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2021 is full of promise. This year marks the start of the United Nations (UN) [Decade on Restoration](#) and will see the UK host a major climate change summit, [COP26](#). It is a year in which the world will also convene in China for the Fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, [COP15](#).

Peatlands, and their restoration, are at heart of the global climate and biodiversity crises. The UK peatland community have a wealth of knowledge, expertise and case-studies that demonstrate peatland conservation and restoration progress to date and highlight future goals and the resources needed to achieve these. The [10th annual IUCN UK Peatland Programme Conference](#) once again provided an opportunity for peatland scientists, practitioners and policy makers to share their knowledge, expertise and enthusiasm for peatlands as a UK and international community. [All conference sessions are available to watch here.](#)

Reflections from the 10th IUCN UK Peatland Programme Conference

Delivered in partnership with the [Welsh Sustainable Management Scheme project](#), the IUCN UK PP 2020 Conference '[Peatlands: from strategy to action](#)', was our first all-virtual event and proved to be a considerable success, attracting over 420 attendees from across 17 countries (see below). Continually building on the success of previous [conferences in the series](#) the accessible format of this event enabled the audience to double in size, with 60% of delegates attending the series for the first time and with a broader international reach. With such a wide-reaching audience, this was an excellent opportunity to gain a broad insight into the issues, challenges and successes across the peatland community in the UK and internationally.

Here we present some of the key overarching items that arose during the conference presentations and discussions... [continue reading.](#)

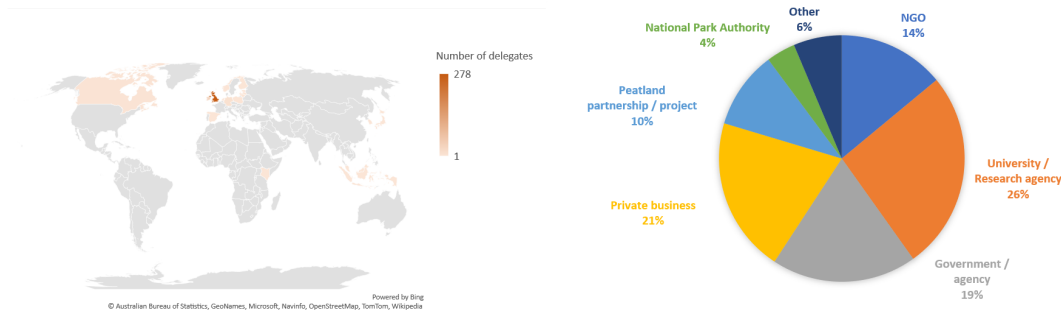


Figure 1: Global distribution (*left*) and organisational representation (*right*, $n=182$) of conference delegates

Peatland addition to the UK GHG inventory adds 3.5% to national emissions

The end of January saw the long awaited, formal inclusion of peatlands in the UK GHG emissions inventory. Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) released '[Planned methodology changes for UK greenhouse gas emissions statistics 1990-2019](#)'. The report summarises that inclusion of new peatland data increases their contribution to national emissions to 3.5% (as opposed to 2.3% reported in the 1990 baseline). [Read more...](#)



Defra announce plans to prevent burning of vegetation on protected blanket bog habitats

This month's announcement from Defra that the government plans to bring forward legislation to prevent the burning of heather and other vegetation on protected blanket bog habitats aligns with the key principles, set out in the [IUCN UK Peatland Programme Position Statement](#), that burning is damaging to peatlands and hinders peatland restoration.

Over the coming months the detail of legislation around the licensing of burning on peatlands is due for release in Scotland (February) and England (April). [Read more...](#)

International expert on peatlands awarded MBE

[Professor Chris Evans](#), a biogeochemist who has worked at the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH) for more than 20 years, was recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours List in 2020, for services to ecosystem science.

"I am just one among many hard-working scientists who are trying to provide the scientific understanding we urgently need to manage our planet sustainably" **Professor Chris Evans** [Read more...](#)

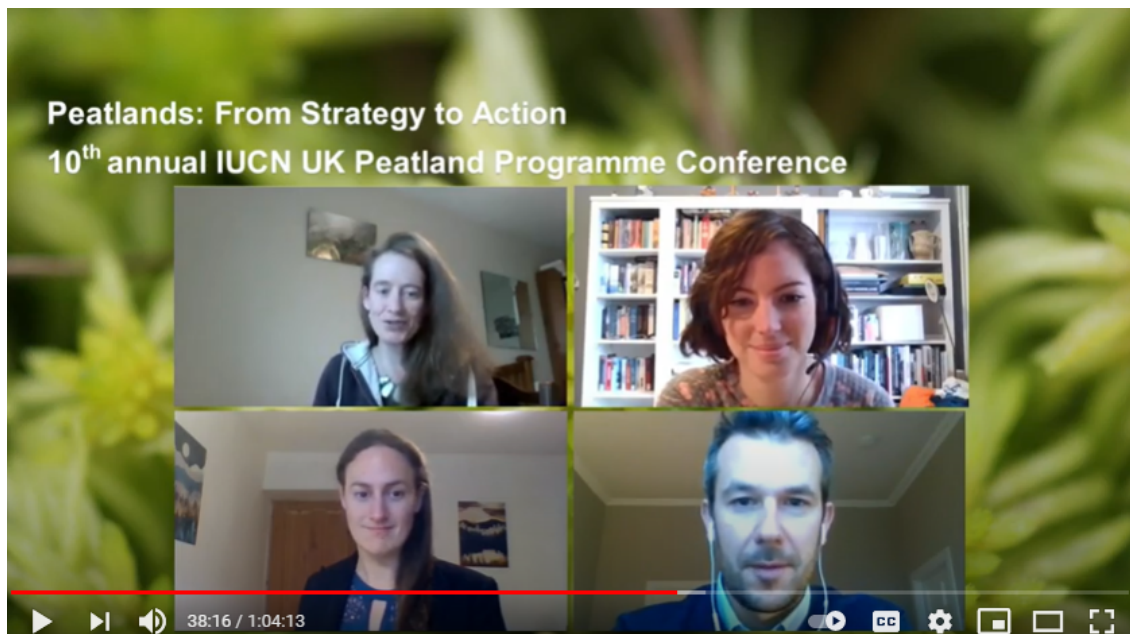


Our news

UK Land Carbon Registry launched

2020 saw the launch of the [UK Land Carbon Registry](#)- a joint platform with the Woodland Carbon Code so that all UK Land Carbon Projects can now be viewed and managed in one place. The new registry, on the [IHS Markit](#) platform, ensures the transparency of projects and accounting of carbon credits. It is a great step forward that both Peatland Code and Woodland Carbon Code projects are now on the [Markit registry](#), since both mechanisms are vital to tackle the climate crisis. Currently we have 24 [Peatland Code projects registered](#) of which 4 are validated, and we have several new projects in the pipeline for 2021. [Additional peatland code updates...](#)

[Watch Peatland Code session from our 2020 conference:](#)



New Eyes on the Bog sites: The West Cavan Bog Association update

[Eyes on the Bog](#) is a standardised methodology founded by the IUCN UK Peatland Programme enabling individual peatland sites to be consistently monitored across the UK, creating a network of comparable sites. The initiative employs cheap, simple techniques and modern technology to enable useful monitoring information to be collected by peatland community employees or volunteers.

Heather Bothwell of the [West Cavan Bog Association](#) (Britain & Ireland) reached out to the IUCN UK PP team during the 2020 conference in December. We are pleased to hear that since learning about the Eyes on the Bog initiative at our conference in Belfast in 2019 that they have since set up two EoB sites in Fartrin and Aughaweena. [Read more...](#)



Partner Highlights

Welsh Government launches National Peatlands Action Programme to help lock in carbon and reinvigorate vital habitats



The management and renewal of Wales' environmentally important peatlands – helping the nation's response to the climate crisis – will be outlined under a new programme.

The National Peatlands Action Programme will ensure the nationwide delivery of existing peatland policies devised by the Welsh Government, providing a single set of guidelines and advice for partners and land managers. [Continue reading...](#)

Environment Agency working with Peak District partnership to slow the flow of water from the moors

From the summer of 2019 to the spring of 2020, Britain experienced catastrophic floods. In its [National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England](#), published in July this year, the [Environment Agency](#) has recognised that by 2050, there could be up to 59% more precipitation in winters due to climate change. As well as setting in motion flood warning

systems, the Strategy talks about the importance of nature-based solutions to store flood waters on high ground. Peak District-based [Moors for the Future Partnership](#) is working with the Environment Agency to deliver natural flood management techniques across catchments in Greater Manchester, Cheshire and Merseyside (GMMC).

[Read more...](#)



Getting out to the bog - an innovative solution to accessing a Peatland Restoration site in Shetland

One of the biggest hurdles to implementing peatland restoration in Shetland has been getting out to the sites. Occasionally there are “peat roads”, rough tracks traditionally used to bring peats home from the hill, but generally the machines and fuel have to be taken some distance out across degraded blanket bog owned or managed by other crofters. And, as everyone familiar with peatlands will be aware, blanket bog quickly turns to a black peaty “mush” when repeatedly driven over, even when using tracked vehicles. [Continue reading...](#)



Volunteer group and conservation organisations join forces to improve the health of local moorland

[Moors for the Future Partnership](#) has been working with the community group, [Friends of Crompton Moor](#), for the last couple of years to carry out sphagnum moss planting and vegetation monitoring. The first of its kind for the Partnership, this collaboration aims to give the community a sense of ownership of Crompton Moor through practical conservation. Crompton Moor was also featured on this week's [Countryfile](#) showcasing the benefits of peatland restoration on the site. [Read more...](#)



North Pennines AONB: Bund-raising

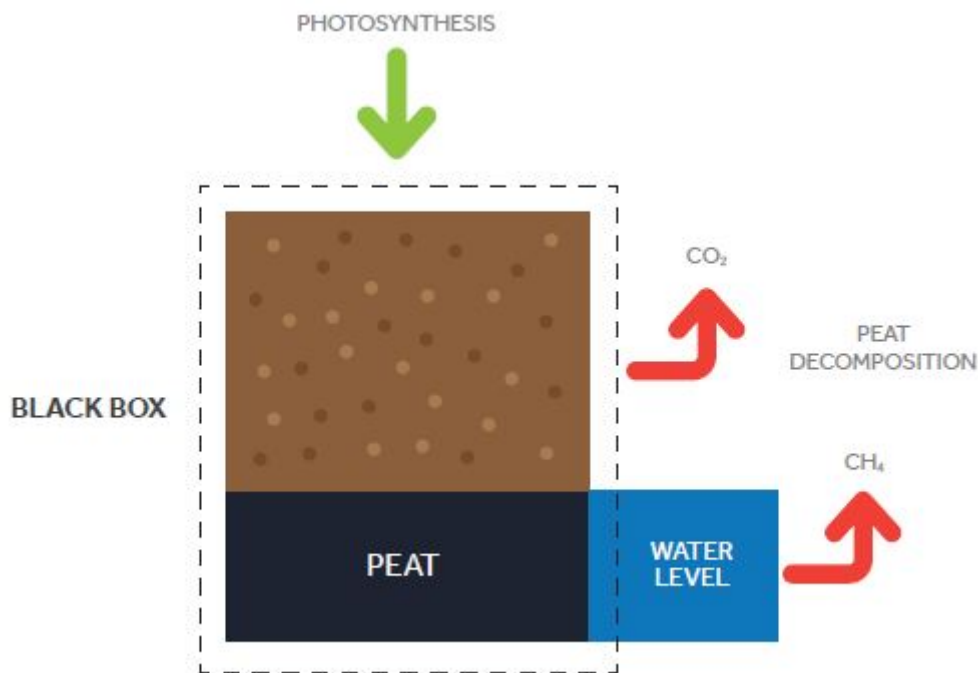
The [Pennine PeatLIFE](#) project, delivered in the Yorkshire Dales by

[Yorkshire Wildlife Trust](#), has installed its largest ever peat bund on Bleaberry Moor. At the site's heart are 3 ha of deeply damaged and vulnerable bare peat. Although gently sloping, this area is riddled with channels and run-off taking its heavily sedimented load down into Semer Water SSSI. The picture shows one of the largest bunds the project has ever installed, stretching about 8 metres from end to end. Filling up instantly, this bund, and the others that surround it, are all holding fast, retaining substantial amounts of water that would otherwise be flooding into the village and fields of Marsett.



Microbial understanding of the resilience of peatland systems

A series of workshops amongst peatland scientists, practitioners and policy makers held at the University of Manchester has sought to capture the state of the art of peatland microbial understanding and, as a research community, defined a series of questions to further our knowledge of this area and unlock the 'black box' of peatland functioning. [Continue reading...](#)



Deep Winter in the Cairngorms

Peatland restoration work has been suspended in the Cairngorms National Park since before Christmas due to heavy snow. They are experiencing a particularly wintry spell and it is looking likely that restoration work could be over until the summer. The Peatland Action team were close to completing a number of projects on Balmoral and Wildland Estates which will add to their modest programme for 2021. They would also like to welcome Daisy Whytock to the Peatland ACTION team in the Cairngorms National Park. Daisy joins the team from the East

Ayrshire Coalfield Environment Initiative bringing with her a wealth of experience in project management, peatland restoration, contract management and lowland raised bogs



One of the unexpected outcomes of this site is the huge number of pools that we have created that are becoming a haven for wildlife with colonisation by dragonflies and amphibians happening in a matter of months.

ScottishPower Renewables winter 2021 peatland restoration update

[ScottishPower Renewables](#) have now completed 1267ha of deforested bog restoration using a “ground smoothing” technique, and 535ha of drain damming using “wave damming” peat dam innovation. Both of these techniques were developed by Strath Caulaidh Ltd on SPR projects as part of early research experiments to develop better techniques for blanket bog restoration. [Read more...](#)



Stonechat Research at the Great Fen

Certain bird species are suitable for [monitoring and research](#) in the Great Fen, especially those that perch in prominent positions, making it easier to identify them. Due to their presence throughout the winter, coupled with the possibility of regular breeding in the future, [stonechat](#) have been selected as one such species. [Continue reading...](#)



Resources

Peatland Training Programme

[Part 1 of a Peatland Training Programme](#) is now available as a means of establishing a logical learning curve, introducing key peatland concepts, then moving on to the implications of these for peatland policy, and finally offering more in-depth information about certain topics.

The resource “... *has clarified so many points regarding definitions, classification and general concepts regarding peatlands ... I cannot stress how helpful it has been, and has most definitely proven to me I'm interested in pursuing a career in peatland conservation.*” **MSc student, University of Plymouth**



New animation explores drainage impacts on a raised bog

The most recent addition to our suite of training materials is a new animation exploring the hydrological basis of raised bogs, considering what happens to them when they are damaged by drainage, peat cutting or agricultural land-claim, and suggests ways to aid and speed up recovery from such impacts.

View this [animation](#) and explore the other resources in the series including [Burning on Blanket Bogs - Part 2: Recovery pathways](#).



Sharing peatland pictures

To help celebrate, communicate and educate about the importance of peatlands IUCN UK Peatland Programme have set up a [Flickr group called 'Peatland Pictures'](#) for the peatland community to share images like this beautiful view of Ingleborough from Fleet Moss captured by [Yorkshire Peat Partnership](#) Peatland Restoration Office Dr. Jenny Sharman.

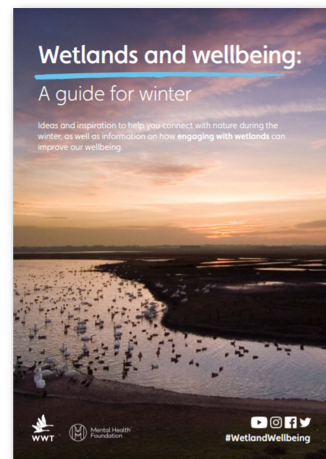


WWT: 'Wetlands and wellbeing' guide

[The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust \(WWT\)](#) have launched their new '[Wetlands and wellbeing' guide](#), created in partnership with the [Mental Health Foundation](#), featuring ideas and inspiration to help you connect with nature during the winter,

as well as information on how engaging with wetlands can improve our wellbeing.

[Download the free guide](#)



Events

Visit the [IUCN UK Peatland Programme website](#) for upcoming events.

Sphagnum moss - what's all the fuss about?

2nd March 2021 7-8pm

Join [North Pennines AONB Partnership](#) Senior Field Officer Alistair Lockett for an online look at Sphagnum moss. [Register for your free place.](#)

MoorWissen: Virtual conference week - [RRR2021](#)

9th - 11th March 2021

The first two RRR conferences on the utilisation of wetland plants ([paludiculture](#)) were held in 2013 and 2017 in Greifswald. The Greifswald Mire Centre warmly invites you to continue this dialogue and to use the 3rd RRR conference as a platform for exchange.

The Heather Trust: [Managing land for nature and climate - natural capital and funding options](#)

10th March 2021

An event to consider the funding opportunities private investment might offer those managing land for nature and the climate.

International Bog Day 2021

25th July 2021

This year's [International Bog Day](#) will take place on Sunday 25th July 2021 celebrating the brilliance of bogs.

IUCN World Conservation Congress, Marseille, France

3rd - 11th September 2021

[Conference](#) comprised of forum, exhibition & Members' Assembly takes place every 4 years this year focussing on contribution to [post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#).

IUCN UK Peatland Programme Conference 2021

Save the Date - w/c 13th September 2021

COP 15 - [2020 UN Biodiversity Conference](#), Kunming, China

5th - 10th October 2021

COP26 – [26th United Nations Climate Change Conference](#), Glasgow SEC

1st - 12th November 2021

Vacancies & Opportunities

Please contact info@iucn.org.uk if you have a research, volunteer or employment opportunity that you would like to share with the UK peatland community.

PhD - Dynamics of carbon capture in Scottish and Irish peatlands over the past centuries

QUADRAT NERC Doctoral Training Partnership - [PhD description and application form](#)

Closing date: 30th June 2021

Nature Restoration Trainees, North Pennines AONB

[For job description and application form](#)

Closing date: Sunday 28th February 2021

Director of Wilder Yorkshire (Policy & Partnerships), Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

[Job description and application form](#)

Closing date: Thursday 11th February 2021

Communications and Engagement Officer (Maternity Cover), Moors for the Future Partnership

[Job description and application form](#)

Closing date: Monday 22nd February 2021

Project Manager, East Ayrshire Coalfield Environment Initiative (CEI)

[Job description and application](#)

Closing date: Monday 8th February 2021

Land Use & Biodiversity Lead Officer, Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere (GSAB)

[Job description and application form](#)

Closing date: Thursday 18th February 2021

Research Technician Greenhouse Gas Team, The James Hutton Group

[Job description and application form](#)

Closing date: Tuesday 2nd March 2021

Peatland Project Officer, Crichton Carbon Centre[Job description and application form](#)**Closing date:** Friday 26th February

Research Publications

Jennings, B., Flint, A. (2020) Saturated with meaning: peatlands, heritage and folklore. *The Journal of Archaeology, Consciousness and Culture* **13** 283 – 305 <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1751696X.2020.1815293>

Littlewood, N. A., Hancock, M. H., Newey, S., Shackelford, G., Toney, R. (2021) Use of a novel camera trapping approach to measure small mammal responses to peatland restoration. *European Journal of Wildlife Research* **67** <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10344-020-01449-z>

Watts, S. H. (2020) Revegetation of upland eroded bare peat using heather brash and geotextiles in the presence and absence of grazing. *Mires and Peat* **26** <http://mires-and-peat.net/pages/volumes/map26/map2629.php>

Tanneberger, F., Abel S., Couwenberg, J., Dahms, T., Gaudig, G., Günther, A., Kreyling, J., Peters, J., Pongratz, J., Joosten, H. (2021) Towards net zero CO₂ in 2050: An emission reduction pathway for organic soils in Germany. *Mires and Peat* **27** <http://www.mires-and-peat.net/pages/volumes/map27/map2705.php>

Zhuang, Q., Wang, S., Zhao, B., Aires, F., Prigent, C., Yu, Z., Keller, K. J., Bridgham, S. (2020) Modeling Holocene Peatland Carbon Accumulation in North America. *JGR Biogeosciences* **125** <https://agupubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1029/2019JG005230>

Byun, E., Sato, H., Cowling, A. S., Finkelstein, A. S. (2021) Extensive wetland development in mid-latitude North America during the Bølling–Allerød. *Nature Geoscience* **14** <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41561-020-00670-4>

Beaulne, J., Garneau, M., Magnan, G., Boucher, E. (2021) Peat deposits store more carbon than trees in forested peatlands of the boreal biome. *Scientific Reports* **11** <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-021-82004-x>

Please note: 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 April 2021. To submit articles please email: info@iucn.org.uk

Privacy policy:

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