

BOG Subcultures

A Zine

Peatland research



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MAR 2026

425 ppn*

bog (n.)

A wetland composed of peat soil which accumulates via partially decayed plant matter like mosses over thousands of years. . From the Irish bogach, adj. bog meaning soft.

subculture (n.)*

By 1886, in reference to bacterial cultures derived from previous cultures. By 1922 in reference to human societies. The way of life, customs, and ideas of a particular group of people within a society that are different from the rest of that society.

zine (n.)

The word “zine” is a shortened form of the term fanzine. Fanzines emerged in the 1930s among fans of science fiction and have roots in the underground publications of social and political activism in the '60s. By the '70s, zines were popular on the punk rock circuit and in the '90s, the medium was taken up by the feminist punk scene and riot grrrls. Zines are non-profit and intended to share ideas quickly and cheaply.

*Front Cover: The concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere was 420 ppm when the first issue of Bog Subcultures came out in 2023. It is set to reach 425.7 ppm in 2025.

Source: <https://globalcarbonbudget.org/fossil-fuel-co2-emissions-hit-record-high-in-2025/>

IRISH PEATLAND EARLY CAREER RESEARCH

Irish Peatland Early Career Researchers (ECRs) came together in 2020 during the pandemic. The group was started by PhD student Elena Aitova, and enabled early career researchers to network, connect with others and share their research during lockdown.

The group is a part of the international network Peat ECR Action team. Members met online initially and now organise and attend conferences, events and outings together. These are usually peatland related (e.g. peatland sites, exhibitions, and field trips) as well as the annual 'Peatmas' events in December.



Photo: John McDonald

CELEBRATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF PEATLAND RESEARCH

This zine features a selection of ECR peatland researchers in Ireland, sharing insights, fun and practical wisdom from their work. Their research spans disciplines such as ecology, hydrology, GHGs, mapping, policy, legislation, social science and community-led conservation.

From field snacks and treasured field kit to misconceptions about bog ecosystems, these profiles offer a glimpse into the realities of fieldwork and the different ways researchers understand and protect peatlands across the humanities, natural sciences and social sciences. We hope more people are encouraged to explore peatlands and become part of the the growing community of peatland researchers studying these remarkable landscapes.

Thanks to all the researchers who contributed, to editors Kate Flood and Elena Aitova and to the many senior researchers whose supervision, guidance and encouragement continue to support and inspire the next generation of peatland researchers. We are also very grateful to the communities that help us in our research and field work.



Name: Alessandra Accogli



What aspect of peatlands do you research?

I look at the legal protection of peatlands.

Who or what got you into peatlands?

During my PhD on the protection of ecosystems that serve as carbon sinks, my PhD student advisor recommended focusing on peatlands as a case study.

My bog-related superhero name would be...

The Peat Sentinel.

Which bog species do you most identify with and why?

Sphagnum Moss because it defines a bog. Without it there is no peatland.

Least glamorous thing you've done in the name of research:

Sifting through interview transcripts.

Go-to field snack or drink:

Coffee.

Most treasured piece of fieldwork/research kit:

My field trip to Abbeylax Bog.

Biggest misconception about bog ecosystems in your research:

That they are less relevant than forest ecosystems, which means they are highly understudied from a legal perspective.

Advice to future researchers:

Try and immerse yourself in the ecosystem and understand its multifaceted nature. Take a holistic view!

Which bog site would you nominate to the Bog Hall of Fame?

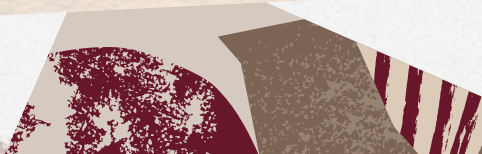
Abbeylax Bog.

Fun thing to do on a bog:

Spot the pine martens!

Where can we find out more about your research?

<https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2025/0430/1510340-irish-peatlands-legal-protection-biodiversity-conservation/>.





Name: Elena Aitova



What aspect of peatlands do you research?

GHG emissions from raised bogs and blanket bogs

Who or what got you into peatlands?

Facebook! I liked the idea of nature restoration and I love all ecosystems.

My bog-related superhero name would be...

Bog hopper.

Which bog species do you most identify with and why?

Heather...I feel at home in wild, vast landscapes filled with old magical stories.

Least glamorous thing you've done in the name of research:

Learning how to drill.

Go-to field snack or drink:

Vegan sausage roll from Apple Green.

Most treasured piece of fieldwork/research kit:

GHG analyser!

The biggest misconception about bog ecosystems in your research:

Bogs are the best storage of carbon, but small sink.

Advice to future researchers:

Networking, because sometimes the best research happens over a pint.

Which bog site would you nominate to the Bog Hall of Fame?

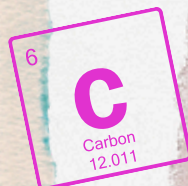
Cloncrow bog

Fun thing to do on a bog:

Jump across the drains (don't do it though!)

Where can we find out more about your research?

<https://elenaaitovaeco.com/>



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Very Important Bog

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Name: Kate Flood



What aspect of peatlands do you research?

The social, cultural and equity dimensions of peatland conservation and restoration.

Who or what got you into peatlands?

My dog Bonnie - we discovered Girley Bog together.

My bog-related superhero name would be...

Wonder Bog Woman.

Which bog species do you most identify with and why?

So many to identify with. Although not exclusively a bog species, I'm fond of lizards, who spend their days basking in the sun and can grow back parts of themselves!

Least glamorous thing you've done in the name of research:

Working with spreadsheets. Although not the most fun part of peatland research, it can still have hidden depths.

Go-to field snack or drink:

Apples - food and drink in one.

Most treasured piece of fieldwork/research kit:

Hand lens, notebook and camera.

Biggest misconception about bog ecosystems in your research:

That peatland restoration is purely an ecological or technical task. Restoration succeeds not just with scientific expertise, but when it also engages with the social, historical, community and cultural dimensions of bogs.

Advice to future researchers:

Start with people, not just landscapes. Listen. Have fun!

Which bog site would you nominate to the Bog Hall of Fame?

Girley Bog, the university I am always learning from.

Fun thing to do on a bog:

Peatland picnics, parties and tea on the bog.

Where can we find out more about your research?

www.abogslife.com/About

<https://www.ucd.ie/peat-hub-ireland/>





Name: Lisa Jessen



What aspect of peatlands do you research?

Paludiculture, a sustainable method of farming on wet soil.

Who or what got you into peatlands?

Lecturers in wetland science during my undergrad.

My bog-related superhero name would be...

Dr. Bog.

Which bog species do you most identify with and why?

Bog cotton - it seems like a social plant.

Least glamorous thing you've done in the name of research:

Fell on my face changing in the forest and ruined my clean clothes.

Go-to field snack or drink:

Flapjack.

Most treasured piece of fieldwork/research kit:

Auger, used for sampling and coring to establish peat depth and other scientific measurements.

The biggest misconception about bog ecosystems in your research:

That paludiculture is restoration.

Advice to future researchers:

A positive field work attitude makes the day go so much quicker and better despite any hiccups.

Which bog site would you nominate to the Bog Hall of Fame?

Doire Iochtair, Connemara.

Fun thing to do on a bog:

Have a laugh.

Where can we find out more about your research?

<https://palusdemos.org/>





Name: Dean Mac Cú Uladh



What aspect of peatlands do you research?

Biodiversity, especially hoverflies and botany.

Who or what got you into peatlands?

I fell in love with peatlands during university when I was introduced to the palaeo-ecology of bogs. The interest in bog biodiversity followed soon after.

My bog-related superhero name would be...

The Flytrap.

Which bog species do you most identify with and why?

Not explicitly a bog species but I would go with a bog body: perpetually bogged down, ginger and worthy of display in a museum.

Least glamorous thing you've done in the name of research:

Definitely either accidentally consuming flies when surveying or falling into a boggy ditch 30 mins before a school education visit to talk about bog biodiversity (with no change of clothes).

Go-to field snack or drink:

Water, water, water (especially in summer!).

Most treasured piece of fieldwork/research kit:

My hand lens is an essential part of my tool kit in bogs and beyond.

Biggest misconception about bog ecosystems in your research:

'Bogs are a bit dull and colourless'. Maybe in winter but when you search for the small and unnoticed, a kaleidoscope appears.

Advice to future researchers:

ALWAYS bring spare clothes especially trousers and socks, trust me.

Which bog site would you nominate to the Bog Hall of Fame?

Derryleckagh Bog, co. Down - a quaking bog with lovely transitions from fen to bog.

Fun thing to do on a bog:

Eating cranberries, if you're lucky enough to be on a bog where they grow.

Where can we find out more about your research?

newrywildlife.com - encompasses all my adventures in nature.





Name: Hannah Mealy



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What aspect of peatlands do you research?

Greenhouse gas dynamics from peatlands.

Who or what got you into peatlands?

My PhD was directly related to peatlands.

My bog-related superhero name would be...

The Bog Woman.

Which bog species do you most identify with and why?

Sphagnum all species of it! It's one of the most beautiful colours and resilient plants and of course it's also known as the bog builder and is the core of the bog.

Least glamorous thing you've done in the name of research: Got down and dirty in a bog drain to try get water flowing through one of our instruments. My high vis were no longer high vis afterwards.

Go-to field snack or drink:

Doritos chilli heat wave! Warm you up on a cold day on the bog.

Most treasured piece of fieldwork/research kit:

My eddy Constance tower that sits 15 m tall in a natural woodland on peat soils.

The biggest misconception about bog ecosystems in your research:

Some people say bogs are barren but if you look closely they are a host for so many plants and insects.

Advice to future researchers:

Never underestimate the bog!

Which bog site would you nominate to the Bog Hall of Fame?

Lullymore bog.

Fun thing to do on a bog:

Play with Sphagnum!





Name: Jamie Rohu



What aspect of peatlands do you research?

History; the politics of bogland transition through time.

Who or what got you into peatlands?

A Masters project.

My bog-related superhero name would be...

Peatnik.

Which bog species do you most identify with and why?

Bog asphodel. Changes throughout the year, just like the bog itself.

Least glamorous thing you've done in the name of research:

Got soaking in freezing water in Sheheree Bog in a bitter cold February.

Go-to field snack or drink:

Flavahans oat flapjacks!

Most treasured piece of fieldwork/research kit:

iPhone for the pictures.

Biggest misconception about bog ecosystems in your research:

That Eamon Ryan closed Bord na Móna!

Advice to future researchers:

Immerse yourself in the landscape.

Which bog site would you nominate to the Bog Hall of Fame?

Scohaboy Bog - incredible community restoration effort.

Fun thing to do on a bog:

Take photographs. You can geolocate them and see changes through time.

Where can we find out more about your research?

See my Research Gate profile.





Name: Cathal Ryan



What aspect of peatlands do you research?

Investigating variability in past climate and palaeoecology and their impact on carbon stores.

Who or what got you into peatlands?

Growing up County Kildare, with a lot of exposure to peatlands sparked an early interest.

My bog-related superhero name would be...

The Stratigrapher of Time.

Which bog species do you most identify with and why?

Cladonia rangiferina (Reindeer lichen) - appears delicate, yet survives in an extreme environment.

Least glamorous thing you've done in the name of research:

Peat ground by pestle and mortar....

Go-to field snack or drink:

Cheese and ham sandwiches with a flask of tea.

Most treasured piece of fieldwork/research kit:

My waterproof notebook (Rite in the Rain).

The biggest misconception about bog ecosystems in your research:

That peatlands, especially as larger complexes, can be generically labelled by a type (i.e. raised bog, blanket bog)

Advice to future researchers:

Sandwiches and tea, with a seat mat..

Which bog site would you nominate to the Bog Hall of Fame?

Garranbaun Bog, Slieve Bloom Mountains.

Fun thing to do on a bog:

Collect heather and meadowsweet for tea making.

Where can we find out more about your research?

<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Cathal-Ryan-6/>





Name: Md Shamsuzzaman



What aspect of peatlands do you research?

Carbon emissions under peatland restoration.

Who or what got you into peatlands?

Dr. Kari Minkkinen (Finland), Dr. Owen Naughton, and Dr. Shane Regan (Ireland).

My bog-related superhero name would be...

Flux Guardian.

Which bog species do you most identify with and why?

Cotton grass (high density), Sphagnum (desired), and Sundew (the beauty).

Least glamorous thing you've done in the name of research:

The constant battle not to fall over while carrying expensive instruments across soggy peat.

Go-to field snack or drink:

Fresh tomato and water - simple, refreshing, and keeps me going.

Most treasured piece of fieldwork/research kit:

Rain gear and boots - the true heroes of Irish fieldwork.

The biggest misconception about bog ecosystems in your research:

Restoration is seen as costly, but it's invaluable.

Advice to future researchers:

Good boots = good science.

Which bog site would you nominate to the Bog Hall of Fame?

All Saints Bog SAC.

Fun thing to do on a bog:

Exploring beautiful bog species.

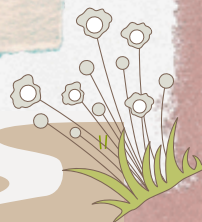
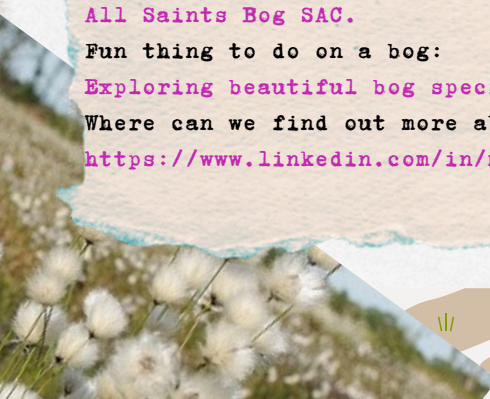
Where can we find out more about your research?

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/md-shamsuzzaman/>

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Get in touch



Girley Bog Trip

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This zine was created with the support of Meath County Council Arts Office.

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www.abogslife.com

Clár Éire Ildánach
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Programme

