

The IPS is an organisation of corporate and individual members dedicated to the responsible management and Wise Use of peatlands and peat. It promotes the gathering, exchange and communication of knowledge and experience. The Society serves all those interested in peat and peatlands including the scientific, industrial and commercial, and regulatory communities. It respects the economic, social and environmental values of the peatland resource. Currently the IPS has more than 1,500 individual and institutional members from 44 countries.

Me&Peat Photo Contest for Tullamore

As the work of IPS is manifold and includes many matters not only related to “wet”lands but also drained, afforested and degraded peatlands and a lot of broader issues, we have decided to launch a “**me&peat – my peatland workplace**” photo contest. This includes photographs of pristine peatlands how we encounter them during summer, but also laboratories, greenhouses, teaching, office work, libraries and other ways how you work with peat and peatlands in your own country. You can take photos, paint or use your phone just to take a quick selfie. Please send all photos by **1 May** to ips@peatsociety.org or post them directly in the special competition folder on our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/peatsociety. The best 20-30 photos will be on display during the IPS Annual Meetings and “A new conversation on peatlands” Colloquy in Ireland and three winners will be announced on the same occasion. Each person can send up to 3 photos. The final decision on the winners will be made by the IPS Secretariat.

Peatlands – A New Conversation – Mark the date!

Preparations for the event in Tullamore are well underway. The Irish Peat Society will be hosting this year's **IPS Annual Assembly** and the website and registration will be open in the coming weeks. In the meantime be sure to put the dates in your calendar: **7 - 11 June 2015**. The programme includes a number of field trips, masterclasses and plenty of opportunities to talk about peatlands. The social and arts programme are not to be missed. Sign up virtually here: www.facebook.com/events/665566623563847/?ref=73&source=1. More details will follow soon. (Catherine Farrell)

Campaign: Wise Use & Climate Change books for € 20

Now in February we are offering all *Wise Use of Mires and Peatlands* (Joosten/Clarke) and *Peatlands and Climate Change* (Strack) books for just € 20 including mailing costs. You can order by sending an email with your full address details to [susann.warnecke \(at\) peatsociety.org](mailto:susann.warnecke@peatsociety.org). Payment can be done vial PayPal (credit card) or bank transfer. We will send you an invoice by email or post after we have received your order. All IPS publications that can still be ordered in print are listed at www.peatsociety.org/publications.

World Wetlands Day 2015 on 2 February

IPS and its National Committees and Commissions are following celebrations of World Wetlands Day, which is promoted worldwide by the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (www.ramsar.org). The day marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea. Each year since 1997, the Ramsar Secretariat has provided materials so that government agencies, non-governmental organizations, conservation organizations, and groups of citizens can help raise public awareness about the importance and value of wetlands. If you would like to have your event listed at the IPS website or write a report for Peatlands International, send us an email to [susann.warnecke \(at\) peatsociety.org](mailto:susann.warnecke@peatsociety.org).

Online Courses at the University of Oxford, UK

The University of Oxford is offering two online courses from the postgraduate part-time Ecological Survey Techniques programme in February. The first course is a five-week course entitled, “Field Techniques for Surveying Birds” and will commence on **11 February 2015**. The deadline for registration is on **4 February 2015**. Registration may be done from the following link: <http://ow.ly/lkA3Q>. The second course is a ten-week course entitled, “Data Analysis in Ecology:

Statistics for Field Biologists and Ecologists” and will commence on **25 February 2015**. The deadline for registration is on **18 February 2015**. Registration may be done via <http://ow.ly/lkAdw>. The University also offers a one-day training course on Woodland Ecology and Management. The course will take place on **20 June 2015**. Further information may be found at <http://ow.ly/lkAng>. (Fiona Mwacharo, IPS)

Register for the 21st PERG Symposium in Canada

The Peatlands Ecology Research Group (PERG) will be hosting its 21st annual workshop in Waterloo, Canada on **18 February 2015** and they would like to invite all those who are interested in participating. There will also be a student poster session on **17 February**, in which students will have the opportunity to present posters that are in conjunction with the theme of the symposium. The symposium will be discussing, among other things, the restoration and reclamation of peatlands and the effects of mineral source extraction on peatlands in Canada. You can register via the following link: www.regonline.ca/Register/Checkin.aspx?EventID=1659602. (Fiona Mwacharo, IPS)

State Government of Lower Saxony (Germany) Protects Agriculture from Needs for Peat Extracting Industry

Under the pretext of implementing climate protection on peatlands, the state government of Lower Saxony had planned to designate about 100,000 ha of raised bogs and fens as areas of priority for the preservation of peat and restoration of peatlands, as formulated in the State Regional Planning Program. All peatland areas previously designated for peat extraction (ca. 21,500 ha) were affected by this plan. Due to massive protests voiced by farmers as the main users of peatlands, the Minister of Agriculture of Lower Saxony recently reflected that it is not his intention to restrict peatland use for agriculture, but to phase out peat extraction in Lower Saxony. Therefore, the unduly controversial draft of the State Regional Planning Program is to be revised, referring only to peat preservation and not to peatland restoration. Thus, agricultural peatland use as at present would still be possible and competition for peatland use between farmers and peat industry would be eliminated. The new draft – expected in March this year – will not be subject to a new participatory procedure. (Tanja Constabel (IVG), translated by Gerald Schmilewski)

International Mires Symposium in Petrozavodsk, Russia

An international symposium entitled “Mires of Northern Europe: Biodiversity, Dynamics, Management” will be held in Russia, Republic of Karelia, Petrozavodsk, during **2 - 5 September 2015**. Mire ecosystems are matter of great importance in biosphere functioning. Mires are essential parts of landscapes in the Arctic and Boreal zones. They occupy extensive ranges and have great economical importance on the North of the European part of Russia. Key topics planned to discuss on the symposium are:

1. Diversity and structure of mire ecosystems: flora, vegetation and biotopes of mires;
2. Typology and mapping of mires;
3. Dynamics and functions of intact and transformed mire ecosystems;
4. Adaptation of mires to changing environment;
5. Resources, management and protection of paludified lands.

Working languages: Russian and English. Synchronic translation for English-speakers is expected to be provided. The symposium will consist of plenary talks, work in oral and poster sessions, and excursions to mire sites nearby. If you are interested in participation the symposium please contact mire2015 @ krc.karelia.ru before **16 February**. Abstract submission deadline is **15 May 2015**. (Oleg Kuznetsov, RAS Karelian Research Center Institute of Biology)

EEF Dinner Debate in Brussels

The European Energy Forum invites all MEPs to a dinner-debate hosted by its Associate Member Westinghouse, dealing with “The IEA’s World Energy Outlook 2014: What are the implications for the EU’s 2030 Climate and Energy Framework?”. The event is held on **24 February 2015**, Brussels, 19.00, MEPs Restaurant, European Parliament. Participation is open to all MEPs interested in energy issues. Please contact the EEF if you are an MEP and you wish to take part in the debate. Registration is open until **17 February**: <http://ow.ly/lkz9r>.