

WHAT DO PEATLANDS DO FOR US?

IRISH PEATLANDS AND THE ECOSYSTEM SERVICES THEY PROVIDE



ECOSYSTEM SERVICES SIMPLY MEANS THE MANY AND VARIED BENEFITS THAT HUMANS GAIN FROM THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT WHEN PROPERLY FUNCTIONING ECOSYSTEMS ARE MAINTAINED.

BIODIVERSITY

PEATLAND HABITATS ARE WILDLIFE HAVENS AND CONTAIN UNIQUE SPECIES GROUPS: TERRESTRIAL, AQUATIC AND MICROBIAL.



WATER PURIFICATION + FLOOD ATTENUATION

PEATLANDS CAN MODERATE RUN-OFF AND, IN DOING SO, REDUCE THE RISK OF DOWN-STREAM FLOODING.

WHEN PEATLANDS ARE DEGRADED, WATER QUALITY DETERIORATES. THIS LEADS TO INCREASED TREATMENT COSTS AND LOSS OF FISH SPawning GROUNDS AND IMPACTS ON OTHER SPECIES, INCLUDING THE THREATENED FRESHWATER PEARL MUSSEL.

DIRECT ECONOMIC RESOURCES

PEATLANDS HAVE PLAYED AN ESSENTIAL ROLE IN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF IRELAND.

THEY HAVE BEEN EXPLOITED FOR HORTICULTURE, ELECTRICITY PRODUCTION AND PEAT EXTRACTION FOR FUEL FOR CENTURIES. LARGE TRACTS OF PEATLANDS HAVE BEEN RECLAIMED FOR AGRICULTURE, GRAZING AND FORESTRY. OFTEN THESE ACTIVITIES ARE NON-SUSTAINABLE AND INTERRUPT NATURAL PROCESSES THAT SUSTAIN THEM.

THE VAST MAJORITY OF PEATLANDS IN IRELAND ARE NO LONGER FULLY FUNCTIONING ECOSYSTEMS.

BOGS ARE KEY FOR THE SURVIVAL OF ENDEMIC, RARE SPECIES AT A GLOBAL SCALE WITH SPECIAL ADAPTATIONS TO THESE UNIQUE ENVIRONMENTS.

LANDSCAPE AND RECREATION

PEATLANDS ARE AN INTRINSIC PART OF THE IRISH LANDSCAPE. THEY ARE THE CLOSEST WE HAVE TO WILDERNESS. PEATLANDS ARE UNIQUE AMENITY SPACES TO ESCAPE TO, SEEK CULTURAL ARTISTIC INSPIRATION OR SIMPLY ENJOY NATURE. THEIR ROLE IN FOSTERING HUMAN WELL-BEING IS BECOMING WIDELY RECOGNISED.

DEVELOPED BY THE
NATIONAL PARKS AND
WILDLIFE SERVICE
Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

AIR QUALITY

BURNING OF PEAT IS A SOURCE OF EMISSIONS OF A RANGE OF AIR POLLUTANTS THAT CAN IMPACT ON HUMAN HEALTH. PROPERLY FUNCTIONING PEATLANDS HELP THE SURROUNDING COUNTRYSIDE TO PROVIDE FRESH + HEALTHY AIR.

THE FOLLOWING IRISH WORDS AND PLACE NAMES HAVE AN ASSOCIATION WITH BOG OR WETLAND: "BOGACH" (BOGGAGHBAWN), "EANACH" (ANNAGHMORE), "MOING" (MONART), "MOIN" (MOCCOIN) AND "CURRACH" (CURRAGHMORE).

CULTURAL HERITAGE

PEATLANDS AND IRISH PEOPLE HAVE A LONG HISTORY AND CULTURAL RELATIONSHIP. PEATLANDS ARE LINKED TO TRADITIONAL CULTURE AND IN THE PAST TO RITUALS OF DEPOSITION. THEY FEATURE IN LITERATURE, HERITAGE AND ORAL TRADITION. DUE TO THEIR PARTICULAR CHEMISTRY THEY PRESERVE MONUMENTS AND ARTEFACTS WHICH IN OTHER ENVIRONMENTS WOULD PERISH.

