



Forestry England

Free

The New Forest

Essential Guide

Forest map
Places to explore
Parking guide
Walking & cycling guide

The New Forest Essential Guide
is brought to you by Forestry England
in association with The New Forest
National Park Authority





Welcome

The New Forest is a truly spectacular landscape.

Made up of ancient trees, woodlands, wetlands, bogs, and heathlands the New Forest is home to many rare species of plants and wildlife long since lost from other parts of the UK.

In fact, it is one of Europe's most important locations for nature and conservation. The sheer numbers of different species of wildlife and plants found here make it a Special Site of Scientific Interest, a Special Protection Area for Birds, a Special Area of Conservation, and a Ramsar Site (an internationally important wetland area).

It's also an important place for people to connect with nature and enjoy spending time outdoors. We provide a network of tracks, trails, cycle routes and car parks to help people explore this beautiful landscape.

Forestry England looks after around half of the New Forest landscape including most of the green spaces the public can access and enjoy here.

The New Forest National Park Authority ensures this outstanding landscape has the highest level of protection to preserve it for the nation to enjoy.

Learn more about the New Forest and different ways to enjoy the area in the following pages of this guide. You can also find out how everyone spending time here can help to look after this special place by following the New Forest Code.

Find out more

forestryengland.uk/newforest
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newforestnpa.gov.uk
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Image contributors: Nick Whittle, Steve Poole, Andy Hay, Joshua Copping, New Forest National Park Authority

Forestry England - caring for the forest

Forestry England looks after 1,500 woods and forests across the nation, focusing on creating spaces for people to enjoy, providing homes for wildlife and producing sustainable timber.



We do much more in the New Forest than you probably realise:

- ✓ We provide hundreds of miles of paths and cycle routes, 129 car parks and ten campsites, helping millions of people to enjoy the forest.
- ✓ We plant thousands of trees, care for hectares of heathland, restore miles of rivers, and help to conserve wildlife.
- ✓ We support thousands of people in participating in community activities and events across the forest.
- ✓ Our rangers patrol the area every day of the year, helping to prevent wildfires and addressing anti-social behaviour such as fly tipping.

Your support

Caring for the New Forest is a big job and costs millions of pounds every year.

We receive less than 20% of our core funding from the government and have to raise the rest of the money we need ourselves.

With rising costs and visitor numbers, the cost of looking after the New Forest is now much greater than the money we raise here. This means we can't fund our work without the support of those visiting this special place.

Everyone paying to park in one of our 129 car parks across the New Forest is helping to support the area. The money raised from parking helps us to continue our critical work here, looking after the landscape, its wildlife and keeping car parks and trails open.

Regular visitors can take advantage of an annual Forestry England membership, which provides unlimited parking for less than £2 a week in all New Forest car parks.

We couldn't continue our work without your support.

Thank you.



A haven for wildlife

Here are some of the creatures who call the New Forest home:



Pine martens

Pine martens are cat-sized members of the weasel family. As native omnivores, they play an important role in the forest by feeding on what is seasonally abundant. Once widespread across the UK, habitat loss and human activity have drastically reduced their numbers, but there is now a well-established population living here in the New Forest.



Red Deer

Deer

Five species of deer live wild here in the New Forest: red, fallow, roe, sika and muntjac. Red and roe deer are truly native to the area, but fallow deer are now the most commonly seen species.



Stonechat

Ground nesting birds

The New Forest is a Special Protection Area for birds and one of the UK's most important breeding locations for ground nesting birds such as the lapwing, nightjar and curlew.

Unlike most birds, ground nesting birds build nests and raise their young on the ground around woodland edges and on the heathlands. They visit the New Forest to breed in the spring and summer, with many returning to the same nesting spot every year.

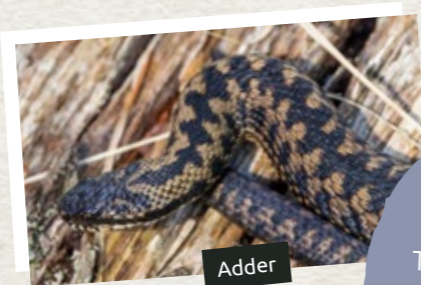
When enjoying time in the New Forest, look out for special signs in key nesting zones which highlight the presence of the birds and provide advice on how to avoid disturbing them.

During the breeding season (from late February to the end of August) please stick to the main gravel tracks and avoid walking on the open heathland areas where birds will be nesting. If you have a dog with you, please keep them on the tracks with you and where necessary, use a lead.



Dartford warbler

This small, dark, long-tailed warbler is resident in the UK. It will perch on top of a gorse stem to sing, but is often seen as a small flying shape bobbing between bushes. Their nest is not on the ground, but close to it in gorse or heather. The New Forest is one of the most important locations in the UK for this species.



Adder

Did you know?

The New Forest is home to all six UK native reptiles

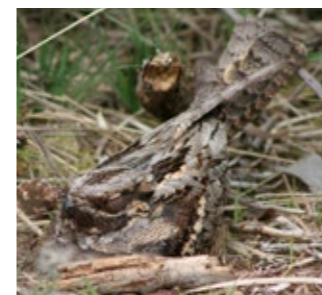
Reptiles

Adders, slow worms, grass snakes, common lizards, and the two rarest reptiles in the UK - the smooth snake and the sand lizard - can all be found in the New Forest.

Reptiles are cold blooded, which means they use the sun to warm up. With sandy soils that heat up quickly, the heathland areas of the New Forest provide the perfect environment for them.

Goshawks

These large and powerful birds of prey were absent from the New Forest for 120 years, only returning in 2002 when a single pair settled here again. Since then, a team from Forestry England have been working hard to learn more about these raptors and help ensure they are able to breed successfully. Today over 30 breeding pairs call the New Forest home.



Nightjar

Travelling from Africa to breed in the New Forest, they are found in heathland, around woodland edges and in recently cleared forest. With around 10% of the UK population, the New Forest is a stronghold for nightjars. Conservation efforts such as heathland restoration, are helping to support this population.



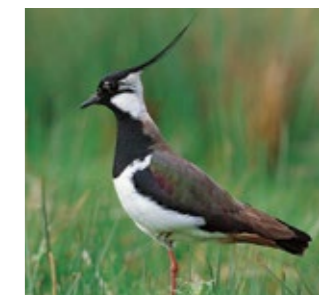
Woodlark

These secretive and rare birds build their nests in heather and recently felled woodland areas of the New Forest. Woodlarks are best seen and heard singing in February and March, early in the morning. The New Forest holds a significant percentage of the UK population (around 12%) and numbers have increased in this area by more than 50% in the past five years.



Curlew

These large wading birds with majestic beaks nest in scrapes on the ground. Their plumage is beautifully camouflaged to help disguise them from potential predators. The New Forest is now one of the only areas of southeast England where the curlew still breeds. This species is globally threatened and is classed as 'red' - the highest conservation priority.



Lapwing

Lapwings are often nicknamed "peewits", after the calls they make during swooping display flights. Breeding lapwings have undergone widespread and marked declines in the UK over the last few decades, making the New Forest increasingly important for them. This species is globally threatened and is classed as 'red' - the highest conservation priority.



Please stay on tracks at all times to help protect wildlife

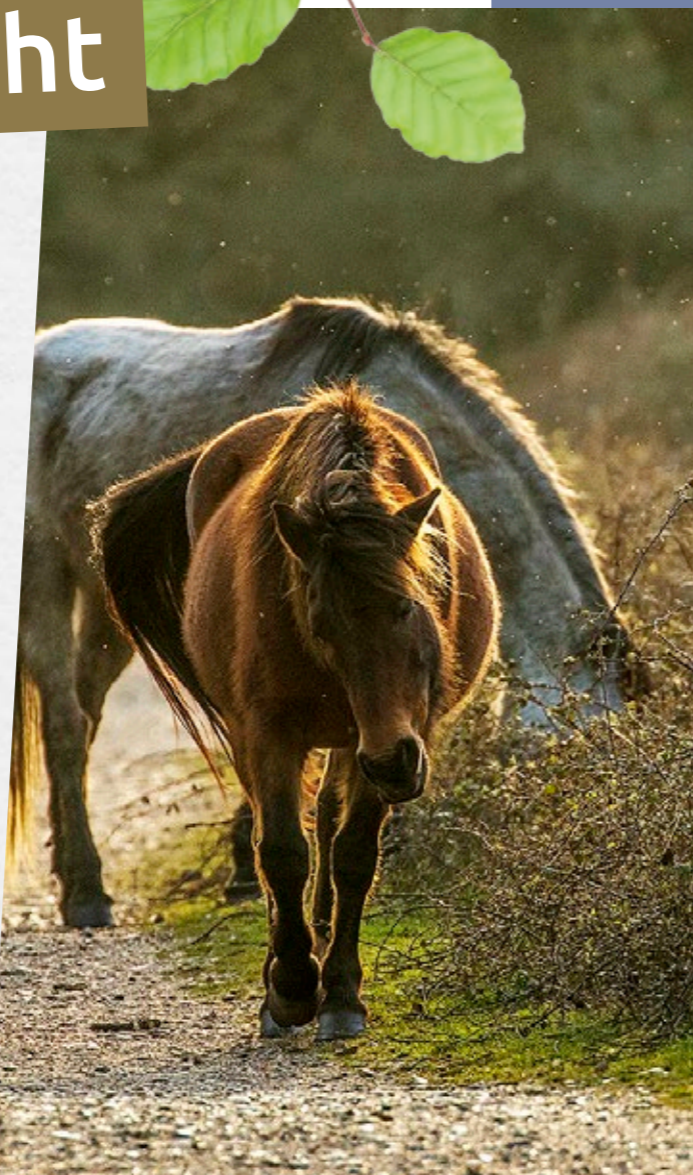
A common sight

The New Forest is home to some other notable animals, such as the iconic New Forest pony, which has been part of the traditional forest scene for more than a thousand years.

There are also donkeys, cows, pigs, and sheep which all belong to people who live locally and care for them.

Their owners are New Forest "commoners", who practice the ancient right to graze their livestock on the open forest. They are a fundamental part of the New Forest's long history as a working forest.

The animals roam free, going anywhere they like, choosing the tastiest grasses and vegetation. The forest provides the food they need to remain healthy. Many rare and precious plants and creatures thrive here specifically because of the way the area is grazed by the commoners' animals.



Keep your distance

All of these animals need their space and should not be fed or petted by visitors. It's vitally important that they are left to forage for themselves.

Please help us protect them through some simple actions:

1. Please **#PassWideandSlow** when driving and be prepared to stop for animals. However tame they may appear, they are unpredictable and can bite and kick. Take particular care around ponies and cattle with young, especially if you have a dog with you.
2. Don't feed or touch the animals. It is vital that they graze naturally, both for their own health and

survival, and for the benefits their grazing brings to the landscape. It's a finable offence to feed or leave food out for New Forest ponies and donkeys, or to touch or pet them. Failure to comply may result in a fixed penalty order of £100 which could increase up to £1,000.

3. Please don't leave water out for the animals at any time of the year. There is always natural water available, and it is important for the forest that the grazing shifts naturally according to the weather.

4. If you see an animal in the New Forest that you are concerned about, take a photograph and get a what3words location if possible. Posting on social media is not the best way to get the animal the help it needs. Please report your concerns immediately.

How to report a problem with a forest animal

Road accident involving a pony, cow, pig, sheep or donkey call: **999**

Sick, injured or dead pony, cow, pig, sheep or donkey call: **02380 282 052** (office hours)
0300 067 4600 (after hours).

Incidents involving deer: **0300 067 4600** (24 hours)



Walking in the New Forest

Looking for the best places to walk?
Follow our waymarked walks and trails...

The following trails are marked on the ground by wooden marker posts with coloured bands. An overview map of each route is displayed at the start point in the car park. All routes are circular and will bring you back to your starting point.

From Bolderwood car park: The Hatheburgh Trail 0.75km (0.5 miles)

A short stroll leading you to a viewing platform overlooking fields where you may be lucky enough to spot a herd of wild fallow deer. The path is a moderately smooth gravelled surface with gentle slopes and benches along the way. The trail is accessed by a gate which has a low catch.

Jubilee Grove Trail 1.5km (1 mile)

This gently meandering route leads you past some majestic trees, the oldest of which date back to 1860. Benches from which to admire their beauty can be found along the way. The path is a moderately smooth gravelled surface with two short but fairly steep slopes and frequent resting places. The trail is accessed via a gate which has a low catch.

Radnor Trail 3km (2 miles)

This longer route takes you into the heart of the forest and across the Bratley Water stream. There are benches located along the trail. The path is a moderately smooth gravelled surface with two short but fairly steep slopes and frequent resting places. The trail is accessed via a gate which has a low catch.

From Blackwater or Brock Hill car parks: Tall Trees Trail 2.5km (1.5 miles)

Follow the marker posts as they guide you along a shady path beneath mighty Douglas firs and redwoods planted during the reign of Queen Victoria. The path has a fairly smooth gravelled surface. The trail is flat with frequent resting places and no gates.

Blackwater Arboretum Trail 0.75km (0.5 miles)

A circular route which leads you past tree species from around the world. Panels provide information and activities to do as you walk around these special trees. Benches are located along the walk. The path has a fairly smooth gravelled surface with one very gentle slope.

From Whitefield Moor or Puttles Bridge car parks: Ober Water Trails 1.5km (1 mile) (red trail) 2.5km (1.5 miles) (yellow trail)

Two circular routes follow the Ober Water, midway between its source and the sea. Close to this meandering stream is the open grassy expanse of Whitefield Moor. The paths are moderately smooth gravelled surfaces and compacted grassy ground with some gentle

slopes and a few resting places. This trail can be muddy after wet weather.

From Wilverley car parks: Wilverley Wander 4.2km (2.5 miles)

A longer and more informal trail which winds through this diverse and working woodland. The paths are moderately smooth gravelled surfaces with some short, steep slopes. Please note that part of this trail is on a cycle route.

From Knightwood car park: Knightwood Oak Less than 0.25 miles

An accessible route to one of the most famous trees in the New Forest. Believed to have been planted before 1600, this tree is still going strong! The path has a flat and even surface, suitable for mobility vehicles and pushchairs. Two fully accessible parking spaces are available in the car park.



Scan the QR code to view our walking trails, including car park information, opening hours and facilities available.



Discover the New Forest

Ways to pay for parking

You can pay for parking at all of our car parks by using the **RingGo app** on your mobile.

Don't worry if your phone signal is too weak, you can still pay via the app before midnight on the following day. If you forget your location number or need details on other ways to pay, please check on our website here: forestryengland.uk/car-parks/parking-in-the-new-forest

In some of our larger car parks, a small number of **cashless payment machines** will be available. These won't use printed tickets, so instead you'll just enter your vehicle registration.

Parking costs:

- £1.50 for 1 hour
- £3.00 for 2 hours
- £5.00 for 4 hours
- £8.00 for over 4 hours

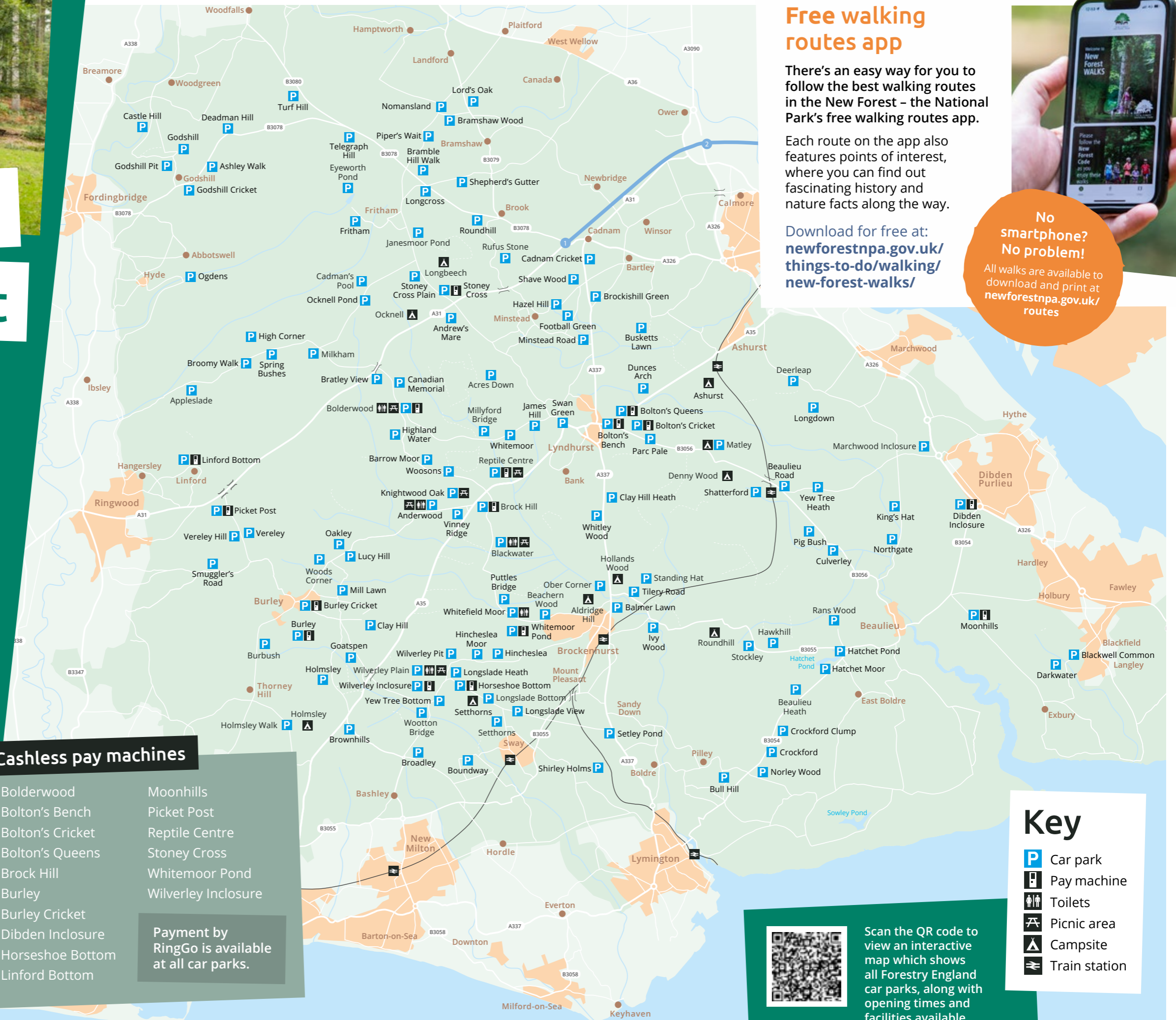
Tickets are transferable, so if you have time left when you finish spending time at one car park, you can use it to visit any other Forestry England car park in the New Forest.

*If you have Forestry England membership, you can park in any of the New Forest car parks for free. Please see page 10 for membership details.

Cashless pay machines

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Bolderwood | Moonhills |
| Bolton's Bench | Picket Post |
| Bolton's Cricket | Reptile Centre |
| Bolton's Queens | Stoney Cross |
| Brock Hill | Whitmoor Pond |
| Burley | Wilverley Inclosure |
| Burley Cricket | |
| Dibden Inclosure | |
| Horseshoe Bottom | |
| Linford Bottom | |

Payment by RingGo is available at all car parks.



Free walking routes app

There's an easy way for you to follow the best walking routes in the New Forest – the National Park's free walking routes app.

Each route on the app also features points of interest, where you can find out fascinating history and nature facts along the way.

Download for free at: newforestnpa.gov.uk/things-to-do/walking/new-forest-walks/



No smartphone? No problem!
All walks are available to download and print at newforestnpa.gov.uk/routes

Key

- Car park
- Pay machine
- Toilets
- Picnic area
- Campsite
- Train station



Scan the QR code to view an interactive map which shows all Forestry England car parks, along with opening times and facilities available.

Visit often? Become a member

With a Forestry England membership, visiting the New Forest is easy. You're also helping to support the forest.

Free parking in any of the 129 Forestry England managed car parks in the New Forest, and at many other forests across the country.

Works out at £1.85 per week, or £8 monthly direct debit.*

One membership covers the whole household. Register up to two cars per household.**



How do I join?

It's really easy. Just go to:
forestryengland.uk/national-membership

If you need any help, contact our friendly customer service team:
0300 068 0400 | membership@forestryengland.uk



Scan here to visit our membership page

* Annual membership costs £96 per year, with options for monthly instalments (£8 per month) via direct debit.

** Free parking applies only to one registered car at a time. If two vehicles are used at the same time, the second to arrive will need to pay normal parking charges.



New Forest Tour

The New Forest Tour is the perfect excuse to leave your car behind and enjoy the forest.

The Tour offers unrivalled treetop views of free-roaming ponies, ancient forests and picturesque villages. There are three beautiful routes to choose from: red, green and blue – and you can hop on and off where you like and switch routes – all on the same ticket. All three routes converge at Brockenhurst.

Well-behaved dogs are welcome and you can even bring your bikes (carried free). Listen to audio commentary that brings the history and characters of the New Forest to life.

The perks don't stop there, as you can enjoy free journeys to the Tour on connecting bus services, and benefit from great discounts at attractions and local eateries along the way.

Tour information
thenewforesttour.info

newforesttour

Are you ready to ride?

Explore the New Forest by bike with a network of over 100 miles of family-friendly cycle routes.

Cycle routes are marked with numbered wooden posts. Navigate your way around the tracks by checking the numbers against our cycle trail map or following the Ordnance Survey grid references also on the posts.

The cycle network is easily accessible from railway stations at Ashurst, Brockenhurst and Sway, and links to the main New Forest villages.

Visit forestryengland.uk/new-forest/cycling-the-new-forest for all the best trails.

Please follow the New Forest Cycling Guide newforestnpa.gov.uk/things-to-do/cycling/cycling-guide/

! Cycling in the New Forest is only allowed on the official cycle routes to help protect the landscape and its wildlife. Please stick to marked trails all year round.



Adventure cycling

For more adventurous cyclists, there are purpose-built mountain bike skills circuits at Moors Valley Country Park, near Ringwood. Here you will find a network of trails and a bike park graded from green to red in line with British Cycling standards.



Cycle guide and map

Grab a cycle route map before heading out on your adventure. It shows off-road and road-based cycle networks across the New Forest, plus details of bike hire outlets.

Available to pick up at outlets across the New Forest National Park, including local information points and bike hire shops.



Scan the QR code to view our cycling guide and cycle routes map, along with a New Forest and car park map.

A mosaic of landscapes

More than trees...

Forests are made up of many different types of landscapes – not just trees. This is certainly the case in the New Forest. In fact, it's the diverse mix of different areas within the New Forest that make it such an internationally important place for nature.



Heathlands

Here in the New Forest, we are fortunate to have the largest area of lowland heath in Western Europe.

Heathlands are open areas, with few trees, but covered with low growing plants like grasses, heather, bracken and gorse. They provide critically important habitats for many different types of wildlife, including reptiles, ground nesting birds and insects.

The importance of these areas for biodiversity is one of the key reasons why the New Forest is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and Special Protection Area for birds and conservation.

Forestry England has been working hard to improve the amount and quality of heathland in the New Forest. This work has helped over 70 different species of wildlife return to these areas.



Ancient woodland

The New Forest has some of the oldest trees in the country. With around 1,000 ancient trees recorded here, the area is believed to have the highest concentrations in Western Europe.

The oldest trees are Yews (*Taxus baccata*) with some thought to be over a thousand years old. Oaks (*Quercus robur*) are the next in line, living for up to an impressive 800 years. Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) trees can also reach a grand old age of around 300 to 400 years.

These ancient undisturbed areas have had no significant clearing or development for hundreds of years. The trees, soils and wildlife have grown and matured together for centuries. Fungi, invertebrates and insects all thrive here, along with bluebells, wild garlic and rare orchids. Many of these species would not be able to survive in other places, making these habitats, which have formed over many centuries, very special.



New Forest wetlands

The New Forest is one of the most important areas for freshwater wildlife in the UK.

The mires, bogs, ponds and streams, along with the wet heaths, wet grasslands and wet woodlands, are among the New Forest's most precious assets. They form part of the New Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and are a key reason why large areas of the New Forest are also protected under international law.

These wet areas are special because they provide high-quality freshwater which is home to wildlife and plants that have long since disappeared from other parts of England, such as the sundew, bog pimpernel, tadpole shrimp and southern damselfly.

Wetland areas are also important for the environment as they have the capacity to store as much, or even more carbon than an equivalent area of woodland.

Help us protect New Forest fungi – look but please don't pick!

Amongst the ancient trees, you'll see fallen branches and dead wood. This is a wonderful place to spot fungi, which sometimes lives in rotting wood. Fungi are essential to the New Forest's ecosystem and 'web of life' – which is why we ask you not to pick fungi from this special place.



Meet some of the people who look after the New Forest

Such a special place needs special care. A dedicated group of people from across the community are committed to looking after the New Forest and work across the seasons to care for it. Here are some of the people who work in the forest every day.

Top tip

"We are incredibly lucky to have so many types of ground nesting birds in the New Forest. You can help us support them by sticking to the main gravel tracks and keeping your dog with you at all times."



Rangers

A committed team of Rangers from Forestry England and the New Forest National Park Authority patrol the forest every day, come rain or shine! They are joined by Volunteer Rangers - local people who give up their time to look after the forest. Together the Rangers support wildlife, look after facilities, and talk to thousands of people every year to help them enjoy their time here and visit responsibly.

Top tip

"Fire is a major risk in the New Forest and is increasing as we experience hotter and drier conditions each year. A fire can so easily be started from a single, careless action, but it takes many decades for nature to recover. This is why BBQs, portable cooking equipment and fires of any kind are banned and failure to comply may result in a fixed penalty fine or prosecution."

Keepers

Forestry England's New Forest Keepers were originally appointed by the monarch. They were first established in the 11th century when William the Conqueror declared the New Forest as his own hunting ground. Their role today is to care for the unique mix of wildlife in the forest and ensure there are sufficient habitats for them to thrive. As Forestry England's wildlife experts, they look after a wide range of creatures, from the smallest butterflies through to Red Deer - the UK's largest mammal.

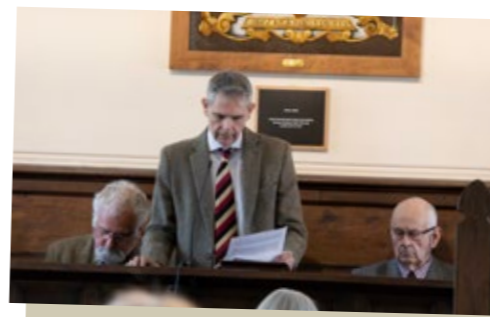


Volunteers

The New Forest is supported by a wide range of volunteers and community groups. Forestry England volunteers give over 5,000 hours each year to carry out tasks including patrolling, speaking with visitors, conservation activities, wildlife monitoring and surveys.

Top tip

"Volunteering is a great way to meet people and learn new skills, while helping to care for our beautiful forest. You learn so much about the New Forest - its nature, history and landscapes."



Verderers

The Court of Verderers is a corporate body set up under the New Forest Act of 1877. The Verderers' primary objective is to regulate and protect the commoners' interests, and to preserve the natural beauty and traditional character of the forest.

Top tip

"The New Forest may look wild, but it is an active, working forest. Please respect the people living and working here by giving their ponies and grazing animals the space they need, paying attention to signs, and leaving nothing but footprints when you visit."

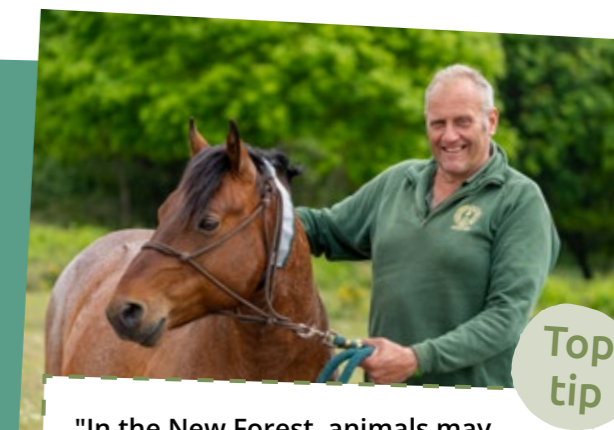
Commoners

Commoners are people who own or rent land in the New Forest that has common rights attached to it. There are six registered commoning rights which are Pasture, Mast, Marl, Turbary, Sheep and Fuelwood. Many commoners are descendants of families who have been commoning for generations and play an essential role in maintaining the New Forest's landscape and ecology.



Top tip

"The New Forest is famous for the ponies who roam freely here, but many people don't understand that they are semi-wild and find all the food they need on the forest. Feeding them foods they do not eat naturally, even fresh vegetables or fruit, can make them really unwell."



Top tip

"In the New Forest, animals may be grazing very close to the roads. To help protect them, please take extra care when driving through the area. Drive slowly, especially at night, and give any animals you come across a wide berth."

Agisters

Agisters are employees of the Verderers, and they help to manage animals put out to graze by commoners. Much of their time is spent out in the forest, frequently on horseback, checking on the condition of both animals and their grazing areas. They work around the clock to deal with any incidents, including animal accidents or emergencies. Agisters also oversee an annual roundup of the New Forest animals to check their health and to collect marking fees.

Follow the New Forest code

The New Forest is a unique place with rare wildlife and free-roaming livestock. Thank you for helping us care for this special place by following the simple New Forest code:

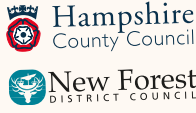
Be Forest Friendly!



Scan me to find out more

-  Keep your distance from the animals – don't feed or touch them*
-  Keep dogs under control. Don't let dogs approach or chase any animals
-  Stick to the permitted cycle tracks
-  Take home litter and dog waste
-  Park only in car parks
-  Drive with care – animals on the road!
-  No fires or barbecues*
-  No wild camping
-  Help wildlife by keeping to the main tracks

*Failure to comply may result in a fixed penalty of £100 or being taken to court and a fine of up to £1,000.



newforestnpa.gov.uk

thenewforest.co.uk

Thank you for looking after the New Forest



Forestry England



New Forest National Park Authority