

## News story: £10m fund to restore peatland opens for applications

A £10 million grant scheme to restore England's iconic peatlands has officially opened for bids, Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey announced today.

In England, peatlands cover 11 per cent of the country and provide a key habitat for birds such as the merlin, dunlin and golden plover. They provide 70 per cent of the country's drinking water and store more than 3.2 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide. But it is estimated as much as four fifths of our peatland is in need of restoration.

Funding will be made available for schemes that restore upland and lowland peatlands, create habitats for vulnerable wildlife, reduce flood risk by slowing rain water flow and increase carbon capture.

The government fund is in addition to the £4 million Defra has already allocated to existing Natural England peatland restoration schemes across the country, from Cumbria to Cornwall, which have raised water levels for mosses to thrive and seen rare species replanted.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

Peatlands are a vital part of the natural ecosystem that provide key habitats for wildlife, supply us with clean water and reduce carbon emissions, so I encourage groups from across the country to apply for funding to restore this important habitat.

This scheme will help fulfil our ambition to be the first generation to leave the natural environment in a better state while returning thousands of hectares of peatland to their natural state.

Bids with the greatest potential for greenhouse gas mitigation and projects that deliver better value for money and maximise environmental benefits will be favoured. The scheme is for capital works and is open to everyone outside central government and their agencies.

Funding will be available for three years from April 2018 as part of Defra's £100 million of capital funding for direct investment in projects that support the natural environment.

The closing date for applications will be 20 November 2017 and applications will be made via Defra's [e-tendering platform](#).