

ALFAwetlands 2025: the year of progress

Press Release



December, 2025



Funded by
the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or CINEA. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

ALFAwetlands 2025: the year of progress

The year 2025 has been an exceptionally active and productive period for ALFAwetlands, marked by a broad range of events, field activities, and public engagement across Europe. It was also a year of substantial scientific progress, with new datasets, publications, trainings, and collaborative research & dissemination efforts advancing our shared understanding of the importance of wetland restoration.

ALFAwetlands made a great effort to streamline its activities with the three Horizon Europe wetlands sister projects Restore4Cs, REWET and WET HORIZONS.

These achievements directly support ALFAwetlands' mission to improve the geospatial knowledge base of wetlands, to evaluate restoration pathways through co-creation, and to provide robust information and sustainability indicators, with the aim of maximizing climate change mitigation, biodiversity, and other ecosystem benefits across Europe.

Key Events and Engagements in 2025

- In November ALFAwetlands, together with its sister projects launched a new expert-led **webinar series** called “**Wetlands in Action**,” aimed at bringing together scientists, policymakers, practitioners across Europe to explore the latest developments in wetland restoration, monitoring, sustainable management and policy. This month ALFAwetlands experts also joined **clustering activities** of REWET and RESTORE4Cs projects.
- In October ALFAwetlands & WET HORIZONS research findings were presented at the 2nd Conference on **Earth Observation for Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification of Carbon Removals** held in Copenhagen, Denmark. Hosted by the European Environment Agency (EEA) and the European Space Agency – ESA, projects insights were presented at the Carbon Markets Forum, with a talk about “**Identifying hotspots of greenhouse gas emissions from drained peatlands in the European Union.**”
- A great impact was also achieved during the **Renewable Resources from Wet and Rewetted Peatlands Conference** held in September in Greifswald, Germany. Two impactful workshops targeting the topics of co-creation and policy advocacy as well as a paludiculture excursion for policymakers to the Living Lab Upper Peene Valley were co-organized by the German project partners on behalf of the ALFAwetlands.
- From June 29 to July 4, ALFAwetlands and its three sister projects participated in the **INTECOL Wetlands Conference 2025** held in Tartu, Estonia. The event took place alongside with the **20th Annual Meeting** of the European Chapter of the Society of Wetland Scientists and became a significant milestone highlighting projects importance and current results, as well as enabled interaction with projects' main target groups. The **Symposium: “Restoration of Wetlands –**



Pathways, Trade-offs and Co-benefits” was co-organized by all sister projects and opened up a forum for sharing knowledge about restoration strategies, climate mitigation, biodiversity and ecosystem services. During the Conference, participants also joined **technical tours**, visiting also Laiuse bog, one of the ALFAwetlands Living Labs sites – a chance to see restoration in action.

- In June the **ALFAwetlands Consortium** held its **annual meeting** in Tartu, Estonia, bringing together over 50 experts and partners from across Europe. The meeting offered a valuable opportunity to review progress, coordinate ongoing and future activities, and strengthen collaboration between partners.
- Over the summertime, the **Living Labs** in **Latvia, Finland & Germany** invited the public to join their **Open Days**. In the Upper Peene Valley (Germany), visitors were invited to take part in guided tours into the peatland, educational activities, as well as in the lecture and song evening. In Sanginjoki (Finland), participants learned about wetland restoration, enjoyed nature excursions, and explored the area’s diverse nature. The Open Days were part of the project’s broader outreach and on-the-ground engagement.
- In **April** ALFAwetlands joined the global **City Nature Challenge 2025 (CNC)** with its bioblitz campaigns, feeding ALFAwetlands INaturalist Initiative¹. This is a citizen-science biodiversity observation initiative, feeding wetland biodiversity research. This year, not only the well experienced Austrian-Hungarian Living Lab, but also the sites in France and Spain joined the challenge. More than 150 high school students, citizens and visitors took part in the event, learning more not only about biodiversity, but also about wetlands restoration importance.

Alongside its core activities, ALFAwetlands engaged in diverse national and regional events, interacting with its different stakeholders across Europe.

“The reason I choose to work in wetland conservation is because I care about maintaining a healthy, liveable environment for everyone. I also want to promote a dialogue with policy makers to address local needs in relation to wetland restoration. In 2025, we were able to further strengthen this connection as part of the ALFAwetlands project”, emphasises Marie Lorenz from Michael Succow Foundation.

Knowledge, Results and Deliverables

- In May ALFAwetlands ran an online training session: **“Unlocking the Power of Wetland Mapping for Restoration”**, organized in cooperation with its sister project WET HORIZONS. More than 70 participants (policymakers, researchers & practitioners) joined to learn about the uses of the released European Wetland Map for restoration planning and policymaking.

¹ ALFAwetlands Inaturalist initiative, comprising continuously updated biodiversity database can be found here: <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/alfawetlands-inaturalist-initiative>

- The project progressed on producing several key **deliverables**². Among publicly available are:
 - D1.1: European Wetland Map & wetland databases for selected catchments with Living Labs, *which as for the date has more than 16 thousand downloads!*
 - D1.4: Framework of geo-data needs for policy instruments at national & European level
 - D1.5: Recommendations for wetland restoration.
 - D1.6: GIS dataset of past wetland restoration projects across Europe
 - So far ALFAwetlands have released **21 peer-reviewed research articles**, 17 of them - in the top quartile Q1 and Q2 journals of respective research areas! The research areas include: Environmental Sciences, Environmental Studies, Plant Sciences, Agronomy, Ecology, Geosciences, Forestry & Water resources. The articles are featuring data on wetland methane emissions under climate variability and on ecosystem-service mapping in drained peatland forests, reinforcing their role as a major contributor to wetland science and evidence-based restoration etc. You can find more at our constantly updated [Zenodo](https://zenodo.org/) community.



Picture1. Joint moment at INTECOL Conference



Photo 2. Field trip to Estonian wetlands

Social Science and Public Participation

- As part of its Work Package 5, ALFAwetlands continued work on **surveys** to assess the benefits and costs of wetland restoration. These include: a PPGIS survey to explore recreational use of wetlands; a survey to estimate how the public values biodiversity and ecosystem services from restored wetlands; and a preparation of the survey of landowners' perceptions.
- The data from these surveys, once fully processed, will feed into economic-environmental models (e.g., the GLOBIOM model) at EU scale, to inform policy recommendations on optimal restoration pathways that maximize social and ecological benefits.

² Continuously updated list of deliverables is available here: <https://alfawetlands.eu/deliverables/>

- The expanded citizen-science engagement through the Living Labs Open Days and exhibitions. City Nature Challenge also strengthened community involvement and awareness, showing how research, restoration and public participation can go hand in hand.
- ALFAwetlands integrates gender awareness across its activities to promote inclusive and equitable wetland restoration. Through gender-sensitive communication and, where feasible, the use of gender-disaggregated data, the project supports fair access to information, participation, and decision-making.

Collaboration & Cross-Project Synergies

ALFAwetlands values our productive collaboration with our sister projects. Furthermore, we congratulate **WET HORIZONS**³, which has successfully completed its second implementation period, delivering an impressive amount of work, including 56 open-access scientific publications and a range of promising outputs. The focus now is on further maturing these tools and ensuring they are fully accessible and easy to use. **RESTORE4Cs** has entered its final project stage with numerous results and closing event. Furthermore, preparations are underway for a joint final conference together with **REWET**.

Special mention should also be made here of the cross-project collaboration between ALFAwetlands & WET HORIZONS regarding geodata analysis.

In 2025 ALFAwetlands also strengthened collaboration with number of other projects, initiatives and networks, sharing similar values. For example, launch of cooperation between research and conservation took place through the support for the **Austrian Peatland Strategy 2030+** implementation within the Austrian LIFE AMooRe Strategic Project.

In parallel, collaboration and exchange across the projects continue to be strengthened. This year, we also deepened our engagement with the **Society of Wetland Scientists** and the **Society of Ecological Restoration**, further reinforcing the projects' impact and outreach.

"Through such collaborations, ALFAwetlands aims to contribute to a more harmonized, Europe-wide approach to wetland restoration, combining geospatial data, ecological modelling, social and economic evaluation, and stakeholder engagement", points Max Rossberg from European Wilderness Society out.

³More information about WET HORIZON's scientific publications: <https://www.wethorizons.eu/resources/#scientific>; RESTORE4Cs: <https://www.restore4cs.eu/resources/scientific-publications/>; REWET: <https://www.rewet-he.eu/>.



Looking Ahead — Perspectives for 2026

As 2025 draws to a close, ALFAwetlands enters a new phase with momentum from this year's achievements. Our key expectations for 2026 include:

- Further dissemination and use of the **European Wetland Map** and associated datasets to support restoration planning, policy instruments, and prioritization of restoration sites across EU.
- Finalization and launch of the **Tool: Best practices for cost-effective restoration of peatlands & restoration of floodplains**.
- Launch of the **Online training course on co-creation and inclusive wetland restoration**.
- Continued rollout of the **"Wetlands in Action" joint webinar series**, offering a space for knowledge exchange, innovation diffusion, and stakeholder dialogue across European wetland restoration communities.
- Finalization and publication of additional **deliverables**, especially those modelling greenhouse gas fluxes, carbon-stock changes, and ecosystem service responses, enabling more robust evidence-based recommendations for restoration and policy.
- **Integrating survey results** into broader socio-economic analyses to assess the cost-benefit balance of restoration and inform EU-wide decision-making.
- **Strengthened collaboration** across ALFAwetlands sister projects and broader stakeholder networks, ensuring restoration strategies are interdisciplinary, socially inclusive, ecologically sound, and policy relevant.
- Conduction of the joint **final conference** to present and discuss with the key stakeholders' project results and their sustainability.

Season's Greetings & Call for Support

"As we wrap up an impactful year, the ALFAwetlands team wishes to extend warm holiday greetings to all our partners, supporters, researchers, discussion-makers, practitioners and citizen-scientists.

Looking ahead to 2026, we invite you to stay connected, participate in upcoming webinars and trainings, contribute to citizen science efforts, explore the new datasets, and spread the word about the importance of wetlands. Together, we can make a real difference. With best wishes for a peaceful, joyful festive season and a green, restorative New Year", emphasizes ALFAwetlands Team.

ALFAwetlands contact information and more news:

Email: info@alfawetlands.eu
Website: <https://alfawetlands.eu/>

Social media: [LinkedIn](#) [Facebook](#) [Bsky](#) [YouTube](#)
Publications at [Zenodo](#)

