

The International Peatland Society (IPS) is an organisation of corporate and individual members dedicated to the responsible management and Wise Use of peatlands and peat. Our mission is to serve all those involved in peatlands and peat through the promotion, gathering, exchange and communication of knowledge and experience, by means of events and projects which address key issues, including climate change, biodiversity, the need for responsible use and restoration. Currently the IPS has 1486 individual, corporate, student and institutional members from 35 countries.

International Peat Congress with over 1000 participants!

The 15th International Peat Congress was held during **15 - 19 August 2016** at the Pullman Hotel Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia with over 1,000 participants from more than 30 countries. The programme included ten key note speeches, four excursions, and in total about 400 oral and poster presentations. Topics included inventory, biodiversity, conservation and functions of peatlands; peatlands and ecosystem management; peatlands after-use, restoration and rehabilitation; peat use, peatlands technology and agro-technology; responsible utilisation and management of peatlands; cultural, educational, as well as medical and socio-economic aspects of peatlands, peat and sapropel. In addition, special sessions were held on soft soil engineering, horticulture & energy, carbon storage, ecosystem services, tropical peatland biodiversity & conservation, peatland restoration and Asia Flux. The Congress showcased, one more time, that research results and opinions on peatland management are manifold and that their responsible use, including conservation, requires special attention and deep knowledge in tropical as well as temperate regions. IPS emphasises that it acts as a forum to exchange information, as expressed in its mission statement. We hope that in all member countries, and worldwide, ways can be found to allow peatland conservation, rural development, peat use and peatland restoration including poverty reduction, hydrology management and local employment following the principles of Wise Use - and keeping environmental, economic and social benefits in mind. We would like to thank the organising and scientific committee for their dedicated work, the sponsors and exhibitors for their financial support, all participants for their expertise and company, and the Malaysian hosts and hotel staff for offering us their warm-hearted famous local hospitality. The next International Peatland Congress (note the new name!) will be held in 2020 in Tallinn, Estonia under the auspices of the Estonian Peat Association. See also www.peatlands.org/events.

New IPS Executive Board Elected

At the Annual Assembly on 19 August, the National Committees of the IPS elected six new Executive Board (EB) members. The EB will consist during the period 2016-2018 of:

- Gerald Schmilewski, President, Germany
- Guus van Berckel, 1st Vice President, Netherlands
- Samu Valpola, 2nd Vice President, Finland
- Moritz Böcking, Germany
- Donal Clarke, Ireland
- Erki Niitlaan, Estonia
- Jack Rieley, United Kingdom
- Claes Rülcker, Sweden
- Paul Short, Canada

Samu Valpola will also chair the Scientific Advisory Board of the IPS. The EB decided, in addition, that representatives of the four Asian National Committees are warmly invited to participate in the work of the EB. For the contact details of the EB members and further information see www.peatlands.org/about-us or write an email to eb@peatlands.org.

Juhani Päivänen New Honorary President of the IPS

Professor Juhani Päivänen of the University of Helsinki, Finland, has been appointed new Honorary President of the IPS. Juhani has been a long-time member of the Society and influenced its work and position in many ways in Finland and internationally. In addition to his outstanding career and professional achievements, he is a true friend and

valuable peatland expert for many of us. The honorary certificate, a hornbill painting by a local artist, was handed over by the new IPS President Gerald Schmilewski to Finnish representative Maija Lampela during the General Assembly in Kuching on 19 August. Paljon onnea!

Baltic Peat Producers' Forum in Kaunas

As previously announced, the annual Baltic Peat Producers' Forum will be held in Kaunas, Lithuania during **14 - 16 September**. The main aim of the forum is to present the status and perspectives of the peat industry, to introduce the achievements of the Baltic member companies as well as to share experience among professionals from different countries. The event also includes a field excursion to the Novaraistis Ornithological Reserve. IPS President Gerald Schmilewski will present the new structure, strategy and activities of our organisation. The full programme of the conference can be found at <http://bppf2016.eu/programme>.

New Book by Polish National Committee

The Polish National Committee of the IPS has published a history of its activities in English which is a great resource also for our other local associations. The book was edited by Andrzej Lachacz and Barbara Kalisz and can be obtained via ISBN 978-83-8100-016-01. The texts contain general information about peatlands in Poland, the history and activities of the organisation, and chapters describing the work of the seven Commissions. Authors are Andrzej Lachacz, Klara Tomaszewska, Adam Bogacz, Janusz Gotkiewicz, Jan Szatyłowicz, Barbara Kalisz, Wiesław Dembek, Janusz Ostrowski, Teresa Latour, Jan Łukaszewicz, Kazimierz Tobolski, and Lech Wojciech Szajdak.

Finland Launches Ramsar Wetlands Action Plan 2016-2020

The new National Ramsar Wetlands Action Plan 2016-2020 was prepared as part of the Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in Finland for 2012-2020 and the related action plan for 2013-2020, adopted by a Government resolution in 2012. The Plan was drafted by the Ramsar Wetland Working Group, which is a cooperation network of parties working with wetlands. The member organisations of the network are committed to promoting the protection and sustainable use of wetlands in their own operations. Finland's Ramsar Wetlands Action Plan includes a review of the current state of wetlands and presents an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities in the protection and sustainable use of wetlands. Based on these, a total of 55 measures aimed to improve the state of wetlands have been established, including an estimate of the economic and environmental impacts of the plan. The documents were updated to correspond to the goals specified in the Convention on Biological Diversity (78/1994), and the EU biodiversity strategy. Finland has a total of 49 Ramsar sites, covering approximately 785,000 ha. Half of the Ramsar sites in Finland are mires. More info: www.ramsar.org/news/finland%E2%80%99s-ramsar-wetlands-action-plan-2016-2020-improving-the-condition-of-wetlands-benefiting. (Ramsar)

IUCN UK Peatland Programme Conference in November

This year's IUCN UK Peatland Programme Conference 2016 entitled "Creating a Legacy for Peatlands" will be held at the Shropshire Conference Centre, Shrewsbury, UK during **29 November - 1st December**. The conference is targeted at practitioners, policy-makers, scientists, landowners/managers, and students. The two-and-a-half day event will explore the financial, policy and regulatory implications for UK peatlands in the wake of 'Brexit', creating lasting management structures that drive forward peatland restoration and good management. Several field trip options on the second day will allow delegates to explore habitats in the area and learn more about restoration work carried out in Shropshire and its neighbouring counties. For further info see www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org/conf16.

IUCN Congress in Hawai'i – Wetland Events

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Conservation Congress 2016 will take place in the United States from **1 to 10 September** in Hawai'i. In cooperation with the National Geographic Society, IUCN will draw attention to the pressing conservation issues facing our planet as well as to proposed solutions to solve them — all the while raising the profile of IUCN and its mission. The programme reveals two peatland events and a long list on wetland activities, e.g. on mapping, cranes, indigenous people and Peru: www.iucnworldconservationcongress.org.