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IN THE NICHE OF SUNDEW – THE HIDDEN CREATURES OF UPLAND MOORS



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Category: Collective Artists



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IDEA:

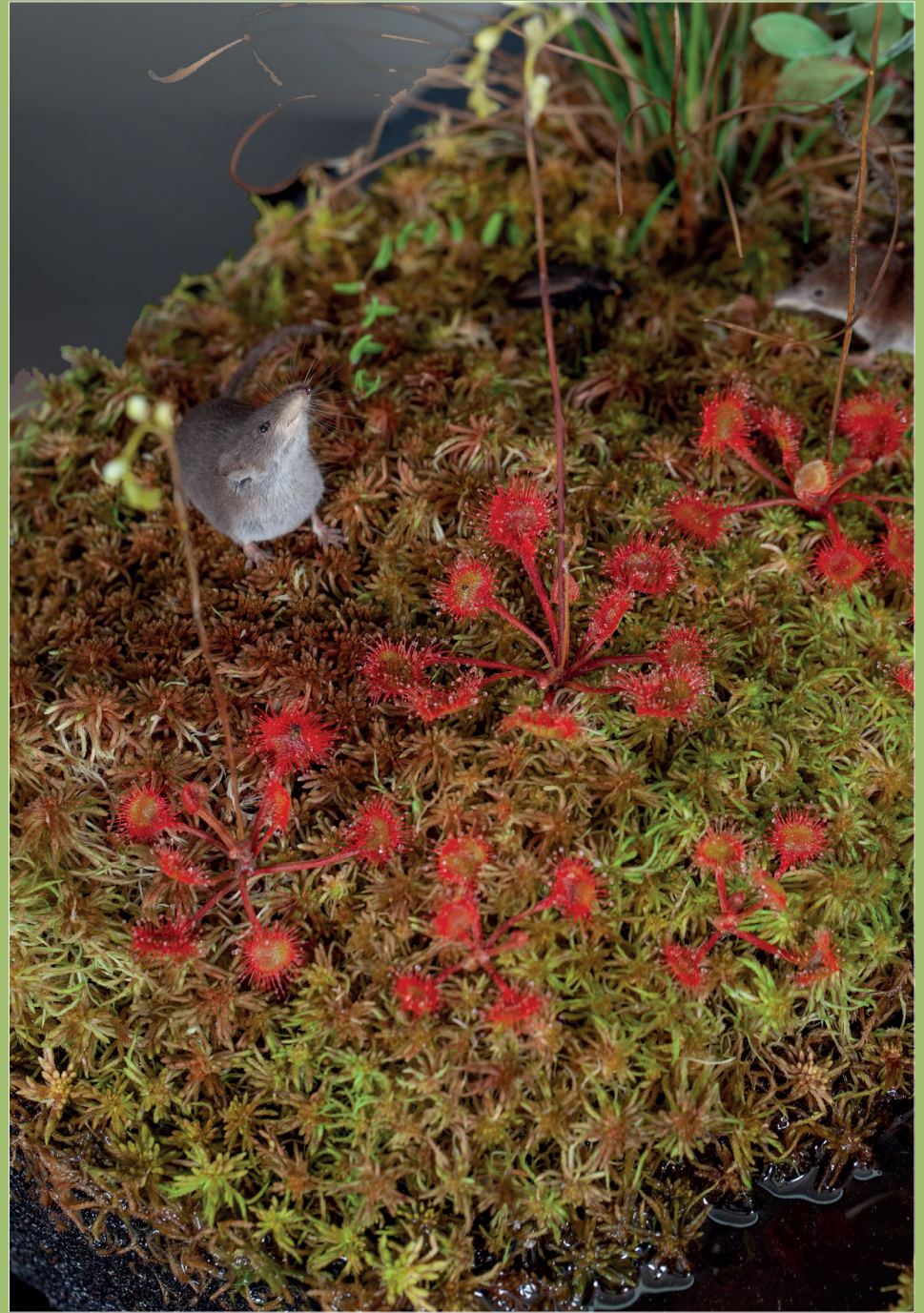


The life of the upland moors is a hidden treasure. These most endangered ecosystems are threatened by numerous human caused effects, not only drainage and peat cutting – but also on climatic changes as they are completely depending on long term stable rainwater balance and enough moisture. Its an extreme ecosystem with a acid and nutrient-poor peat soil created by several sphagnum moss species in hundreds of years. Also these lands have the largest storage capacities for carbon-dioxide of all terrestrial habitats.

The upland moors are home for some very strange evolutional experiments – for real natural specialist. The **roundleaf sundew** *Drosera rotundifolia* is bizarre carnivorous plant. Its roots are only rudimental anchors, just for fixing the small and fragile plant between wet **sphagnum moss** steams – not more soaking more then water as there are no nutrients at all to find (especially no nitrogenous). By this its leaves took a strange evolution away from photosynthesis organs to complex sophisticated insect traps. Sitting in a small ground rosette on thin stems they are fully packed with shiny reddish glandular tentacles. Each of this hairy structures is wearing glossy, sweet smelling and nectar-like appearing drops – irresistible for small insects like flies, bees, bugs and even butterflies. They are shining in the early sun really like dew. But they are not of that kind, they are most sticky segregations of this tricky plant full of digestive enzymes able to kill and soak all need nitrogen compounds out of any insect prey who is careless enough to land and touch on that precious trap. In moment of contact the creature is immediately stuck on that glue and in about one hour almost all tentacles of the sundew leaf move inwards on that victim by a special impulsive asymmetric growing process and start to digest it. After maximum two three days only the empty chitin-carapace of the insect and its wings are left.

Other typical plants of this special environment are **sheated cottonsedge** *Eriophorum vaginatum*, **bog blueberry** *Vaccinum uliginosum* and swamp cranberry *Vaccinum oxycoccos*.

As in plants also the fauna is something special particularly on insects like the precious **cranberry blue** *Plebeius optilete* and some **predatory beetles** *Carabus* sp. Vertebrates are quite rare in this areas scarce of nourishing food. Common species are insectivores like Eurasian **pygmy shrew** *Sorex minutus* and **lesser white-toothed shrew** *Crocidura suaveolens*.





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