

RESTORING FEN AND MOOR IN AAMOSE, DENMARK AFTER PEAT DIGGING AND DRAINAGE

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During the second world war and a decade after, until the middle of the 1950s, peat was an important source of energy in Denmark and peat digging became a large industry, using the most important native resource. In the Aamose area in NW Zealand (about 25 km²), about 2 meters of peat were removed from most of the area. By digging peat, it was discovered, that the area contained very important remains from the hunters stone age 8-10.000 years ago and also from the later peasant stone age. Wood and bone were a.o. preserved in the wet peat. The Aamose was investigated thoroughly by archaeologists in the 1960-80s, and the National Museum bought 50 ha of the area for both investigation and the habitation of research-workers and students.

Later, in the wet summers in the 1950s, a strong wish to increase agricultural production in fen and moor raised, and the Danish so-called Heath Society created a project covering most of the area. The main element was stretching and deepening the main river, running through the area, and also some important minor rivers, running to the main one. As a result, the water level lowered about 3 meters. Large areas were ploughed, but today much has gone out of annual cultivation.

Since the 1990s, the work has been going on to preserve the still existing areas of fen and former raised bog, and in 1995, 230 ha were made a nature reserve and the water level raised 2-2½ m. In addition, the work is going on to rewet much larger areas (2200 ha) and manage raised bog against regrowth with trees and keep fen areas free of nettles and other less wanted plant species through grazing and hay harvesting.

In the presentation I will introduce the results so far and plans for the future, a short overview of other Danish restoration projects will also be given.