



World Wetlands Day

Come celebrate wetlands with co-creation and local communities

Avenue d'Auderghem 22, 1040 Brussels

6 February 2025, 16H



Wetlands
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Additional Information

Wetlands International Europe is thrilled to invite you to a dual event in honor of World Wetlands Day, co-organised with the WaterLANDS project.

Our EU funding

The [LIFE Programme](#) supports European non-profit organisations through operating grants, enabling them to play a vital role in raising awareness of environmental issues and promoting better governance. These grants empower non-profits to contribute to the decision-making process by coordinating and amplifying the voices of their citizen networks. The publication of the paludiculture cookbook "[Morsels from the Moor](#)" was funded from a LIFE Operating Grant.

The WaterLANDS project

[WaterLANDS](#) (Water-based solutions for carbon storage, people and wilderness) is a €23.6 million, 5-year EU-funded project that will restore wetland sites across Europe and lay the foundations for scalable protection across much wider areas. The project will undertake hands-on restoration of specific wetland sites, covering an initial 10,500 hectares, and create best practice models that can be applied to wetland restoration at other sites. By engaging with local communities, policymakers and other stakeholders, the project will ensure that wetland restoration results not only in environmental gains, but also social and economic benefits for the communities involved.

The project expects to achieve the following results:

1. Demonstration of large-scale wetland restoration.
2. Overcome barriers to restoration and develop integrated solutions for upscaling.
3. Cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary collaboration to co-create wetland restoration.
4. Maintained wetland carbon storage and enhanced natural carbon sequestration services.
5. A community-led paradigm in the co-design of restoration, empowering, engaging and reconnecting with nature.
6. Tailored financial solutions and resources for restoration of wetlands.

Action Site descriptions

Bulgaria: Dragoman Marsh is a karst marsh in [Bulgaria](#) which hosts many rare species of birds. The marsh is a Natura 2000 site and is part of the wider Dragoman Marsh Karst Complex Ramsar Site. Dragoman Marsh is under various external pressures including inflow of untreated wastewater, hydrological changes and intensified

agriculture. The aim of the restoration activities is to seek the best solutions for biodiversity restoration and maintenance, long-term carbon sequestration and the establishment of local economic practices.

Estonia: The Pärnu catchment of western [Estonia](#) has various Baltic bog areas identified for restoration including exhausted peat extraction fields, conifer plantations on peat soil and former mires and wet forest. This combined approach engages with local NGOs, and two important commercial entities who will restore former peat extraction sites and forestry plantations.

Ireland: The Cuilcagh-Anierin Uplands Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is a blanket bog site covering 9,735 hectares, comprising 11 habitats and 7 species protected under the Habitats and Birds Directives. Actions here will involve the establishment of functioning results-based payments schemes for uplands farmers, encouraging positive behaviour change and the uptake of additional measures such as drain blocking and fence construction.

Italy: The [Venice Lagoon](#) is a vast but undervalued network of salt marshes which provides many ecosystem services. "We are here Venice" will coordinate restoration works in the Venice Lagoon which will include extensive public engagement to promote scaling and public acceptability of the restoration. Outreach, community engagement and advocacy will be key in the Venice Lagoon, to influence behaviours and attitudes to saltmarsh use that have become engrained over centuries.

Netherlands: The Ems-Dollard estuary is located in one of the world's largest tidal areas and is renowned for its sandflats, mudflats and coastal salt marshes. The estuary has been historically shaped by human activity but provides numerous ecosystem services, including defense against rising sea levels, nutrient-rich sediment for agriculture and valuable biodiversity support systems. To improve the protection of this system, Provincie Groningen will work to reconcile the commercial interests of the numerous stakeholders in this area, which includes agriculture and commercial shipping.

United Kingdom: The Yorkshire iCASP Action Site covers a range of blanket peatland across [Northern England](#) including parts of three National Parks: Peak District, Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors. This site will link up with existing efforts as part of the Great North Bog, the England Peatland Programme and the IUCN-UK Peatland Programme, particularly focusing on the vast ecosystem services provided by the Yorkshire peatlands in terms of water, amenity and carbon storage.

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Cover illustration by Sarah Heuzeroth.



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