

Shared Island Initiative PEATLAND PROGRAMME



Shared Island
Initiative

CASE STUDY

Ulster Wildlife Peatlands Traineeship

Ulster Wildlife was awarded a grant through the Shared Island Initiative Peatlands Challenge Fund to provide paid training placements focused on peatland restoration.

This directly aims to address the need for building capacity in the peatland restoration sector in order to achieve the ambitious targets set out in the Northern Ireland Peatlands Strategy to 2040.

By June 2027, 12 people will have been given the opportunity to gain skills and experience that will help them pursue a career in the peatland restoration sector.

METHODS & APPROACH

This funding has allowed for a comprehensive 52-week traineeship for six people a year, providing training for individuals in short courses, accreditations, and a full year of hands-on work experience which will open up the opportunity for a career in the nature conservation sector, particularly in the area of peatland restoration.

Trainees have also been given the opportunity to carry out placements with other organisations in the sector to gain a breadth of experience and learn even more skills.

Training has focused on everything from botanical skills, GIS, health and safety and procurement.

Alongside this, trainees have taken on individual projects ranging from monitoring priority peatland bird species to marsh fritillary butterfly.



RESULTS

The first cohort completed their traineeship in March 2026. Within this time frame trainees have taken part in panel discussions at the IUCN Peatlands Conference, presented at

Stormont, and taken part in hundreds of hours of training.

As of Jan 2026, three of the six have managed to attain full time jobs in the peatland restoration sector, supporting projects that are delivering significant restoration across Northern Ireland and Ireland.

This is the ultimate positive result for the project as this not only shows the value of the programme for those taking part, but also for future restoration projects that can benefit from this increased capacity.

KEY LESSONS

Collaboration and support from others in the sector is key and makes for a more rewarding programme for the trainees involved.

Planning a full year of training and experience is a significant task that requires a dedicated staff resource to coordinate and manage.

Having the traineeship well integrated into existing staff structures helps for facilitating experiences and benefiting everyone.

