

The habitat is also essential for species listed in Annex IV of the Habitats Directive. For example the Northern Birch Mouse (*Sicista betulina*), which is subject to strict protection, has been detected in 2010 and 2011 in this area - it's its reproduction habitat.



Fig. 1: The project area (marked with an red ellipse).

The following photographs show the habitat and part of the measures which have been carried out as part of the drainage project.



Fig. 2: The machine the drainage measures were carried out with - at work in the bog forest (picture on the left) and while being loaded on the truck (picture above).



Fig. 3: The meadow-biotope in the center of the affected area.



Fig. 4: Impressions from the southern half of the marked area affected by the measure.



Fig. 5: Impressions from the northern half of the marked area affected by the measure.



Fig. 6: Example of a drainage with influence on the humid meadows in the affected area.



Fig. 7: Example of drainages with influence on the bog woodland in the affected area.



Fig. 8: Example of drainages with influence on the bog woodland in the affected area.



Fig. 9: Example of drainages with influence on the bog woodland in the affected area.

The drainages are not compatible with the actual and the de facto protection status of the affected area:

- In the region already Hazel Grouse chicks were found drowned in drainage ditches (PÖSCHL & HOFFMANN (2011), SCHMALZER) – the new drainages thus have a direct negative impact on the reproduction success of this protected species. The affected area is a long-known reproduction habitat of the Hazel Grouse (SCHMALZER (1990s, 2004, 2009), NADLER (2009, 2011)), which connects the populations on the Czech and Austrian side. Habitat fragmentation has already occurred on both sides of the frontier which means the beginning of extinction for this strongly territory-bound species with little ability to disperse. Therefore, the affected area is of special importance for the coherence of the European network of Natura 2000-sites.
- The draining of bogs and bog woodlands is long known as having a significant negative impact on the habitats of the grouse species that live here (Hazel Grouse, Black Grouse and Capercaillie).
- The drainages will destroy the priority habitats of the Habitats Directive „Bog woodland“ and „Species-rich *Nardus* grasslands on silicious substrates“ and the humid meadows that are essential to several species in the area affected by the project.
- The drainage measures are taken to allow profitable forest use of the affected area: a structured bog woodland with standing and lying dead wood is to be transformed into a forest production area. By this, the habitat of the woodpeckers, Hazel grouse, Black grouse, Tengmalm's owl etc. as well as the reproduction habitats of the Northern Birch Mouse, the forest-bound microbats etc. is going to be severely damaged or totally destroyed.

From the point of view of nature conservation and the corresponding act the drainages drawn in November 2012 are to be immediately filled again with material taken out (without mixing the mineral and organic materials), in order to minimize the negative impact on the protected areas.

Sincerely yours

for the NGO Protect • Natur-, Arten- und Landschaftsschutz