

Peat bogs in Edinburgh



(c) Scottish Wildlife Trust

Of course there are not really any peatbogs here are there? Well you're wrong – the photo is of Red Moss at Balerno, a Scottish Wildlife Trust wildlife reserve and an example of a lowland raised bog. The importance of the peatbog is to be the subject of discussion at Edinburgh University later in the year.

Dirty, smelly and a useless waste of space. That's the public image that peat bogs have acquired over the years. But top UK scientists have gathered forces to rid the so-called 'Cinderella Habitats' of this reputation, and help them to shine as modern ecosystem heroes.

Damaged peatlands are a huge source of emissions in the UK and worldwide, but restoring them can not only bring significant carbon savings but also vital improvements to wildlife and water management.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) UK Peatland Programme's Commission of Inquiry into Peatland Restoration has drafted in leading UK scientists to undertake a thorough review of key peatland issues to help understand the multiple benefits of bogs. The first stage of the work is now complete, and the draft reviews are now available on the IUCN UK Peatland Programme's [website](#).

Dr Steve Chapman, Scientific Co-ordinator of the Programme's Commission of Inquiry into Peatland Restoration said:-
"Peatland restoration is already a high priority for governments internationally as well as in the UK. What this inquiry wants to do is achieve scientific consensus on just how vital peatlands are as carbon stores, for biodiversity and

other ecosystem services, to give policy makers a clear steer as to how to benefit the most from this resource.”

The eight draft reviews are open for public and peer consultation until 20 September. Early findings will be discussed at the ‘Investing in Peatlands – the Climate Challenge’ conference, at Durham University on 28 and 29 September and there will be an opportunity to feed further into the debate at an Open Inquiry event in **Edinburgh** on 3 November.

Clifton Bain, Director of the IUCN UK Peatland Programme, welcomed the publication of a new report on the climate change benefits of peatland restoration earlier in the summer.

“Peatbogs and carbon – a critical synthesis” by Richard Lindsay, reviews the impacts of current and historical use of peatlands, and the effects of restoration on greenhouse gas emissions. The report draws the conclusion that while healthy peatbogs release a certain amount of potent methane gas, the overall impact on the climate is significantly less than that of the carbon dioxide which leaks from damaged peat.

The report was commissioned by the RSPB, and received financial support from the IUCN UK Peatland Programme, amongst others.

Download [the full report](#) “Peatbogs and carbon – a critical synthesis”