



**Press Release**

**22<sup>nd</sup> July 2021**

## **Celebrating Bog Day – How will you spend yours?**

For some of us every day is [Bog Day](#). For others Bog Day comes around just once a year on the fourth Sunday in July.

This annual event is an opportunity to explore and celebrate the brilliance of bogs, fens, swamps & marshes – all different types of peatlands.

Covering 10% of the UK land area, from Exmoor Mires in the south of England to the Flow Country in the north of Scotland and from the Great Fens in the east to Snowdonia, Wales and Cuilcagh, Northern Ireland in the west peatlands are an important feature of some of the UK's best known and most visited green spaces: national parks; nature reserves; walking routes and wildlife watching hotspots and as such are important spaces for nature on our doorsteps.

Peatlands include the largest remaining semi-natural habitats in the UK supporting much of our rarest and most threatened biodiversity. Below the surface they are also powerhouses of carbon storage - storing a third of the world's soil carbon yet covering just 3% of the global land surface. Whilst the benefits that peatlands provide extend far beyond carbon storage it is a feature that can be robustly measured and one which has been brought into sharp focus in recent years with the growing climate crisis. Sue White of Shetland Amenity Trust said "Peatlands are home to sphagnum moss which not only holds huge amounts of water, it also sucks carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere and locks it into the peat as carbon - so it's the perfect solution to combatting climate change."

As long as peatlands remain saturated, with the water table within 10 cm of the surface, they remain essentially carbon neutral and in the long-term have a strong cooling effect on the climate. Unfortunately, 80% of peatlands in the UK are not in a stable state and are rapidly losing their carbon store as, among other things, oxidised carbon – CO<sub>2</sub>. Damaged peatlands are currently responsible for 4% of the UK's total annual greenhouse gas emissions. Peatland restoration can rapidly reduce carbon emissions from a site and is increasingly recognised as a climate mitigation tool for the UK. Patrick Scheel, United Nations Environment Programme said "Peatlands are the past and the future, they store the history of thousands of years of carbon accumulation and hold the key to solve the climate crisis. Let's take action together and let's keep the carbon locked in the peatlands."

Peatland Restoration can also protect homes and livelihoods from larger magnitude flood and wildfire events, with healthy peatlands aiding natural flood management and mitigating wildlife risk when compared to damaged peatlands. There is also a tangible benefit to the provision of drinking water for peatland dominated catchments.

Peatlands are amazing natural places that provide a multitude of benefits for people and wildlife. Sarah Proctor of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's UK Peatland Programme said: "Peatlands are an important part of our natural jigsaw – they can tell us about our past, they can help us enjoy the present and they can help save our future". Bog Day is a great opportunity to discover your local peatland either in-person or [virtually](#) from the comfort of your own home. Across the UK and internationally on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> July the peatland community will be celebrating the brilliance of peatlands, the benefits they provide, the threats they face and the ways we can all help to protect them. Whether you join the [Moors for the Future Partnership](#) team going [Bogtastic](#) in their interactive van, work through the [The CANN Project](#)'s Peaty A-Z, join peatland scientists for an online storytelling evening of [Bog Tales](#), choose this Sunday to embrace [peat-free gardening](#) or visit your local peatland, everyone can celebrate Bog Day.

## Notes to Editors

The IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) UK Peatland Programme exists to promote peatland restoration in the UK and advocates the multiple benefits of peatlands through partnerships, strong science, sound policy and effective practice. The work of the IUCN UK Peatland Programme is overseen by a coalition of [partner](#) bodies.

Peatlands cover around 3% of the land surface of the Earth yet they contain twice as much carbon as the world's forests. *Huge areas of bog have been drained and damaged in the past, and the carbon that was locked in the peat for thousands of years is now rapidly being released to the atmosphere.* Damaged peatlands are responsible for at least 10% of the world's carbon dioxide emissions. The UK is one of the world's top twelve countries in terms of peatland area, out of 175 nations with peat deposits and is in the top 20 countries with the most damaged peatlands. *Restoring peatlands is an effective and cost efficient way of reversing the carbon loss from damaged bogs.*

For more information visit [www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org](http://www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org).



Virtually Explore [Carmel, Waun Ddu and Rhos Goch](#), Wales with the NEW LIFE for Welsh Raised Bogs peatlands team.