The Commitment to Responsible Peat Use



scotch whisky association

The Commitment to Responsible Peat Use (2nd Edition)

For over two hundred years peat and Scotch Whisky have been inextricably linked. The harvesting and combustion of this unique organic material is an essential component in the production of some of the most famous Scotch Whiskies in the world. It is burned during the malting process to impart a distinctive 'peatiness' to malted barley which in turn contributes to the character of the final spirit. Highly recognisable, peat smoke is amongst the most memorable aromas and flavours in Scotch Whisky.

Peat's importance to the category as one of its influential flavours and aromas is set out in the Technical File for Scotch Whisky; the legal framework defining the Scotch Whisky category. Alongside being present in all peated single Scotch Whiskies produced in Scotland, a majority of the highest selling blended scotch whiskies (a category which comprises over 85% of the market) also rely on the inclusion of a peated influence. As a result, the importance of peat to the Scotch Whisky industry cannot be understated, with peated Scotch Whisky acting as a cornerstone of the £7.1bn in gross value added (GVA) by the industry to the UK economy.[1]

However, although peat is vital to the production of numerous Scotch Whiskies, the peatlands from which it is harvested are also some of the most valuable ecosystems on Earth. Whilst only accounting for just 3% of the planet's land surface, peatlands are our most effective terrestrial carbon store.[2] A sizeable percentage of peatlands can be found in Scotland where they cover an estimated 20% of the country's landmass and store around 1600 million tonnes of carbon.[3] In addition to locking in vast quantities of carbon, healthy peatlands can support biodiversity through plant species such as sphagnum moss and contribute to local water quality. Despite this importance, roughly 80% of Scotland's peatlands are degraded.[4] The reasons for degradation are numerous, ranging from the drainage of peatlands for agriculture and commercial forestry, burning and grazing management, the expansion of energy infrastructure, and peat extraction for the purposes of industry use and home heating. In their degraded state, peatlands are a net-emitter of carbon, contributing to climate change. The impacts go beyond this too, with degraded peatlands increasing flood risk and harming biodiversity as well releasing sediment into waterways which can increase costs for water treatment plants.[5] In recent years, NGOs and consumers have begun to exert pressure on Government and businesses to change their approach to peatlands and step-up their restoration activity.

[1] *Facts & Figures.* Scotch Whisky Association [last accessed 17/02/2025]. Available at : https://www.scotch-whisky.org.uk/industry-insights/facts-figures/

[2] *About Peatlands.* IUCN [last accessed 17/02/2025]. Available at: https://www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org/about-peatlands#:~:text=Peatlands%20cover%203%25%20of%20the,in%20all%20the%20world's%20forests.

[3] *Why Restore Peatlands', Scotland's Soils* [last accessed 18/10/22]. Available at : https://soils.environment.gov.scot/resources/peatland-restoration/#:~:text=Peatlands%20are%20a%20key%20part,1600%20million%20tonnes%20of%20carbon.

[4] *Securing a green recovery on a path to net zero: climate change plan 2018–2032,* ScotGov [last accessed 17/10/22]. Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/securing-green-recovery-path-net-zero-update-climate-change-plan-20182032/pages/12/

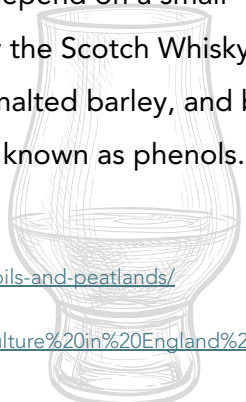
[5] *Peatland Damage.* IUCN [last accessed 17/02/2025]. Available at: https://www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org/about-peatlands/peatland-damage#:~:text=Frequent%20repeat%20burning%20can%20degrade,sustainable%20grouse%20and%20livestock%20production.

This culminated in a commitment by the Scottish Government to invest £250m to restore 250,000 hectares of degraded peatland by 2030.[6] This multi-annual investment will deliver peatland restoration activities through a number of partners in public, private and third sectors, part of which is co-ordinated by NatureScot.

Compared to the overall quantities of peat displaced annually in Scotland by both peat-dependent industries such as horticulture and for the purposes of infrastructural projects carried out across the country, the amount required to produce Scotch Whisky annually is very small. Variations in weight caused by water content make calculating the exact quantities of peat extracted for the purposes of producing peated malt for Scotch Whisky difficult, but it has been estimated by the Maltsters Association of Great Britain (MAGB) that 8,000 tonnes of peat was used in the production of Scotch Whisky in 2023. Though a small portion of the full volume of peat displaced across Scotland annually, the industry readily acknowledges that responsibly using the peat we do extract is a fundamental component of our environmental obligations. No peat use is negligible in terms of impact on the environment, and it must be guided by principles of responsible land management, efficiency, and a comprehensive programme of restoration and stewardship. Furthermore, with the anticipated ban on the retail sale of peat for other uses such as horticulture and gardening following the Scottish Government's 2023 consultation and subsequent report of initial findings on Banning the Retail Sale of Peat[7], there is a greater focus than ever on the Scotch Whisky industry.

Understanding the Peat Supply Chain

A majority of the approximately 8,000 tonnes of peat extracted annually for use in Scotch Whisky production is sourced from independent suppliers by third-party maltsters who produce the peated malt that is sold to distillers. This means that many members of the SWA that produce a peated whisky may be one step removed from the peat supply chain – dependent instead on the maltster producing their peated malt. By comparison, a number of other SWA member companies maintain their own malting facilities and operate as 'distiller-maltsters'. Most distiller-maltsters directly maintain their own peat extraction site owned or managed by their company to provide for their malting facilities. Overall, there are nine peating facilities which produce peated malt for the industry that depend on a small number of peat sources. The estimated 8,000 tonnes of peat extracted for use by the Scotch Whisky industry in 2023 produced 64,000 tonnes of peated malt. The 'peatiness' of this malted barley, and by extension scotch, is measured by assessing the quantity of a chemical compound known as phenols.



[6] *Peat Extraction Impact Assessment*. DEFRA [last accessed 03/02/23]. Available at: https://consult.defra.gov.uk/soils-and-peatlands/endingtheretailsaleofpeatinhorticulture/supporting_documents/Consultation%20Impact%20Assessment%20%20Ending%20the%20Retail%20Sale%20of%20Peat%20in%20Horticulture%20in%20England%20and%20Wales.pdf

[7] *Ending the Sale of Peat: Consultation Analysis*. ScotGov. [last accessed 17/02/2025]. Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/ending-sale-peat-scotland-analysis-consultation-responses/

The Commitment to Responsible Peat Use

Against this backdrop, the SWA produced the Commitment to Responsible Peat Use (CRPU) in 2023. This document provided a high-level, peer reviewed outline of our ambition to achieve a sustainable future for peat in the Scotch Whisky industry and the actions taken to do so. The activity is split between three pillars: Responsible Extraction, Optimisation and Efficiency, and Peatland Restoration and Stewardship. All three of these pillars must be addressed to realise our goal to be nationally regarded as responsible users of this unique resource.

The commitment has been refreshed by the SWA's Peat Supply Chain Working Group in 2025. This group consists of key peat-dependent Scotch Whisky producers, industry scientists from the Scotch Whisky Research Institute (SWRI) and representatives from the Maltsters' Association of Great Britain (MAGB).

Pillar 1 (Responsible Extraction): The SWA will require the highest environmental standards of care to be applied to its members' extraction sites as is determined by expert advice and their site-specific restoration plans. We will work with independent experts to develop a best practice standard in peat extraction for the industry.

Pillar 2 (Optimising the Malting Process): The SWA will work closely with SWRI and MAGB to support research to increase the efficiency of the peating of malt process to reduce emissions and optimise peat use.

Pillar 3 (Peatland Restoration): The SWA will promote peatland restoration efforts across the industry by strengthening the relationships between member companies and the bodies spearheading restoration. As industry leaders, we will drive an increase in peatland restoration undertaken by our membership.

How are we held accountable?

In order to ensure that we continue to reflect the current priorities in peatland protection, the SWA bi-ennially reviews and reissues the CRPU, seeking input from NGOs, government bodies and our members where appropriate. The responsibility for driving activity tied to the three pillars of the Commitment to Responsible Peat Use lies with the SWA's Peat Supply Chain Working Group. This working group was formed in 2023 as part of the CRPU's launch and consists of experienced representatives from across the peat supply chain. The group also enjoys input from a range of experienced third-party NGOs who are positioned to guide the industry and works alongside other groups of industry experts committed to achieving a responsible future for peat use. This includes the Scotch Whisky Research Institute's Peat Research Group and the Maltsters' Association of Great Britain's Kiln Efficiency Working Group.

PILLAR 1: Responsible Extraction

Following the publication of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) by the Scottish Government in 2023, new protections have been introduced for Scotland's peatlands. Under Policy 5e in the framework, development proposals for new commercial extraction sites and extensions to existing extraction sites are subject to increased conditions before consent is granted by local authorities.[8] The SWA welcomes the increased protections which are provided through NPF4, and we are intent on doing all we can to support the ongoing regulation of peat extraction. The SWA is committed to taking the initiative to not only meet our legal obligations as peat consumers and harvesters as outlined in government policy but to exceed them. We will leverage our influence to work alongside member companies and supply chain partners to ensure higher standards across the peat supply chain.

Encouraging Best Practice

In order to deliver on our ambitions within the CRPU, working with independent peatland experts is crucial. With the support of these experts, the SWA is committed to defining what 'best practice in peat extraction' means to our industry by the end of 2025. In defining best practice, the Association wishes to ensure that peat is extracted in a manner that is as sustainable as possible; dealing minimal harm to the surface of a peatland, limiting emissions from degraded tracts of peatland, and leaving an environment that can be most effectively restored through an ambitious restoration plan. Once this definition is developed, the SWA will aim to produce a framework for best practice in peat extraction, in collaboration with NGOs and other experts. The framework will provide additional perspective specific to the Scotch Whisky industry and be a required commitment for members with peat extraction sites. All members will consult the standards set within the framework in their dealings with third-party suppliers as we seek to further embed responsible peat use across the peat supply chain. The SWA will seek the input of vital supply chain partners in the development of the framework to ensure that the final publication – expected in Q4 2025 – accurately accounts for the variety of extraction sites used by the Scotch Whisky industry. We will also confer with leading NGOs and seek third-party consultancy support where appropriate to develop a framework that is fit for purpose.



[8] *Nation Planning Framework 4*. ScotGov [last accessed 17/02/2025]. Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4/

Industry case study: SEFARI & SWA Research Project

One way in which the SWA is seeking to progress this aim is by working with the Scottish Environment, Food, Agriculture Research Institutions (SEFARI) to develop a bespoke research opportunity that will inform the SWA's understanding of best practice in peat extraction whilst aligning with the UN's Sustainability Development Goals as well as the Scottish Government's National Outcomes.[9]

Supported by the SWA, the Scottish Government and our supply chain partners, a small research team will set out in 2025 to analyse the peat extraction methods employed in Scotland and beyond in terms of cost, complexity, scale and their impact on the environment. The SWA is interested in learning which of these methods cause minimal harm to the extracted peatland and enable the most effective restoration following the end of the extraction lifespan of the site whilst taking into account that the nature of some peat extraction sites can make certain restoration methods unviable. The research team will also review the range of peatland restoration methods used across the globe to determine which are best employed on extracted peatland. Taking all of these findings into account, the partnership will propose an outline of best practice in peat extraction for the Scotch Whisky industry which the SWA is committed to adopting and promoting to its membership and the wider supply chain.

In the meantime, the SWA is committed to supporting our members with extraction sites to achieve good practice as required by the Scottish Government and guided by leading authorities such as NatureScot's Peatland Action. This will be achieved via an online Peatland Forum which is being developed to support the CRPU. This forum will be open to all SWA members and will provide signposting to Scotch Whisky distillers, maltsters and partners, that directs them to expert information on best practice in peat extraction, guidance on extending permissions, and more.

Following the publication of the CRPU, the SWA is also committed to implementing a comprehensive engagement programme with peat extraction sites managed by both our members and third-party suppliers on which the industry depends. Site visits are opportunity for site managers to share key learnings with other industry stakeholders and further best practice, as well as demonstrate progress towards implementation of their restoration plans which are required under extraction licences. Whilst the ultimate responsibility of ensuring compliance with NPF4 and other policy falls with local planning authorities, this engagement programme will help to reinforce the work carried out by these bodies and ensure compliance with planning conditions. To ensure that high standards are maintained across the sector, we now require each of our member-managed extraction sites to host one site visit at least every three years. Doing so will ensure that no sites operate without consistent engagement with the

[9] *Funding Call: SEFARI Gateway Fellowship on best practice for permitted peat extraction and restoration.* SEFARI. [last accessed 17/02/2025]. Available at: https://sefari.scot/news/funding-call-sefari-gateway-fellowship-on-best-practice-for-permitted-peat-extraction

association and the wider peat supply chain. By implementing these new obligations on our sites, SWA members can work to hold themselves to account and meet the required standards of care.

Industry Case Study: Hobbister Moor

The drive by the SWA to defining best practice in peat extraction comes at a time when individual companies within the Scotch Whisky industry are assessing their own methods. An example of this is Edrington and their Highland Park distillery. Based in Orkney, Highland Park own and manage their own source of peat at Hobbister Moor under license from Orkney Islands Council and work in close collaboration with the RSPB for the benefit of the local wildlife, including red-listed species such as Hen Harrier and Curlew. In 2024, they began actively seeking to develop and deliver plans for the responsible extraction, restoration and protection of peat by recruiting a Peatland Management Project Officer in collaboration with the Environmental Research Institute (ERI).

The objective of this associate is to deliver a new peatland management strategy for Hobbister Moor that aligns with the ambitions of the Commitment to Responsible Peat Use. As part of this, they will review and enhance historical restoration work, advance peatland monitoring methods, optimise the process of necessary peat cutting for the purposes of maximising both restoration potential and whisky flavour, and also lead on marketing and information strategies to drive wider community interest in Hobbister Moor. In the interests of furthering best practice for the wider industry, learnings from this completed strategy will be shared with the Peat Supply Chain Working Group. The SWA strongly supports the work of its members to forge a path towards responsible extraction activity at their peat extraction sites as we seek to define best practice in peat extraction for the industry at large.

Minimising Impact

The methods of peat extraction used in sites that provide for the Scotch Whisky Industry are varied. Many use tractor-pulled 'sausage' or 'screw' extruders whilst other, often smaller-scale sites still employ traditional cutting methods. Larger full depth extraction sites may employ 'deep-dug' methods using heavy machinery to dig increased volumes of peat. The potential impacts these different methods have on the surface flora and the peat are also varied; with certain methods of extraction causing considerably more disturbance than others. This highlights the importance of the restoration plans and their early enactment to ensure effective restoration.

To be responsible users of peat, due consideration must be given to extraction practices. Following the development of the CRPU, members of the SWA are expected to conduct an assessment of their extraction methods alongside any scheduled review of their restoration plan. These assessments are to be conducted following a similar process to their restoration plan; relying on internal, external and

SWA expertise where appropriate. Optimal draining techniques, run-off control, vegetation placement and other examples of best practice should be considered as part of this assessment and employed where possible. Whilst the SWA recognises that the volume of peat required from certain sites can render some less intrusive methods of extraction unviable, all effort must be made to maximise a site's restoration potential by minimising the effect of extraction methods. Certain methods of extraction designed to retain the surface flora of a peatland that have now been developed hold the potential to increase the cost of peat extraction for the Scotch Whisky industry by up to eight times.[10] The SWA recognises that a movement towards these less invasive methods of extraction, while more costly, are necessary should the industry wish to continue to be considered responsible users of peat and it will work with its members to ensure that the necessary care and consideration is given to the adoption of the most responsible extraction practices.

Industry case study: Castlehill & Port Ellen Maltings

In accordance with these principles, Diageo have taken steps to evaluate and then reduce its impact upon its peat extraction site with the intention of minimising the volume of peat that is extracted and lowering associated emissions and environmental impact. Castlehill is the peat source for the company's Port Ellen Maltings on Islay and currently an expanded restoration plan is being drawn up to restore areas of the moss that will not be harvested or have already been extracted from. This revised restoration plan will also set out a guideline for how extraction on the moss can move towards less invasive harvesting techniques.

Acting with Transparency

Under current extraction licensing laws, a prerequisite to gaining extraction permission is that sites engaged in peat extraction must have a restoration plan. However, due to local council resource constraints responsible for monitoring the enactment of restoration plans, there is a risk that some are not carried out or sufficiently detailed to effectively meet the operational and restoration requirements of the sites. To help address this, member companies that own or manage an extraction site have now committed to informing us of their restoration plan. Furthermore, we require that members actively share important updates with the Association on the progress of restoration work. These developments will be collected as case studies conveyed to the wider membership and articulated to external bodies responsible for peatland restoration. Working to build this timeline of industry progress will have multiple functions; from allowing us to be more transparent on peat with our partners to better holding our members to account.



[10] *Estimation taken from consultancy work commissioned by the SWA from a peatland expert.*

Looking Beyond the Extraction Site

The Scotch Whisky industry's approach to peat extraction is no longer limited to the approaches that have defined our peat use for multiple centuries. Alongside seeking to understand best practice and promoting the use of new, less invasive extraction methods, the SWA and its partners in MAGB and SWRI have begun to broaden our horizons to assess the viability of an entirely different, alternative solution to the sourcing of peat that has the potential to minimise the need for the industry to continue with current extraction practices.

Across Scotland, important infrastructural and energy projects have the potential to displace up to many hundreds of thousands of tonnes of peat a year. Even though companies hold obligations to ensure that as much of this peat as possible is used in the service of a restoration project, a significant quantity remains displaced. With the support of the SWA and MAGB, SWRI are spearheading a study aimed at assessing the viability of taking peat displaced by construction projects in other industries for the purposes of making peated malt (as opposed to producing peated malt using traditionally 'extracted peat'). This work is being undertaken alongside partners in the energy industry with industrial trials now taking place in selected maltsters across Scotland to create peated malt using 'displaced peat'. A second phase of this trial will involve a selection of SWA distillers creating a peated whisky using the peated malt produced.

Throughout this industrial trial, careful analysis is being undertaken to understand if such a solution has the viability for widespread adoption. Location and moisture content play a critical role in establishing the flavour profile of a peated Scotch Whisky and the inevitable variations of these factors when infrastructural projects are used as a source of peat pose a significant challenge to the widespread adoption of displaced peat over traditionally extracted peat from a consistent source. Nevertheless, the SWA recognises the potential that displaced peat holds to reduce the carbon footprint and environmental impact associated with current peat extraction. Should trials of displaced peat produce a Scotch Whisky that is within acceptable parameters in terms of flavour despite its inherent variances, further work will then begin to assess the long-term logistics of using displaced peat as a standard source of peat for the Scotch Whisky industry.

PILLAR 2: Optimising the Malting Process

An important element of using peat responsibly is a determination to optimise the peat we harvest. Maximising the efficiency of the malting process helps us to minimise overall emissions produced from burning peat and further reduce the amount required by the industry and its associated environmental impact. To achieve this, the SWA works closely with the Scotch Whisky Research Institute (SWRI) and the Maltsters' Association of Great Britain (MAGB) through MAGB's Kiln Efficiency Working Group and SWRI's Peat Research Group which aim to identify ways to increase efficiency and reduce emissions associated with peat use in malting operations.

The priorities of SWRI's Peat Research Group include:

Increasing our understanding of congeners (chemical components) responsible for peaty flavours to allow better monitoring of peat within the malting process. In 2023/24, SWRI has progressed our knowledge of peaty flavour congeners, and this is allowing us to better understand how different process parameters in both maltings and distillery interact to most efficiently produce the desired flavour profile.

- **Improving efficiency in the kilning process by understanding the parameters required to optimise generation of peat smoke and its adhesion to malt.** In 2023/24, SWRI have looked at how factors such as peat composition, peat combustion temperature, air flow through the kiln, peat moisture content, malt moisture content impact on the overall profile of peat smoke compounds that are adhering to the malt. Work is now underway to identify the optimum levels of these various elements to maximise efficiency.

- **Decreasing the losses of peat congeners in the whisky making process.** In 2023/24, SWRI have carried out work to better identify where congeners are lost in the combustion process. An important outcome of this research has been the identification of an extended range of flavour congeners and a better understanding of how processes affect these congeners differently. From this we can consider how to maximise congener transfer through the process without significantly affecting overall aroma balance.

- **Assessing novel ways to change the kilning process as it is defined within the Technical File for Scotch Whisky.** In 2023/24, SWRI have been researching ways to minimise carbon emissions associated with peat use. One possibility currently being assessed is producing a peat smoke condensate to add to malt. Research into this avenue remains in early stages, but not only could such a process reduce emissions but may well provide benefits in terms of efficiency and improved control. If the analysis shows promise, there are significant legal and reputational challenges which would need careful industry consideration before research was advanced.

  In time, SWRI's research will present opportunities to further increase our efficiency and reduce extraction requirements. Key scientific developments raised in the Peat Research Group will be disseminated to our membership through the Peat Supply Chain Working Group, the SWA Member's Forum, and Peat insights page on our Members site. Looking ahead, the SWA will continue to facilitate dialogue between those driving the research on peat, our wider membership, and partners in the malting industry to ensure that the use of peat in the malting process is sustainable and led by science.

Developments in the Malting Sector

Critical to the delivery of the industry's commitment towards improving malting efficiency is close collaboration with the malting sector. In recognition of their role in achieving a sustainable future for the industry's peat use, the Maltsters' Association of Great Britain not only sit within the SWA's Peat

Supply Chain Working Group and are engaged in SWRI's Peat Research group consisting of a number of distiller-maltsters, but have also formed a Peating Kiln Efficiency Working Group to work in tandem with the growing network of peat work groups driving change in the sector.

Early in the life of this working group, a survey was undertaken using data from 2023 and a benchmark was derived so that companies could see where improvements are possible. This benchmarking will be repeated, as well as further work to identify why some companies are more efficient than others.

All companies within MAGB which produce peated malt are seeking ways to optimise the efficiency of burning peat and many are carrying out trials. Considerable investment is underway across the sector and includes the construction of new kilns which innovate on existing designs through the construction of a self-contained 'peat box', as opposed to traditional kilns and have the benefit of increased efficiency. Similarly, some sites have installed new ducting to traditional kilns which give improved control of kilning activity and better smoke flow to the malted barley. This also has the effect of boosting efficiency across the industry.

PILLAR 3: Peatland Restoration and Stewardship

Many SWA members are already engaged in the active restoration of peatland that goes beyond their potential obligations relating to their peat extraction sites. In the past number of years, the industry has conducted many such restoration projects – some of which can be learned about below – with many more in various stages of planning. Furthermore, there are a range of distilleries which are invested in adjacent land stewardship projects which contribute to supporting biodiversity and local habitat. The SWA itself has now begun to increase its own monetary support towards the delivery of peatland restoration in alignment with these members which has includes providing funding to support the work of the Ugie Peatland Partnership in the North East. In 2024, the SWA also became founding members of an exploratory group of Scottish businesses seeking to create a peatland restoration fund aimed at helping SMEs to contribute financially to peatland restoration. More details of this peatland restoration fund will be shared in due time as the structure of the fund is developed.

In addition to this, the SWA is committed to doing more to coordinate, communicate, and expand the breadth of the restoration work and stewardship carried out by our membership. Under the CRPU, we have implemented a schedule of annual events which will bring members into contact with leading NGOs and government bodies to share good practice and encourage investment in peatland restoration. These will include visits to restoration projects out with those overseen by our members to increase interaction between distillers and external organisations, industry roundta**bles** with leaders in nature restoration, and member webinars. Supplementary to this programme will be the development of a toolkit for peatland restoration in 2026 by the SWA. This will outline available support and funding and will be created with advice from consulting peatland experts which will be accessible via an online Peatland Forum in which members can communicate learnings and be informed of successful projects.

The toolkit will be aimed at smaller distillers interested in engaging in peatland restoration.

To be responsible users of peat, it is vital that the SWA continues and expands interaction with the leading NGOs and government bodies engaged in peatland restoration following the publication of the CRPU. Accordingly, the SWA is now committed to pursuing scheduled reviews with these and other organisations to discuss ongoing restoration projects and the potential for collaboration. Doing so will not only ensure that the Scotch Whisky industry is aligned with those most knowledgeable of Scotland's peatlands, but that the SWA can be ideally situated to offer effective guidance to its expanding membership on how they can best engage in peatland restoration in years to come.

Industry Case Study: An Lurg North Restoration

In 2021, Diageo undertook a £150,000 investment in a partnership project with RSPB to restore degraded peatland at An Lurg North, part of the RSPB's Abernethy Nature Reserve. This year has seen the completion of an initial assessment into this work by the RSPB which focussed on an 88-hectare area of peatland. Work included installing features such as coir logs and dams to slow the water flow and stimulate the development of sphagnum moss vegetation in key areas.

Industry Case Study: Wyvis Estate Restoration

In 2023, Whyte & Mackay carried out a restoration project on Wyvis Estate. Without restoration, the peatlands on the estate were responsible for estimated annual GHG losses of 57,083 tCO2e and spanned an area of 447 acres (over 250 football pitches). As part of the restoration project, the company introduced 7,143 peat dams to rewet affected areas of the blanket bog and carried out 57kms of reprofiling alongside 7,870m2 of spot turfing and bunding. Restoration of the bog has resulted in the growth of a number of species on the estate, including the endangered Dotterel.

Industry Case Study: Peatland Water SancturyTM Initiative

In 2021, Suntory Global Spirits launched their Peatland Water Sanctuary™ (PWS) Initiative. In 2024, there are now projects underway in five locations across Scotland in Gartly Forest near Ardmore Distillery, Airds Moss Reserve, Machrie and Grianan Moss, the Oa Nature Reserve, and Craigculter Moss. By April 2025, a total of 361 hectares of peatland have been restored through the PWS within an additional 800 hectares in various stages of planning. The initiative has seen the company collaborate with RSPB Scotland alongside third-party landowners and Northern Peat & Moss.

Industry Case Study: Dougarie Estate Restoration Project

Between November 2024 and February 2025, isle of Arran Distillers partnered with Caledonian Climate to deliver a restoration project on Dougarie Estate in North Arran alongside contractors Angus Estate Plant. The groundwork encompassed drain blocking, hagg reprofiling and gully relandscaping to return the dried peatland to its natural bog-like state and established a habitat that will allow a range of species to thrive. Isle of Arran Distillers have also committed to funding the site monitoring for the first 5 years post-restoration. This project will restore over 325 hectares and deliver an anticipated emission reductions of over 16,500 tCO2e over a 55-year period.