

## Precious Peat

Peat can sound a bit boring if you don't really know what it is, but it is actually very beautiful and full of life! Watch the video below (up to the 7:25 minute mark) to find out about 'The Flow Country' the biggest peat bog in Europe; and it's right here in Scotland!



Once you've watched the video, answer the questions on the activity sheet!



<p>How long ago did the Ice Age end and cause the formations of peat bogs in Scotland? (Circle the correct answer)</p>	<p>10 000 years ago    1000 years ago    10 years ago</p>
<p>What can peat trap inside it that helps to fight climate change?</p>	<p>Carbon                      Salt                      Rock</p>
<p>Sphagnum Moss, a plant that lives in the peat bog makes the surrounding area very acidic, so anything that lives there has to be specially adapted to survive. Name one creature that lives underwater in The Flow Country:</p>	
<p>Draw a picture of one of the birds that live in The Flow Country:</p>	
<p>Which direction can dragonflies move their eyes?</p>	<p>Up    Down    Sideways    Every direction!</p>

After watching the video and answering the questions, you will have realised that Peat Bogs trap carbon from dead and decaying matter inside them. If carbon is trapped inside the peat, it means it is not released into the atmosphere; this makes the peat a 'Carbon Sink'. If the carbon were released into the atmosphere, it would contribute to climate change by surrounding Earth and trapping in lots of heat, increasing the temperature of our planet.



You will have also seen from the video that peat bogs are very important for the biodiversity of our planet; they are home to lots of different species! You might have spotted some of these creatures living in and around the peat bogs of The Flow Country:



Hen Harriers



Common Scoters



Red Deer



Carnivorous Sundew Plants



Sphagnum Moss



Palmate Newts



Great Diving Beetles  
(which are big enough to eat the Palmate Newts!)

Peat bogs are amazing environments and need to be protected so that the peat can continue to store carbon and provide homes for all of these different species.

Peat is also important historically as it can trap things inside it and preserve them for hundreds of years. Check out these examples of things that have been trapped in peat.

Unfortunately, peat bogs are being damaged by farming and tree planting. This might seem confusing, as we often talk about how tree planting is a good thing, however the peat bogs can trap lots more carbon than trees can. By planting trees in the peat, the trees use up the water and nutrients and cause the peat bogs to dry out and crack...which releases all of their stored carbon to the atmosphere. It also changes the environment so some species are unable to survive.

As your final task, design a news report to persuade people that peat bogs are really important and exciting environments that need protecting! Maybe you could focus on the environmental benefits peat bogs bring, the different species that are supported there, or the historical clues you might find buried there. You could write this up like a newspaper or blog article and include photos or drawings of peat bogs and the creatures that live there. You could even film your own news segment and include interviews with people or animals that might live there too!

Share your results with us using the hashtag #DynamicEarthOnline

For more information and activities about The Flow Country, [click here!](#)



Would you spread this on your toast? This 'bog butter' is hundreds of years old and had been buried in peat to keep it safe, as it was a luxury food. The owners must have forgotten where it was buried, so it was rediscovered hundreds of years later by archaeologists instead!



The Hjortspring boat was built over 2000 years ago in Southern Denmark. It was found and excavated from a peat bog in 1921. Although it is incredibly old, the peat has preserved it and we get a glimpse into what Viking transport looked like!



This is 'Tollund Man'. He lived over 2000 years ago and his body was mummified in a peat bog in Norway. His body is so well preserved that you can still see the wrinkles on his face, and scientists can even tell what he ate for dinner before he died!