

## **Peatland Habitats - Fiona Hyslop MSP**

Hello, I am Fiona Hyslop, the Member of the Scottish Parliament for Linlithgow, and I am the Nature Champion for Scotland's extraordinary Blanket Bogs, which are a type of peatland.

Peatlands are incredibly special habitats, made up of highly adapted plant species and home to a range of rare and important wildlife. Healthy peatlands are also critical in our efforts to tackle climate change as they trap enormous amounts of carbon. In fact, over 1.6 billion tonnes of carbon are stored in Scottish peatlands – that is a third of the carbon held in the Amazon!

Peatlands are formed over thousands of years, with waterlogging meaning that plants don't fully decompose, instead slowly forming thick layers of organic matter. Blanket bogs are a type of peatland found in places with cool, wet climates. They consist of mostly water, with numerous moss hummocks and hollows interspersed throughout. They are also very rare habitats globally, with the UK and Ireland holding over 20% of the world's blanket bogs, most of which is in the north and west of mainland Scotland and the Western and Northern Isles.

In the lowlands, Scotland has some of the finest examples of raised bogs in Europe. Lowland raised bogs are another type of peatland habitat that create raised domes of peat on wet soils, such as clay.

Unfortunately, around 80% of the UK's peatlands are degraded, acting as a source for greenhouse gases. But once restored, peatlands can once again absorb vast amounts of carbon dioxide, making them a priority for tackling the climate crisis.