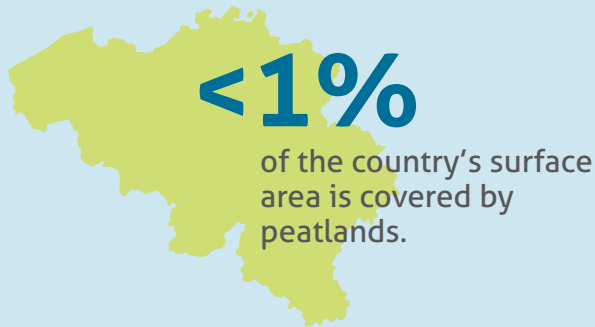


Belgium

European Peatland Factsheet

June 2025



Estimates:

Between 13,000 and 24,780 hectares of peat soils.

Peatlands in Belgium



Belgian peatlands are mostly located in the eastern higher-altitude Ardennes region, notably in the Hautes Fagnes.

The Zwarte Beek valley contains about 4,000 hectares of peatlands. It is estimated that 6,000 hectares of Belgian peatlands are mires.



Belgian peatlands serve as crucial habitats for the Black Grouse (*Tetrao terix*), the cranberry fritillary (*Boloria aquilonas*), and the Black Stork (*Ciconia nigra*), among other birds and insects.

Current Threats

90%

of active raised bogs considered to have disappeared since the 15th century.



Nitrogen pollution

& tourism led to the loss of ¼ peatlands in the Hautes Fagnes and Plateau des Tailles since 1957.



Purple moor grass (*Molinia caerulea*)

dominates peatlands, preventing other native wildlife from growing.



Conservation & Restoration projects

- Several projects for the protection & rewetting of Belgium's peatlands happen in the Hautes-Fagnes.
- The Zwarte Beek valley is undergoing a project to restore 100 hectares of peatland, which is estimated to reduce 2,500 tons of CO2 per year over 50 years.
- Meanwhile, 15 km of ditches are being closed in the valley, aiming to restore the local water table.



The rare Black Grouse (*Tetrao terix*)

has been highly dependent on the Hautes-Fagnes peatlands and was limited to 3 males in 2017. However, a project reintroducing several individuals from Sweden has helped these numbers bounce back and reach 13 males as of 2024!



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