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Significance of Peatland Management in the Context of Nature Conservation

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The Nature Conservation Agency

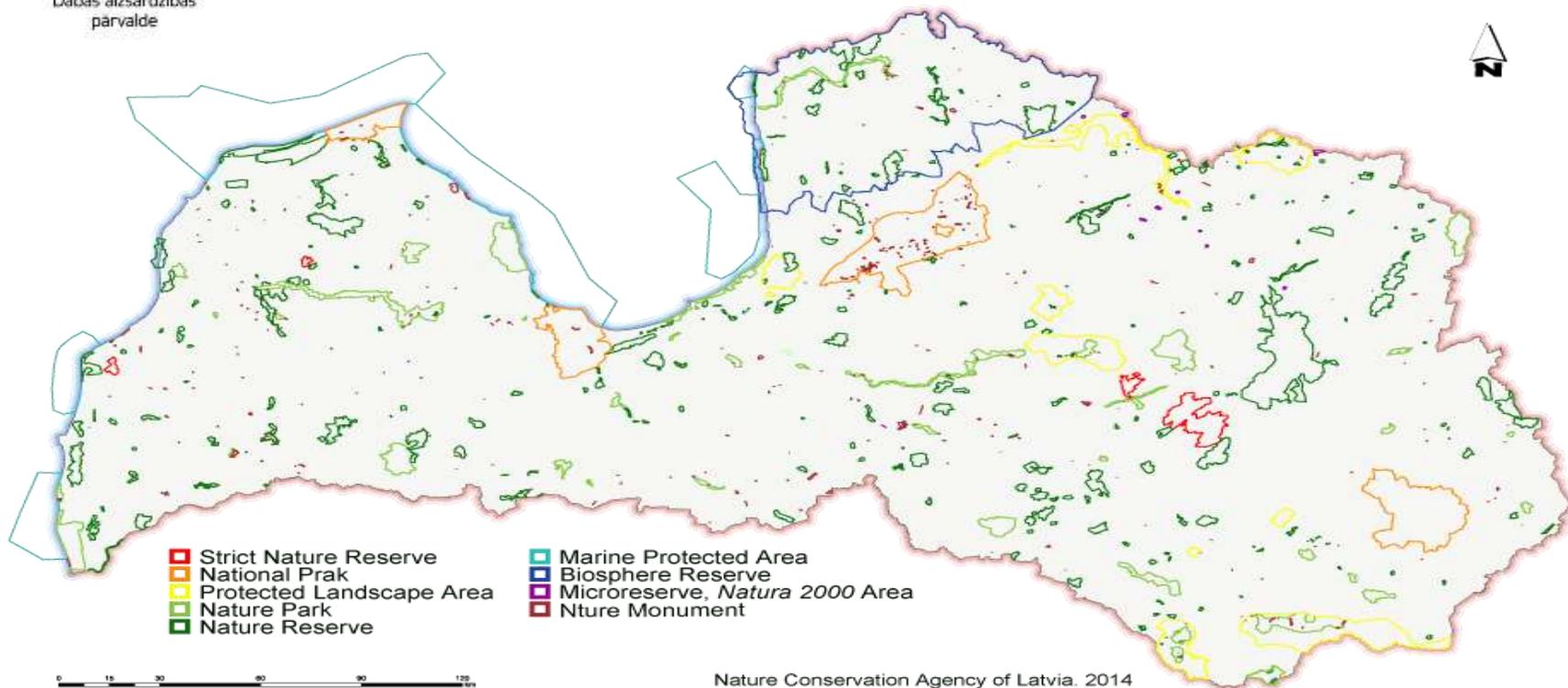


The Nature Conservation Agency ensures implementation of unified nature conservation policy in Latvia.



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Protected Nature Areas of Latvia



Nature Conservation Agency of Latvia. 2014



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Protected Nature Areas of Latvia



There are **683 specially protected nature areas** in Latvia certified by National law or regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers.



333 of them are **Natura 2000 sites**, covering **only ~12%** from the total area of Latvia.

Approx. 100 areas include mires, bogs and/or fens!



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Natural bogs vs degraded peatlands



- ✓ Undisturbed mires are huge carbon storages;
- ✓ provide the variety of the ecosystem services in the highest quality and value, including provisioning services such as berries and mushrooms, raw materials, water, biomass-based energy sources;
- ✓ have aesthetic value, a location for recreation, nature tourism and bird watching;
- ✓ Provide shelter and living conditions for variety of species, including rare and protected ones, around EU and World.

- ! Degraded peatlands without any management:
 - have significant GHG emissions, increase risk of dangerous peat fires;
 - do not provide economic, nor social or other benefits - gap in productive land ballance of LV
 - have very limited biodiversity, or not existing at all.



Peatland restoration and management in Latvia

- ✓ Over the 22 years of restoration management we have acquired a substantial knowledge and ability to restore and manage wetland habitats, based on investigations and practical experience.
- ✓ First restoration of natural bog hydrology of raised bog, were started at 1997 on marginal parts of Teiči Bog - one of the largest ecosystems of this kind in the Baltic - by constructing 42 wooden dams on the ditches, to prevent the drainage impact on the bog ecosystem. The experience of the Teiči Nature Reserve in restoring the hydrological regime of mires has been either replicated or at least referred to by almost all other LIFE-Nature projects having this type of actions.

Restoration method development - 1997.



**Prooved building method – 2006.
Lubana wetland complex**





12 years of experience have formed the method for restoration of raised bogs, demanded and used in other protected Nature Areas



Lubana wetland complex.



The Results after >10 years Teici NR



2014.



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In the next years, the construction of dams on ditches was carried out on a larger scale both in Teiči Bog and in Lubāna Wetland.

In 2006, habitat restoration of the degraded peatland was started for the first time in Latvia: water level was raised in a broad post-harvested area on the edge of the Great Ķemeri Mire.





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The EC LIFE programm project “NAT-PROGRAMME”



- ✓ Guidelines for the conservation, management and restoration of protected habitats in Latvia have been developed from 2013 to 2016 under the project “National Conservation and Management Programme for Natura 2000 Sites”.

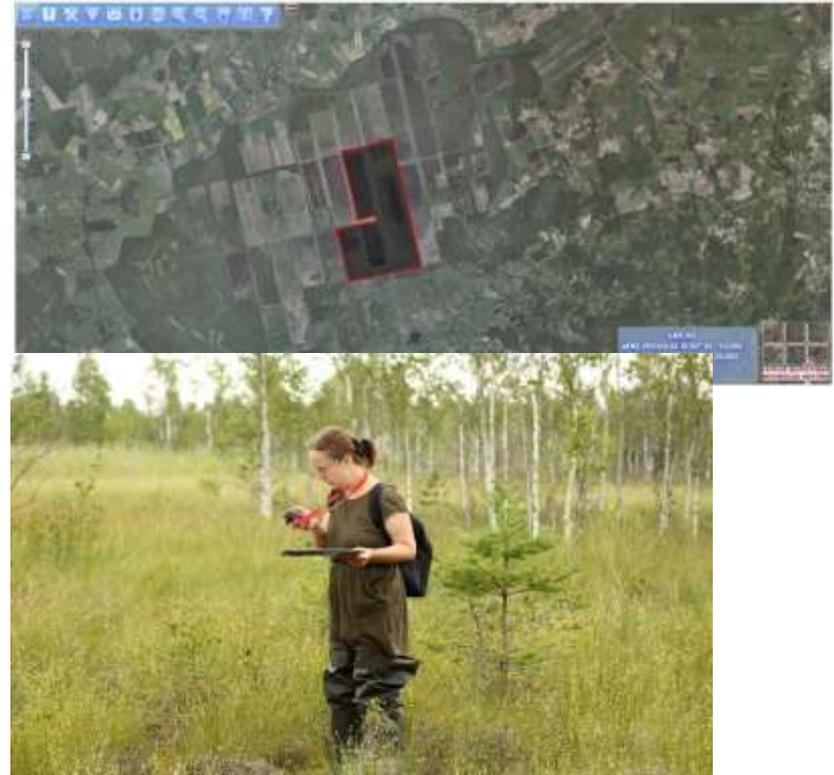
- ✓ The guidelines provide comprehensive recommendations for the conservation, management and restoration of natural habitats, **including peatlands** and form the basis to solve the future challenges of nature conservation.



The habitat mapping project of Latvia

To increase the accuracy of nature data, the Nature Conservation Agency started the full inventory of habitats in Latvia **including mires, bogs and other wetlands:**

- The Project „The prerequisite to create better conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems in Latvia” (The habitat mapping project of Latvia)
- timeline - 2017- 2021; New data on mires and bogs expected on 2020.

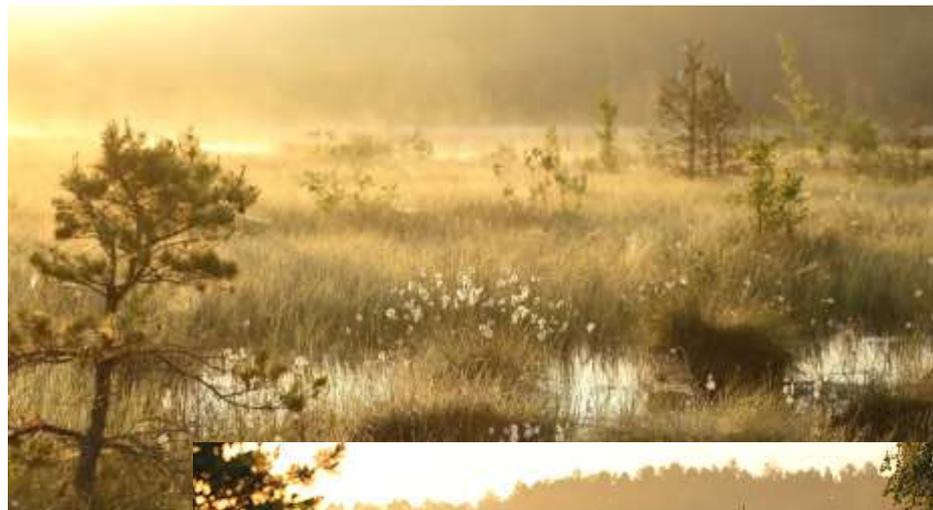




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The importance of natural wetland ecosystem

- **Restored wetland ecosystems**, accumulate carbon dioxide, thereby “withdraw” it from the atmosphere and significantly reduce the impact on climate change.
- While the focus on provisioning services has often led to the degradation of peatland ecosystems, the **recognition of other services that peatlands provide to people**, should be a strong motivation for **restoration**.





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The importance of natural wetland ecosystem

Peatlands have great importance to **economy**, to the **safety of society** and even to the safety of urban environment!

They act as giant sponges, to **reduce the risk** of extreme floods or prolonged drought and dangerous **peat fires**, providing us with **naturally cleaned groundwaters**, as a **regulatory function** in terms of ecosystem services.

Conservation of natural mires, as well as **restoration of degraded peatland ecosystems** is highly important for wellbeing and safety of society in Latvia.





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