



Why are peatlands important?

Peatlands are a natural carbon sink.

Peatlands are capable of absorbing and storing large amounts of carbon dioxide. Known as 'carbon sinks', peatlands cover less than 3% of the global land surface but are thought to contain twice as much carbon as the world's forests. This makes them significant to global efforts to combat climate change.



Peatlands provide places for animals to graze.

Grazing plays a key role in maintaining peatlands. It reduces the dominance of invasive vegetation that choke areas where important mosses, that help form the all-important peat, need to thrive. If managed carefully, cows, sheep and horses can be grazed on peatlands.



Peatlands have historic, archaeological and cultural significance.

Peatlands preserve historical and archaeological evidence. Forming over thousands of years, peatlands are important archives of the past environment, and human activities. The waterlogged conditions that characterise peatlands preserve both natural and man-made objects.

Peatlands can help improve water quality.

Peatlands are often located in the uplands. They lie at the top of river catchments where there is frequent and heavy rainfall. If the peatland is in good condition, the water that runs off into drinking water reservoirs is usually cleaner, thanks to special mosses which filter the water.

Peatlands support recreation and provide a sense of place.

The wide-open spaces that peatlands offer are perfect places for escaping the hustle and bustle of towns and cities. Their open landscapes can provide people with a sense of inspiration and connectedness with their natural environment.

Peatlands play an important part in improving people's health and well-being.

People visit peatlands to relax, explore and unwind, enjoying the tranquility of the vast open expanses' that they offer.

Peatlands provide food for humans.

Blackberries, wild plums, elderberries, bilberries and cranberries can all be found growing wild on peatlands.

Peatlands provide habitat and food for an array of wildlife.

Peatlands are vital habitats for certain plants, birds and insects, many of which can only live or breed in these special habitats. From hares to spongy sphagnum mosses, peatland habitats support many species of wildlife.

Upland peatlands in good condition can help prevent the risk of flooding.

Peatland's in good condition soak up water. Acting as a natural buffer, upland peatlands hold water back and slow the flow of water through the catchment, helping to reduce flood risk downstream.