Restoring Ireland’s raised bogs

Ireland’s raised bogs are among the world’s oldest living eco-systems and many date back almost 10,000 years. They are found mainly in the midlands and it is estimated they once covered almost a million acres of land. However, today, less than 1% of that figure remains as active, living bogs that are a unique feature of the Irish landscape and of considerable tourist value.

What little remains is in need of restoration and conservation and the European Union is helping fund a project that aims to bring 12 of Ireland’s unique raised bogs in seven counties across the midlands back to life.

The €5.4 million Living Bog project is being part funded through LIFE, the EU’s financial instrument that supports environmental, nature conservation and climate action projects throughout Europe.

The project is based in Co Westmeath and covers bogs in Offaly, Longford, Roscommon, Galway, Meath and Cavan as well as Westmeath.

The bogs are all on Special Area of Conservation (SAC) lands that are designated as Natura 2000 sites, meaning they belong to an international network of protected areas.

The Living Bog is designed to improve over 2,600 hectares of threatened raised bog habitat – the equivalent of over 7,000 Croke Parks and 18% of the national high bog area.

The project will restore a habitat that supports hundreds of native species, including the under threat shy Red Grouse and the endangered Curlew as well as rare invertebrates, amphibians, insects and a bewildering array of plant-life not found anywhere else.

The project is being carried out in consultation with landowners and local communities and students of all levels can visit project sites to learn more about the unique boglands.