and conservation in the UK](#).

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## Partner highlights

### What's the connection between peat and fish?

#### A Peatland ACTION case study

Peatland restoration at [Dryhope Farm on the Philipphaugh Estate](#) (the first peatland restoration site validated under the [Peatland Code](#) for its climate benefits) to bring wider benefits to the Tweed Catchment including helping to keep the river and its tributaries - which provide vital spawning grounds for trout and salmon - in a healthy condition. [Read full article](#) by Peatland Action project officer Rachel Coyle from the Tweed Forum.

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#### Short-eared owl



### New breeding bird survey shows positive trend in endangered species numbers in Peak District National Park

The survey, which took place in 2018, and previously in 1990 and 2004, was carried out by Moors for the Future Partnership in collaboration with Peak District land owners and land managers. The British Trust for Ornithology analysed the survey results and drew comparisons to the previous two surveys to give an insight into breeding bird populations, and the influence of key factors. These factors include land use, land management and habitat conditions and types.

The results show an increase in the numbers of key moorland species over the last 30 years; 21 out of the 29 species surveyed have increased in abundance. The curlew, which experienced a decline of 48% nationally between 1995 and 2017, increased 252% between 1990 and 2018 in the Peak District. [Read full article...](#)

#### Teacher's peat

[Yorkshire Peat Partnership](#) (YPP) is working with



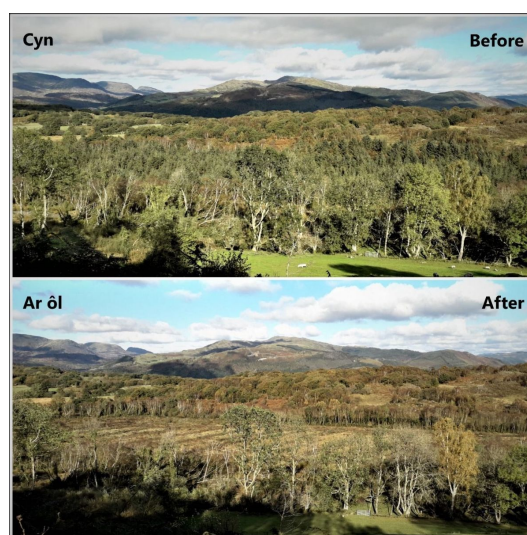


the [Welsh Peatlands Action Group](#) (WPAG) to address the pressing need for an accredited peatland restoration and sustainable management training programme. The programme, which is the first of its kind, will be delivered by YPP and developed with input from peatland managers in Wales as part of the Welsh Peatlands Sustainable Management Scheme – a national partnership project funded by the Welsh Government's Rural Development Programme. It will cover the diverse range of skills practitioners need to enable Welsh peatlands to enter in to sustainable management, and will be accredited by Lantra. YPP hope to deliver the programme in Wales by May 2020. *Image: Bog asphodel, Snowdon © Marian Pye*

### Working together for the future of Welsh peatlands

A major programme of works is underway this season to restore peatlands across Wales. A large proportion of the 90,000 hectares of peat soils found in Wales are in unfavourable condition, so the Welsh Peatlands Sustainable Management Scheme (SMS) project is working with a host of conservation organisations, landowners, schools and stakeholders to tackle there peatlands and enthuse and educate the next generation. [Read full article...](#)

*Image: Forest-to-bog restoration on deep peat in Snowdonia. [Watch the full time lapse here](#)*  
*Marian Pye, Snowdonia National Park Authority.*

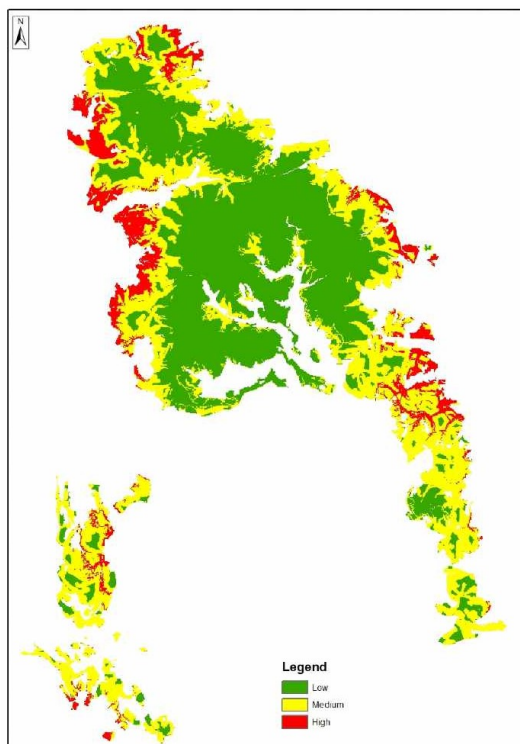


### Record-breaking results for youth climate action in the Peak District

[MICCI, the Moorland Indicators of Climate Change Initiative](#), took place in September this year and traded heavy rain and snow for (mostly) sunshine. Having previously battled the elements in March, the change in weather awarded the MICCI sessions with record levels of activity.

The initiative is a UK-wide project giving secondary school students the opportunity to take part in real-world climate science. Moors for the Future Partnership has been leading MICCI sessions for young people since 2008, offering students the opportunity to take part in ten different experiments designed to see how peatlands are changing over time. MICCI also explores scientific methods in the field and the relationship between weather, climate changes, carbon and water cycles, plants and wildlife – and the human environment. The sessions included five groups from across the Peak District, collecting a range of data about the health of the moorlands. School students were involved in a range of moorland monitoring activities including testing water quality, water table, vegetation and habitat – including a visit to

Harland Brook to find it swarming with four-spot orb-web spiders. See how [young people can get involved](#).



**New maps highlight the most up to date information about wildfire ignition across the Peak District and South Pennine peatlands.**

Taking into account the latest data on wildfire ignition, the maps bring wildfire risk maps up to date. The maps have been produced using data from Moors for the Future Partnership's newly updated wildfire database, which aims to collect comprehensive information about moorland wildfires across the Peak District and South Pennine moors.

The maps show that over time, the places that wildfires are starting has changed. In contrast to the past, when wildfires were more likely to start on high moorland areas, fires are now more likely to start on the fringes of moorland.

For use by firefighting teams and FOG (Fire Operations Groups) groups, these maps will also be used to plan education and public engagement to prevent wildfires. [Read full report...](#)

The [Yorkshire Integrated Catchment Solutions Programme](#) (iCASP) are supporting Natural England with their [Peat Pilot in the North York Moors](#). The North York Moors pilot project will be looking at how novel restoration techniques can be used, as well as examining data on peat depths and extent. Drawing upon our development of the [User Guide for Valuing the Benefits of Peatland Restoration](#) which has been downloaded by peatland restoration practitioners across the EU and as far afield as Australia, Indonesia and Chile, iCASP have supported Natural England by reviewing and informing the scope of their tender for the pilot work to be carried out. We hope to work with the successful contractor to look at methodology and review this as the project progresses.

### **Peatland restoration of the Cheviot reaches new heights in battle against Climate Change**

A major peatland restoration project on the summit of the Cheviot, the highest peak in Northumberland National Park, is underway to prevent an estimated 585 tonnes of carbon dioxide being released into the atmosphere each year – equivalent to the greenhouse gases emitted by an average car travelling 1.43 million miles. [Read full article](#) from Northumberland National Park Authority, part of the North of England Peat Partnership.

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## **Vacancies - research opportunities and jobs**

**PhD opportunity:** QUADRAT DTP: Assessing the restoration of UK Carbon sinks using geophysics and microbiology. Assessing microbial and geophysical mechanisms to ensure the successful restoration of peatlands by monitoring actively accumulating, degrading and restored peatland locations. Queen's University Belfast. [Details](#)

**PhD opportunity:** The Legal Protection of Peatlands in Wales with Swansea University Research Excellence Scholarships (SURES) - exploring ways in which current approaches to environmental protection support or, indeed, provide a barrier to the effective sustainable management of peatlands. [Details](#)

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## **Events**

### **UN Climate Change Conference including the 25th session of the Conference of Parties (COP25)**

**2nd - 13th December**

"The conference is designed to take the next crucial steps in the UN climate change process. Following agreement on the implementation guidelines of the Paris Agreement at COP 24 in Poland last year, a key objective is to complete several matters with respect to the full operationalization of the Paris Climate Change Agreement." [UNFCCC](#). See @UNFCCCwebcast for live broadcasts. [See more information](#). Mark Reed (IUCN UK Peatland Programme and Newcastle University) will join a host of organisations including Global Peatlands Initiative and Griefswald Mire Centre to highlight bringing science to policy for climate change and peatland management. [More information about peatland focused side events](#).

### **Flow Country Research Conference 6: Understanding Dynamics**

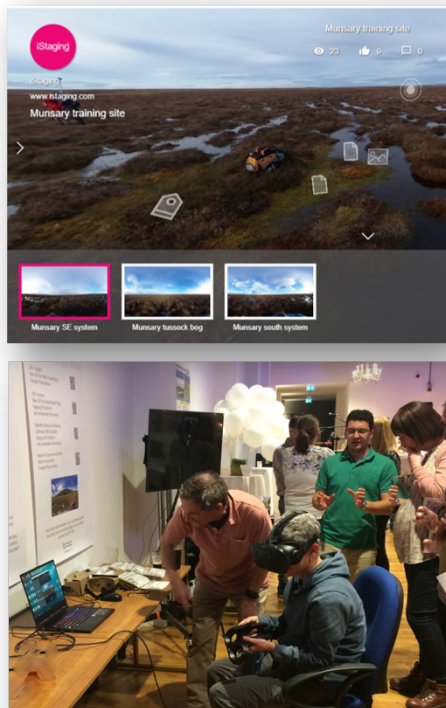
**17th March 2020**

The 6th Flow Country Research Conference will explore peatland processes, resilience & dynamics under climate and land use change. [Full details...](#)

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## New resources



### Bringing the outdoors in: Virtual Reality provides a useful tool for assessing peatlands.

Virtual Reality (VR) and 3D views can be used to generate useful descriptions of peatland sites. Virtual reality images are being used in combination with 3D views and a site assessment matrix to gain good baseline characterisation of peat bogs. Developed by Richard Lindsay, University of East London, several bogs can now be explored through Virtual Reality - providing not only tool for monitoring but a new way of inspiring people to explore peatlands.

[Instructions to view](#) Esgryn Bottom, Carmel, Waun Ddu and Rhos Goch part of the LIFE+ New LIFE for Welsh Raised Bogs project; Plantlife's Munsary Peatlands, Caithness and Hard Hill Experimental Plots on Moor House.

### Scoping study: proposed training opportunities in peatland management

There is a recognised need to embed peatland learning and training in education not only to share understanding of the importance of UK peatlands to broad audiences but to inspire peatland managers of the future.

A Scoping Study has been undertaken to investigate opportunities to provide peatland learning opportunities to school and further education (FE) school/college partnership students within local communities across a National scale. [Read Scoping study & proposed pilot project.](#)



### 5 Things home gardeners can do to address problems with peat

[Listen](#) to the podcast to find out what peat is and why it's used in compost, what the problems are with peat extraction and 5 things that you can do as a home gardener to resolve these problems. [Read full](#)

[article...](#)

The episode is written, hosted and produced by [Dr Fay Edwards](#) and features appearances from [Dr Flo Renou-Wilson](#) (research scientist, University College Dublin), Craig Macadam (Conservation Director, [Buglife](#)), Chris Dean (Partnership Manager, [Moors for the Future Partnership](#) and IUCN UK Peatland Programme Steering Group Member) and Jane Barker (Owner, [Dalefoot Composts](#)).

See more information on [peat-free products](#).

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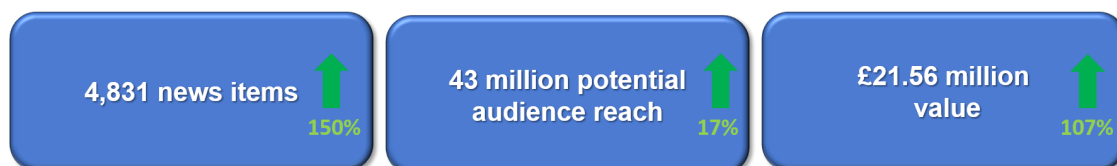
## 10 years of restoring Yorkshire's upland peatlands

Yorkshire Peat Partnership (YPP) has reported on its considerable achievements over its first 10 years; the report looks at surveying, restoration, monitoring, research and funding. YPP began in 2009 as an umbrella organisation to try to coordinate the restoration of the badly degraded peatlands in the uplands of northern Yorkshire. YPP has since developed into the primary organisation coordinating the delivery of upland peatland restoration across the Yorkshire Dales National Park, Nidderdale AONB, North York Moors National Park and northern parts of the South Pennines

[Full report](#) [Summary report](#)

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## Peatlands in the news...



\*Compared to 2018

So far this year press monitoring from the following media types: Internet; UK Newspapers (Nationals & Regionals) and Magazines (Consumer, Trade & Overseas and Business) based on the following Keywords: Peatland; IUCN; Peatland Programme; International Bog Day; Peatland Code; UK Peatland Strategy & World Wetlands Day has identified 4,831 new items, already a 150% increase from 2018, with an estimated 43 million potential audience reach and a total news value of £21.56 million.

## In other news...

- **Cash incentive for landowners to restore peatland**, *Farming UK* (19/07/2019)  
[https://www.farminguk.com/News/cash-incentive-for-landowners-to-restore-peatland\\_53502.html](https://www.farminguk.com/News/cash-incentive-for-landowners-to-restore-peatland_53502.html) See [press release](#) which also featured in the: *Somerset County Gazette*; *South West Farmer*; *Smallholder*; *Poultry News*; *Food Farming Futures*; *Farmers Weekly Interactive*; *Western Morning News*; *The Scottish Farmer*; *HortNews*; *Western Daily Press*; *Darlington And Stockton Times*; *Poultry Business*; *AgriLand*; *The Countryman and Country Smallholding*.
- **Growing media category is ripe for growth as suppliers get ready to unveil latest eco-friendly compost formulations**, *Local Gardener Newspaper* (24/07/2019)  
<https://localgardener.org/blog/growing-media-category-is-ripe-for-growth-as-suppliers-get-ready-to-unveil-latest-eco-friendly-compost-formulations/>



- **Wetland crops such as bulrushes could help cut carbon emissions**, *South West Farmer* (43677) <https://www.southwestfarmer.co.uk/news/17805947.wetland-crops-bulrushes-help-cut-carbon-emissions-says-bcn-wildlife-trust/>
- **South Wales"s `lost peatlands" given new lease of life**, *Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council* (28/08/2019) [https://www.npt.gov.uk/1410?pr\\_id=6283](https://www.npt.gov.uk/1410?pr_id=6283)
- **Letter: "Gardeners - please ditch the peat this year"**, *Stourbridge News* (30/08/2019) <http://www.stourbridgenews.co.uk/news/17865765.letter-quot-gardeners---please-ditch-peat-year-quot/>
- **Amenity trust to stage `peatbog restoration day" at Sandy Loch**, *Shetland Times* (17/09/2019) <https://www.shetlandtimes.co.uk/2019/09/17/amenity-trust-to-stage-peatbog-restoration-day-at-sandy-loch>
- **Boost for peatland restoration works in the Highlands**, *Press and Journal (Aberdeen)* (30/09/2019) <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/highlands/1854296/boost-for-peatland-restoration-works-in-the-highlands/>
- **Conference calls for investment in peatlands**, *Hexham Courant & Cumberland and Westmorland Herald* 08/10/2019 <https://www.hexhamcourant.co.uk/news/17954294.conference-calls-investment-peatlands/>
- **Distillery launch UK"s first true wild gin in fight against climate change**, *FMCG Magazine* (14/10/2019) <http://fmcmagazine.co.uk/distillery-launch-uks-first-true-wild-gin-in-fight-against-climate-change/>
- **Scotland"s Green Investment Portfolio: call for projects**, *The Institute of Historic Building Conservation* (18/10/2019) <https://ihbconline.co.uk/newsarchive/?p=24261>
- **Drying peatlands could release carbon, worsening climate change, according to scientists**, *CountryLife Online* (22/10/2019) <https://www.countrylife.co.uk/news/drying-peatlands-release-carbon-worsening-climate-change-according-scientists-206212>
- **Record dryness of European peatlands**, *SciTech Europa* (24/10/2019) <https://www.scitecheuropa.eu/record-dryness-of-european-peatlands/97926/>
- **Caithness and Sutherland Flow Country hub shortlisted in nature awards**, *Northern Times* (02/11/2019) <https://www.northern-times.co.uk/news/caithness-and-sutherland-flow-country-hub-shortlisted-in-nature-awards-185529/>
- **Shooting on yorkshire Water Land**, *Yorkshire Water* (11/11/2019) <https://www.yorkshirewater.com/shooting>
- **The Landscapes Review - The Future of National Parks is in Our Hands**, *UKHillwalking & UKClimbing.com* (14/11/2019) [https://www.ukclimbing.com/articles/opinions/the\\_landscapes\\_review\\_-\\_the\\_future\\_of\\_national\\_parks\\_is\\_in\\_our\\_hands-12373](https://www.ukclimbing.com/articles/opinions/the_landscapes_review_-_the_future_of_national_parks_is_in_our_hands-12373)
- **New report: Single Scottish wildfire could have doubled Scotland's Climate emissions for the six days it burnt**, *WWF UK* (18/11/2019) <https://www.wwf.org.uk/updates/new-report-single-scottish-wildfire-could-have-doubled-scotlands-climate-emissions-six-days>
- **New report sets out environmental impact of peatland wildfire**, *John O' Groat Journal* (18/11/2019) <https://www.johnogroat-journal.co.uk/news/new-report-sets-out-environmental-impact-of-peatland-wildfire-186456/>
- **NFU media coverage: Livestock farming**, *NFU Online* (25/11/2019) <https://www.nfuonline.com/news/latest-news/nfu-media-coverage-livestock-farming/>
- **Manifesto environment plans: here"s how each party has pledged to tackle climate change in their general election policies**, *iNews* (28/11/2019) <https://inews.co.uk/news/politics/manifesto-environment-plans-climate-change-general-election-2019-party-policies-1327435>

\*This list is by no means comprehensive, nor are these stories endorsements from the Programme, but for your information only.

**The next edition of the Newsletter is due out in February. To submit articles please email: [info@iucn.org.uk](mailto:info@iucn.org.uk)**

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