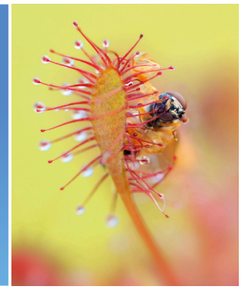
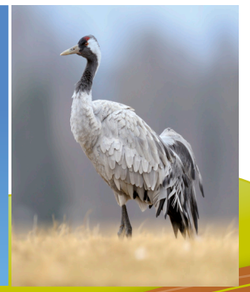
The »Hannoversche Moorgeest« is home to over 20 different species of sphagnum mosses [*Sphagnum* spec.]: the most important species in raised bogs. Only due to their specific ability to absorb and store large quantities of water, bogs come into existence.

During the largest part of the year, the moor frog [*Rana arvalis*] is a very inconspicuous inhabitant of the area. The exception is in spring: During the mating season the males turn bright blue or violet in order to impress the females.

Peat bogs are the home of sundews [*Drosera* spec.]. This carnivorous plant catches spiders and small insects with its tentacle-like leaves. The »dewdrops« on its tips contains sugar to attract possible prey and make escape impossible. Furthermore, special enzymes help in the digestion of the prey.



The common crane [*Grus grus*] inhabits the bogs with several breeding pairs. Preferred breeding sites are undisturbed and sparsely wooded areas containing wet (peat cuttings) and drier (dikes) habitats.



More informations:
www.life-moorgeest.niedersachsen.de

Responsibilities
Lower Saxony
www.umwelt.niedersachsen.de

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NATURA 2000

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LIFE+ NATURE PROJECT HANNOVERSCHE MOORGEEST

HANNOVERSCHE
MOORGEEST
A LIFE+ Project of Lower Saxony

Niedersachsen

More water into the bog

The LIFE+ Nature Project »Hannoversche Moorgeest«

The largest percentage of raised bogs in Germany can be found in Lower Saxony. Due to drainage, peat extraction and cultivation most bogs have lost their original character.
Lower Saxony therefore has a high responsibility for the protection of the last nearly pristine bogs in Germany and Central Europe.

The Bissendorfer, Helstorfer, Ottenhagener and Schwarze (»black«) bog in the »Hannoversche Moorgeest« are some of the most remarkable representatives of this habitat in the country. Because of their vulnerability and the high ecological value they are protected by the European Habitat directive and are part of the NATURA 2000-network. All of them have the potential to be restored to living bogs with growing sphagnum mosses.

With the help of the LIFE+-project »Hannoversche Moorgeest«, co-financed by the EU, it will be possible to implement measures needed to restore the water balance of all four bogs.

The Hannoversche Moorgeest

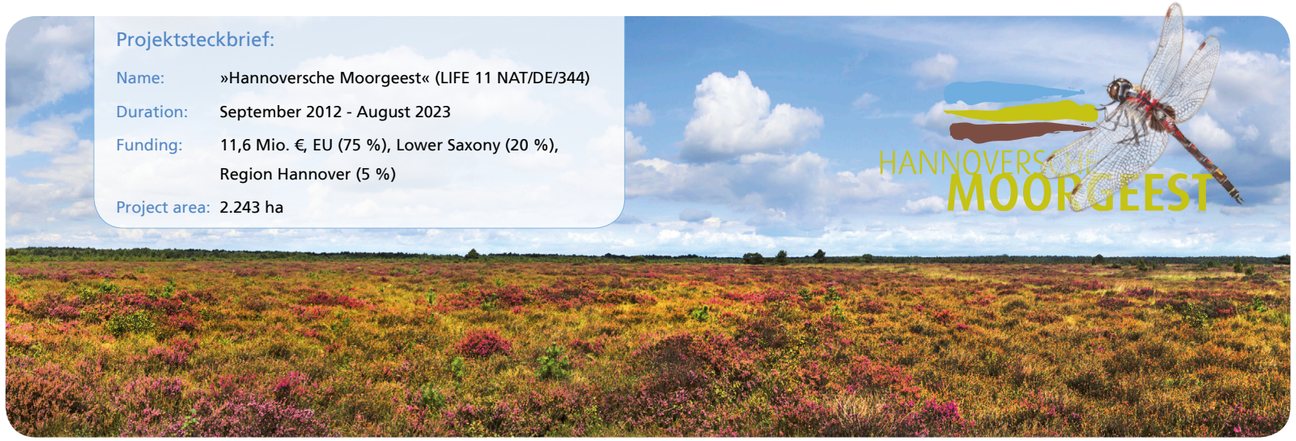
Four raised bogs to the north-west of Hannover – this is the »Hannoversche Moorgeest«. Most striking is the beauty of the landscape and its exceptional biological diversity. Over 120 habitat types and more than 1.400 plant and animal species have been recorded.

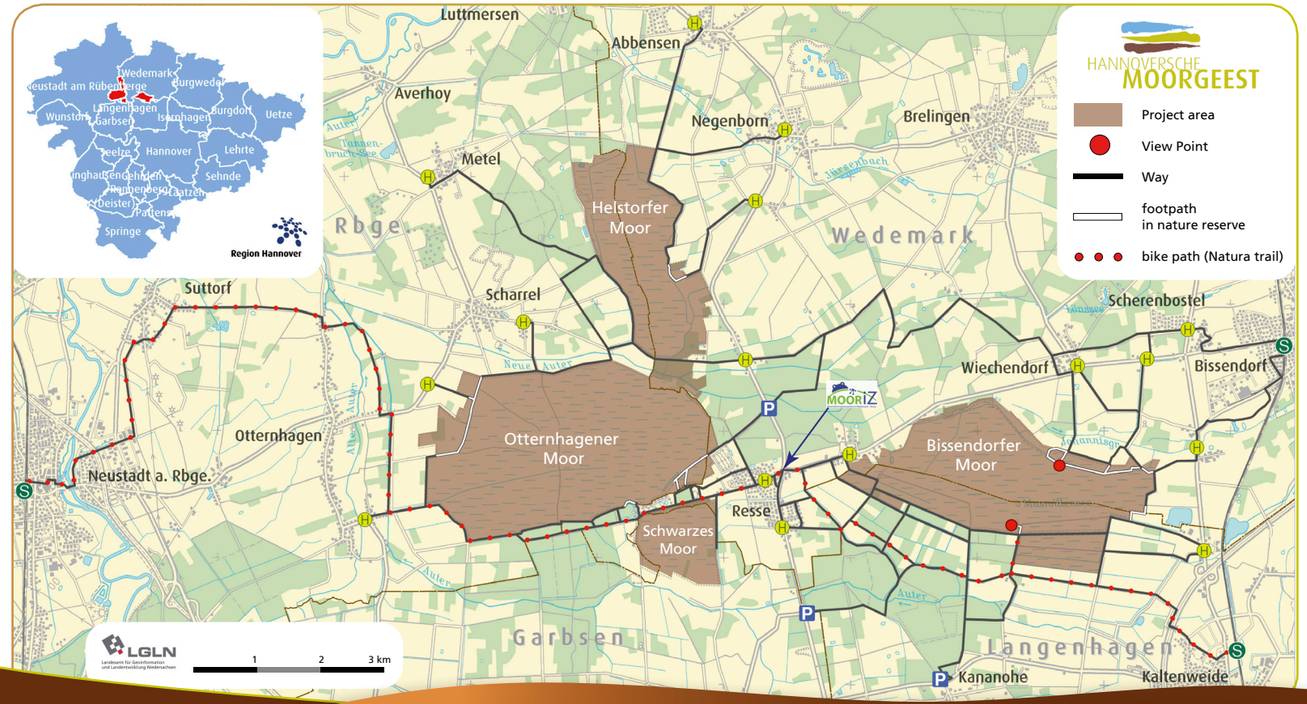
Since commercial peat extraction has never happened in the bogs, the main peat body, dating back 7.000 years, is still largely intact. Peat cutting was practised only on a small scale for fuel production. Due to these reasons a high biodiversity could develop in the bogs.

Raised bogs are wholly rain-fed and do not have contact to the groundwater table. The peat body of functioning bogs is water-logged during the entire year. Due to deep drainage ditches the water balance of the Moorgeest is severely disturbed and the peat body lacks moisture.
This leads to the disappearance of endangered and highly specialised bog species.

Projektsteckbrief:

Name:	»Hannoversche Moorgeest« (LIFE 11 NAT/DE/344)
Duration:	September 2012 - August 2023
Funding:	11,6 Mio. €, EU (75 %), Lower Saxony (20 %), Region Hannover (5 %)
Project area:	2.243 ha





Aims of the LIFE+ Project

The raised bogs are supposed to grow again. Therefore it is important to retain rainwater in the central parts of the bogs in order to re-establish a more natural water balance.

Important measures include:
- removal of drainage ditches
- installing special dikes and low weirs for water retention

The surrounding countryside will not be affected by the rising water levels of the bogs. A special program for rearrangement of agricultural lands will create the prerequisite for the implementation of the intended conservation measures. Therefore the needs and wishes of current land-users and landowners are taken into account.

Bog restoration helps the climate

Restoration of the bog water regime will stop the release of greenhouse gases, because a water-logged peat body does not mineralise. The project therefore activates an important carbon sink which helps to combat climate change.