

# MORSELS FROM THE MOOR

*Celebrating the flavours of Europe's peatlands and a new future for these wetland ecosystems*



**Wetlands**  
INTERNATIONAL

# WHAT ARE PEATLANDS?

Peatlands are unique ecosystems that play a vital role in climate regulation, biodiversity, and water management. Spanning nearly 600,000 sq. km across Europe, these wetlands store immense amounts of carbon—more than all the world's forests combined. Yet, they are disappearing at alarming rates due to drainage and pollution.



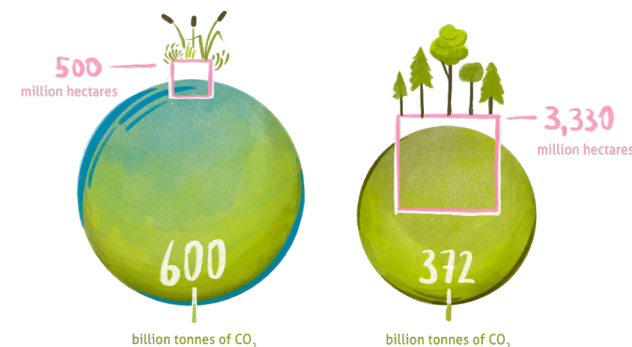
White-faced darter

## Why healthy peatlands matter?

- **Carbon storage:** peatlands act as long-term carbon sinks, storing immense amounts of carbon.
- **Water management:** they filter and store water, improve water quality, and help mitigate droughts.
- **Risk reduction:** healthy peatlands reduce the risks of peat fires, soil erosion, and desertification.
- **Biodiversity:** peatlands provide vital habitats for many species, some of which being rare or endangered, supporting biodiversity.

## The impact of peatland drainage

- At present, the biggest threats to peatlands are drainage and pollution.
- Peatlands are being **lost and degraded at 10 times the rate of their expansion over the last 10,000 years.**
- Every year, **500,000 hectares of peatlands are destroyed globally** due to human activities.
- Nearly **50% of Europe's peatlands are degraded** and primarily used for agriculture, forestry, or peat extraction.
- Europe has so far **lost around 10% of its natural peatlands**, more than any other continent.
- 80% of European bog, mire, and fen habitats are **classified as in poor or bad conditions.**



## REWETTING CAN RESTORE OUR PEATLANDS!

Rewetting is a restoration practice that raises the water table close to, or at, surface level year-round, reactivating peatlands' carbon sink function and halting peat decomposition. This process helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improves water quality by filtering pollutants, and lowers flood risk by enhancing water regulation.

## WHAT IS PALUDICULTURE?

Paludiculture combines rewetting with the cultivation of wetland-compatible crops like reeds, berries and peat moss. This practice:

- **Minimizes CO<sub>2</sub> emissions** while providing a sustainable alternative to traditional agriculture
- **Offers materials for industries** like biochemistry, biofuels, food and animal nutrition, and construction
- **Supports local economies** by introducing innovative land-use practices

## THE EU'S ROLE IN PROTECTING PEATLANDS

To meet the Paris Agreement, the EU must rewet 500,000 hectares of peatland annually. Transitioning from drainage-based agriculture to paludiculture requires major changes in land use, impacting farmers and local communities. Governments and businesses must support this shift through incentives, funding, and capacity building.

The EU Green Deal, the Biodiversity Strategy, and the Nature Restoration Law recognize the importance of peatlands, but progress has been slow. The 2023-2027 Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has made paludiculture eligible for payments for the first time, but its implementation has been limited. Stronger support within the CAP is crucial for effective peatland protection beyond 2027.

“Morsels from the Moor” is a book designed to raise awareness about peatlands, emphasizing their crucial role in climate regulation and the urgent need for their protection and restoration. It promotes paludiculture as a sustainable land-use practice that restores the hydrological function of degraded peatlands while offering economic viability. Through recipes made with products from these wetland ecosystems, along with testimonies and key facts, this book takes you on a journey to discover the wonders of these vital landscapes.

**Dive into the world of peatlands, discover sustainable practices and explore recipes and culinary heritage!**

***For further information  
please visit our website or  
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*Yellow warbler*

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