



## NATURA 2000 AWARDS

Will The Living Bog Project Make The Shortlist?

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### WHAT'S IN THE BOG WATER

Ever wondered why water from a bog is a certain colour?

Project Hydrologist John Cody explains all...See page 3 for more

### THE LIVING BOG ON YOUR TV SCREENS

Project Public Awareness Manager Ronan Casey features in new peatland documentary  
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### WIN A SET OF BOG BADGES!

Our Living Bog badges are still the 'must-have' accessory for bog men and women. There are very few left, but you can win a set on page 5

## RESTORATION WORK NEARS COMPLETION

The Living Bog has so far inserted over 10,000 peat dams across drains on 11 project sites, helping to restore the eco-hydrological balance of these important Special Areas of Conservation and European Natura 2000 sites.

Contractors have been working hard on site for some time now, with very encouraging results.  
See pages 6 - 8 for more...





# NATURA 2000 AWARDS!

Will The Living Bog (LIFE14 NAT/IE/000032) be chosen as one of the finalists for Europe's most prestigious environmental awards: The Natura 2000 Awards?

Every Irish Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is also regarded as a Natura 2000 site. There are 439 SAC's in Ireland, with 53 being raised bogs. The Living Bog is working on 12 Irish raised bog SAC's.

The Natura 2000 Award is designed to reward excellence in the management of Natura 2000 sites and showcase the added value of the network for local economies. It pays tribute to all those who work tirelessly to make Natura 2000 a success whilst drawing public attention to its substantial achievements.

The Natura 2000 network works to ensure the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats, and is the centre piece of the EU's nature and biodiversity policy.

It is currently made up of over 27,800 sites. In total, it covers almost a fifth of Europe's land area and almost 10% of the EU marine areas, making it the largest coordinated network of conservation areas anywhere in the world.

Yet, despite its scale and the wealth of benefits it provides, many Europeans have still not heard of Natura 2000. This is why, in 2014, the European Commission launched the annual European Natura 2000 Award. The aim of the award is to demonstrate what the network is, what it does to preserve Europe's biodiversity, and how it benefits us all.

Eighty applications have been received under the 2020 edition of the Award from across the EU. Five of these were from Ireland.

In summer 2020 a high-level Jury will decide on five winners, one for each category. From the finalists, the public will also choose their winner: the Citizens' Award. In the 2018 Award, over 50,000 citizens voted! Details of the vote are expected to be released in late Spring 2020.

All finalists are invited to the Award Ceremony in Brussels, to be held in June 2020, and the six winners will receive a trophy and a small financial prize. Winners will also receive financial support to organise a promotional event in their country to promote their win and to raise awareness about their achievements on a local and national level.





# WHAT'S IN THE BOG WATER?

Whilst on the road, in classrooms and communities, The Living Bog is often asked about the colour of water coming from, or near a bog, and if it's safe to drink that water. The yellowish-brown colour of bog water is a familiar sight to anyone from the midlands (or indeed the uplands), and some of our rivers are sometimes coloured.

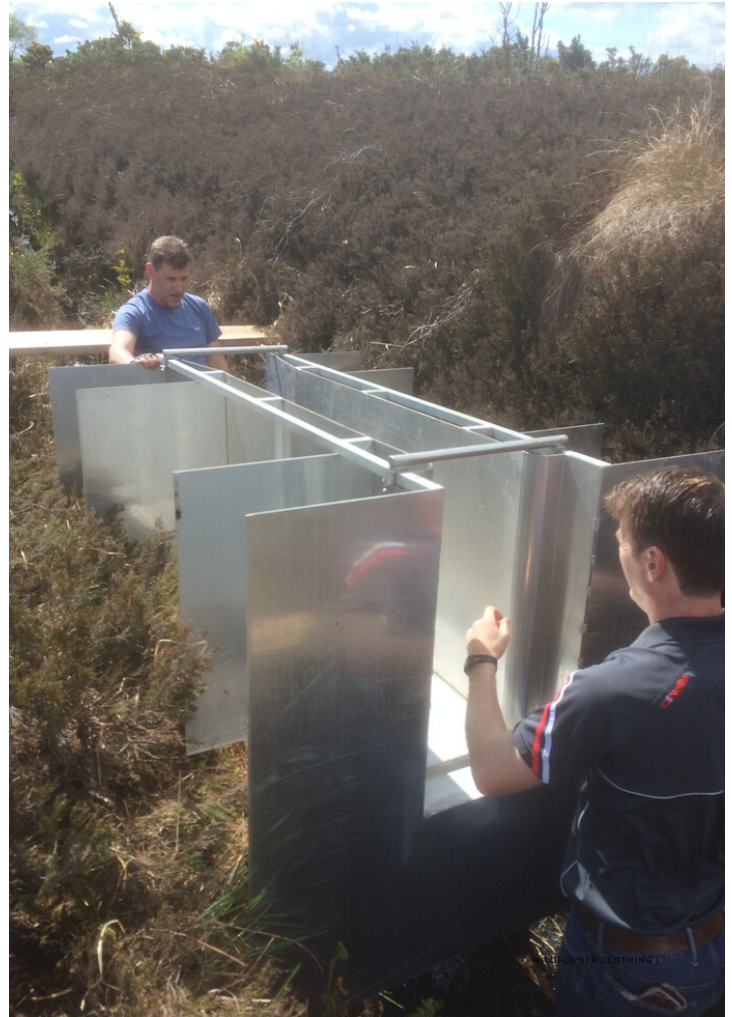
What causes the colour? Dissolved Organic Matter, or DOM. That's what.

On our project website, and in the latest edition of the catchments.ie magazine, our Project Ecologist John Cody (pictured top right installing a water flume on Carrownagappul Bog SAC with Project Manager Jack McGauley) presents a fascinating look into water lost from the bog, and just what it does and doesn't contain.

John's article has fast become one of the most popular every published on our Project Website. In it he explains what causes the colour and the associated impacts on water quality and hopefully answers some of the many questions out there about water from the bog, and stresses how important it is to keep that water on the bog...

For more, log onto the following page:

<http://raisedbogs.ie/whats-in-the-bog-water/>



## SCHOOLS ON THE BOG

The Living Bog has to date brought the bog to life for over 100 schools.

Where possible, we try to bring schools to the bog (such as the visit to Clara Bog SAC pictured left). Where this isn't possible we can bring the bog to your classroom. So if you know of a National School, Primary School, Secondary School or College that

wants to embrace their inner Bog Trotter, contact Living Bog Project Public Awareness Manager Ronan Casey: 076 1002627

ronan.casey@chg.gov.ie



An Roinn Cultúir,  
Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta  
Department of Culture,  
Heritage and the Gaeltacht



# LIVING BOG ON TV

The Living Bog has been no stranger to TV screens and radio speakers since we started making ourselves known in the summer of 2016. However, every now and then we are involved with a TV production that stops the viewer in their tracks. This happened when the award-winning TABU film-makers asked us to be involved in a recent TV documentary by Irish language TV network TG4.

Titled 'Gan Fód - Ag Seasamh an Fhóid' the one-hour show looked at the personal stories behind the changing future of Irish bogs. The show asks what matters more, people and jobs or sustainability and the environment?

The show interviewed Ronan Casey of the Living Bog Project at length about raised bog restorations. Ronan was filmed on three of our project sites: Clara Bog SAC, Ferbane Bog SAC and Killyconny Bog SAC. A school that Ronan has worked closely with, Gallen Community School from Ferbane, also featured.

The programme also looked at Bord na Móna and its phasing out of peat harvesting, along with its 1,500 employees and what the future holds for them. Many Bord na Mona workers were interviewed for this section, as were local businesses which for years depended on the custom of Bord na Mona staff. .

In terms of tourism in the midlands, Sean Craven is involved in Kilcomrac Enterprise Development, Co Offaly. He is trying to get tourism going in the area, in order to bring more people in and create jobs in rural Ireland. The people for whom the bogs provided not just an income but also helped form and connect communities and families are interviewed in the documentary and tell their stories. For many and the generations that went before them the bog provided a way of life.

Gan Fód was met with widespread critical and social media acclaim when it aired on TG4 on Wednesday 5 February. It has since gone on to become one of the most popular streamed programmes on the TG4 web player. Check it out at:  
<https://www.tg4.ie/en/player/home>



**Top:** Ronan Casey, Living Bog Public Awareness Manager was filmed by TG4 leading a school tour from Gallen Community School on Clara Bog SAC for the Tabu 'Gan Fód' documentary

**Middle:** Shannonbridge Power Station, along the River Shannon, with a Bord na Mona fuel train of peat on its way in.

**Bottom:** Ronan Casey, Living Bog Public Awareness Manager, being filmed at St Kilian's Heritage Centre, Mullagh, Co Cavan for 'Gan Fód'





# LIVING BOG AT THE NATIONAL PLOUGHING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Once again, The Living Bog was represented at the National Ploughing championships, which took place at a superb site in Ballintrane, Fenagh, Co Carlow. The project interacted with thousands of people over three days on site. It was sharing the 'Environment, Climate and Sustainability' tent with many wonderful Irish Government and European Commission initiatives. As ever, our bog badges proved to be very popular, as did our 'Bog in a Box'.

Our bog badges are now in short supply. If you want to win a set, email us telling us where the 2020 Ploughing Championships are being held!

Email: [life@raisedbogs.ie](mailto:life@raisedbogs.ie) with your answer, name and postal address



## WIN A SET OF BOG BADGES!

Bottom Left: Cathal Wright of the NPWS Peatlands Unit, Rebecca Teasdale, NPWS Peatlands DCO, Ronan Casey, The Living Bog and Evelyn Slevin, Project Administrator, The Living Bog pictured at the Ploughing  
Bottom right: Some children sample some wildlife at a 'Bog in a Box'



# ROCKING OUT AT ELECTRIC PICNIC

The Living Bog was one of the attractions at the 2019 Electric Picnic festival! Yes, you read that right. Among such big names as The Strokes, Florence & The Machine, Billie Eilish, Hozier, Dermot Kennedy and many more, your favourite bog project was on a stage.

Project Public Awareness Manager Ronan Casey took part in two debates in the festival's popular Mindfield Spoken Word Area. The debates were well attended and Ronan wasn't the only bog trotter taking to the stage, as Chris Uys of the Community Wetlands Forum also took part in a debate over the three-day long arts, music and cultural festival which was attended by 80,000 in 2019!

Ronan is pictured here on stage with MC for a 'Climate Consciousness' debate, journalist Jennifer O'Connell and also with broadcaster Miriam O'Callaghan.





# RESTORATION WORKS ONGOING AS 10,000 DAMS GO IN

Restoration works by the Living Bog to its 12 project sites have been ongoing throughout the year.

Raised bog restoration in the midlands recently achieved a milestone mark, with the completion of the 10,000th peat dam. Funded by both the Department of Culture, Heritage & The Gaeltacht and the EU's LIFE Programme, The Living Bog is Ireland's largest single raised bog restoration project. Of the 12 raised bogs the LIFE project is restoring between 2016 and the end of this year, works have been completed on nine project sites - with works ongoing on two others. The remainder will be restored as 2020 progresses.

Raised bog SAC/Natura 2000 sites where works have been completed are: Clara Bog SAC, Mongan Bog SAC, Moyclare Bog SAC, Raheenmore Bog SAC, and Ferbane Bog SAC (all County Offaly), Carrownagappul Bog SAC (County Galway), Garriskil Bog SAC (County Westmeath), Ardagullion Bog SAC (County Longford), Carrowbehy Bog SAC (County Roscommon). Works are ongoing at two other sites.

Over 10,000 dams have been completed to date. Over the course of the year ahead, contractors will install many more peat dams to block drains and assist with the restoration of the eco-hydrological balance of the raised bogs.

Despite peat extraction ceasing on the SAC's many years ago, open drains were still taking water from the bogs. The Living Bog uses a combination of peat and plastic dams to block these drains, mainly at 10m intervals. A linear dam over 600m long has also been installed on Ardagullion Bog SAC ensuring the correct water level will develop. This will lead to rapid recovery of healthy bog conditions and follows the success of previous similar work on another of the project sites: Killyconny Bog SAC, done by NPWS in the early 2000s.

Already, there has been some incredible results on this site. It was the first to be restored, and pioneering raised bog vegetation is returning incredibly well, especially on the cutover, which until our works was bone dry and Corn Flake crunchy. See next page for some amazing then and now pics!

The Living Bog project is working closely with landowners on and around the project sites, as well as with local communities surrounding them. As part of the project, community-led educational amenities are being developed on five sites, and thanks to the Department's Peatlands Community Engagement Scheme, local communities have also been able to develop interpretive facilities in local centres.

**Keep an eye on our Social Media and webpage for more info on our restoration works: [www.raisedbogs.ie](http://www.raisedbogs.ie) and follow the project on Facebook and Twitter, looking for @LIFERAISEDBOGS**



Former Clara Bog turf-cutter and active community rep Brian Sheridan chatting to one of our contractors on Clara Bog ahead of Brian's old turf bank being restored.



Restoration works ongoing at Ferbane Bog SAC in September 2019, being recorded for a video feature by The Living Bog



Well over a thousand peat dams have been installed on Carrownagappul Bog SAC, aka 'Galway's Living Bog' in Mountbellew. Here are some of the larger 2m dams that were required for some of the larger drains. They have stopped thousands of gallons of water being lost every hour from the site.



**A section of Cutover at Ardagullion Bog SAC, Co Longford,  
photographed pre-restoration works on April 24, 2018**





**The same section of Cutover at Ardagullion Bog SAC, Co  
Longford, photographed post-restoration works on  
January 24, 2019**

