Global Peatland Hotspot Atlas:
The State of the World's Peatlands in Maps
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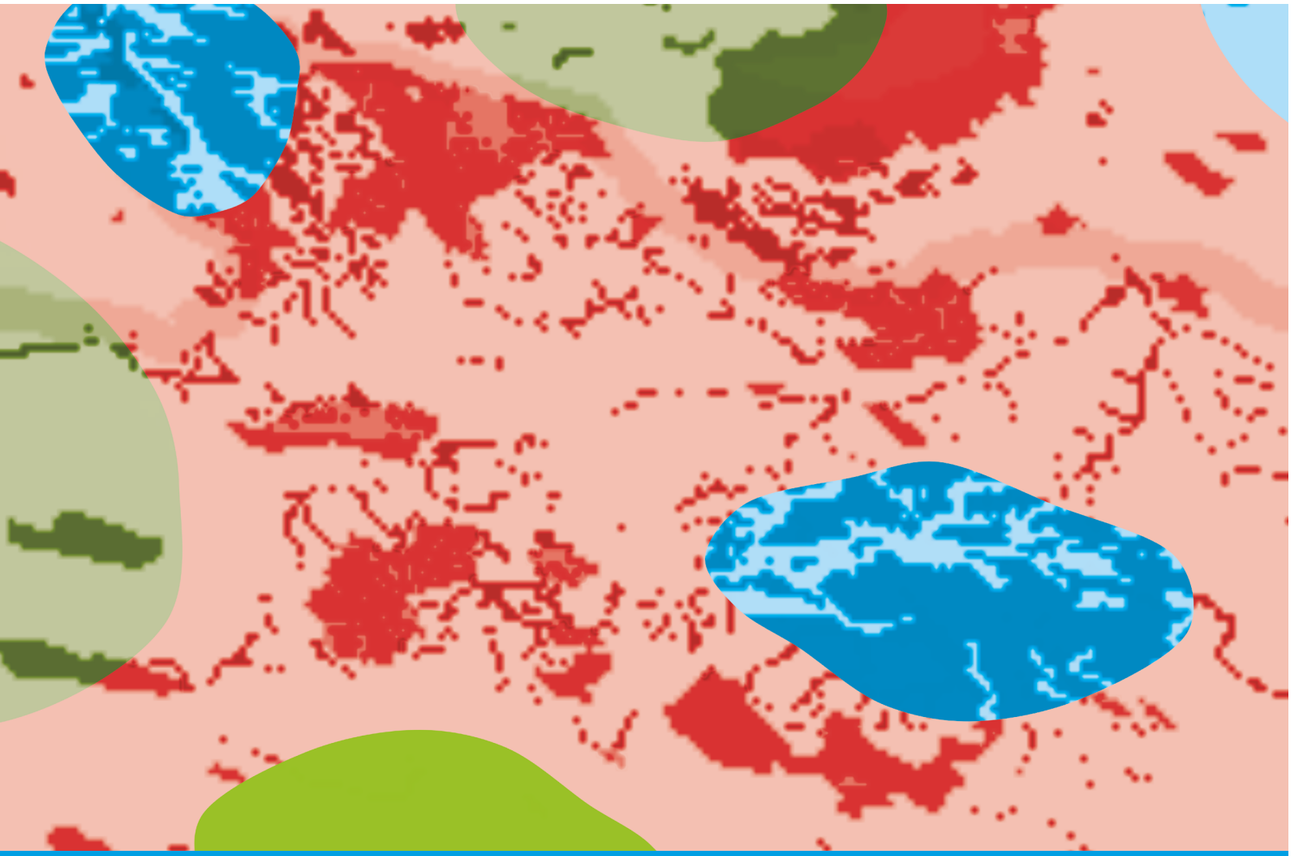
UN environment programme

Peatland protection

Effective protection of peatlands requires holistic management and a landscape approach to conserve the entire hydrological catchment and preserve its valuable ecosystem services for both people and nature.



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Authors
Alexandra Barthelmes (GMC/DUENE e.V.),
Cosima Tegetmeyer (GMC/DUENE e.V.), Hans Joosten (GMC/University of Greifswald), Patrick Scheel (UNEP).

Production, Coordination and Review
Patrick Scheel (UNEP), Jan Peters (GMC/MSF),
Dianna Kopansky (UNEP).

Design and layout
igel+ente, Büro für Gestaltung, Fotografie und Kommunikation Greifswald, Germany
Anna Knüppel & Michael Schröder (www.igelundente.de)
Nora Prinz (www.noraprinz.de)

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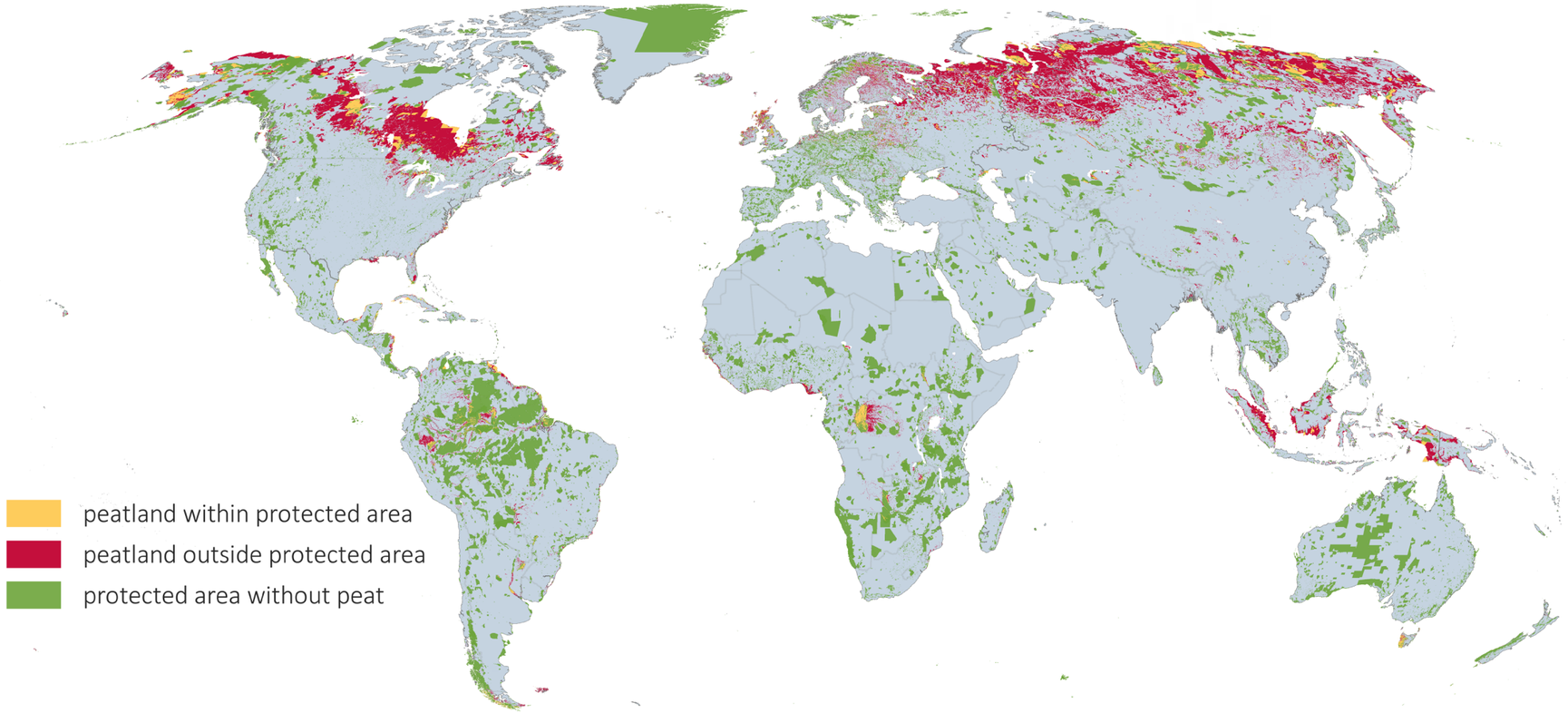
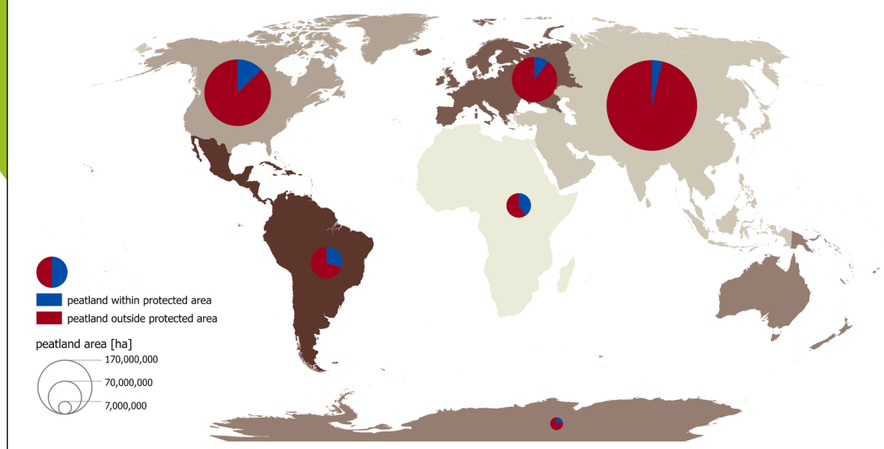


Map 1 Peatland within and outside protected areas [2, 3]



Map 2 Protected peatland area global and by region [1, 3]

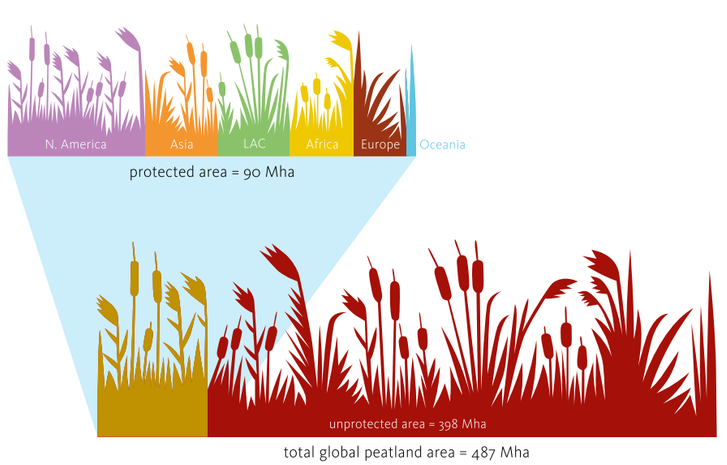


Figure 1 Protected peatland area global and by region [1, 3]

Only 19 % of the total peatland area worldwide is found in protected areas (Figure 1 [2, 3]). Africa and South America are the continents where proportionally the highest share of peatlands is within protected areas (Map 1). Effective protection requires legal protection, management planning and implementation, monitoring, and enforcement. However, being located in a protected area does not guarantee that the protected peatlands are pristine or have high ecological and hydrological integrity. Whereas, for example, a large proportion of peatlands in protected areas in northern Asia remain largely pristine, those in protected areas in Europe are partially drained and deteriorating. While the protected status of peatlands is important, it is essential to ensure that protected area regulations are also properly implemented [1].

Peatland conservation faces challenges due to various competing land uses, particularly in regions where they are extensively used for food production, highlighting the need for regionally tailored solutions that enable both protection and sustainable use. Synergies are best achieved through careful and integrated land use planning, stakeholder engagement (including Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities - IPLCs), promotion of gender-responsive approaches, and, most importantly, a solid knowledge of peatlands (including Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems – LINKS), their functioning and ecosystem services, and the environmental and social costs of degradation.

Additionally, the involvement of both women and men in peatland conservation and management is essential, as their knowledge of local ecosystems can inform sustainable practices. In many regions, women are the primary caretakers of land and resources, and empowering them to engage in peatland conservation efforts can significantly enhance effectiveness. However, women often face barriers such as underrepresentation and limited access to land rights and decision-making processes. Addressing these challenges is crucial for fostering inclusive sustainable management practices and establishing long-term strategies for peatland conservation and restoration.

Effective protection of peatlands requires holistic management and a landscape approach to conserve the entire hydrological catchment and preserve its valuable ecosystem services for both people and nature.

Sources 1. UNEP (2022) Global Peatlands Assessment – The State of the World's Peatlands: Evidence for action toward the conservation, restoration, and sustainable management of peatlands. Main Report. Global Peatlands Initiative. United Nations Environment Programme, Nairobi. 2. Greifswald Mire Centre (2022) Global Peatland Map 2.0. Underlying dataset of the UNEP Global Peatland Assessment. 3. UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2022) Protected Planet: The World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) [Online], Cambridge, UK: available at: www.protectedplanet.net