

# Forestry Statistics 2021

## Sources: Social

Release date:

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Coverage:

United Kingdom

Geographical breakdown:

None

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The Research Agency of the  
Forestry Commission

Forest Research is the Research Agency of the Forestry Commission and is the leading UK organisation engaged in forestry and tree related research.

The Agency aims to support and enhance forestry and its role in sustainable development by providing innovative, high quality scientific research, technical support and consultancy services.

## 11.6 Sources: Social

### Introduction

The data presented in the Social chapter of Forestry Statistics 2021 are based on general population surveys of individuals. This approach is employed for the People and Nature Surveys that run in Scotland and in England, the National Survey for Wales and the Public Opinion of Forestry surveys. (Tables 6.1 to 6.5).

Previous editions of Forestry Statistics have also included results from surveying and counting of visitors to specific areas or woodlands using surveys (for example the All Forests surveys) or using administrative data (Northern Ireland Forest Service records of visitors who pay an admission charge to their sites). As no new, comparable data is available for these on-site methods, this section has been dropped from the 2021 edition of Forestry Statistics.

### Data Sources and Methodology

#### Household surveys

The information shown in Table 6.1 has been obtained from the following general population household surveys.

- Scottish Recreation Survey (to 2012)
- Welsh Outdoor Recreation Survey (2011, 2014)
- Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (England 2009/10 to 2018/19)
- Scotland's People and Nature Survey (2013 and 2017/18).

The Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment has also been used to provide information on visitor characteristics in table 6.2. For further information on this survey, see [www.gov.uk/government/collections/monitor-of-engagement-with-the-natural-environment-survey-purpose-and-results](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/monitor-of-engagement-with-the-natural-environment-survey-purpose-and-results). This survey has now been

replaced by the People and Nature Survey for England, with fieldwork starting in April 2020. Further information on this survey is available at [www.gov.uk/government/collections/people-and-nature-survey-for-england](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/people-and-nature-survey-for-england).

Scotland's People and Nature Survey has replaced the Scottish Recreation Survey. Further information on both surveys are available at [www.nature.scot/](http://www.nature.scot/).

The National Survey for Wales has replaced the Welsh Outdoor Recreation Survey and provides statistics on visitor characteristics (Table 6.3). Further information on the National Survey is available at: <https://gov.wales/national-survey-wales>.

Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys have been run, usually every 2 years, by Forest Research on behalf of the Forestry Commission/Forestry England/Defra, Scottish Forestry, Welsh Government/ Natural Resources Wales and the Northern Ireland Forest Service. The surveys cover public attitudes to forestry and forestry-related issues, including visits to woodland (Tables 6.4 to 6.5 and Figure 6.1).

## Quality

It is notable from Table 6.1 that different surveys have provided some quite different estimates of the aggregate number of visits to woodlands. It is likely that differences in survey design and methodology have contributed to a considerable proportion of the differences in results between these surveys. As the scope of the surveys has evolved over time, the figures in Table 6.1 should not be interpreted as time trends but instead as separate results from each survey.

In common with all sample based surveys, the results from each survey are subject to the effects of chance, depending on the particular survey method used and the sample achieved, thus confidence limits apply to all results from these surveys. For example, the range of uncertainty around the estimated 357 million visits to woodland in England (by English residents) in 2012, should be within  $\pm 8\%$ , i.e. the true figure is likely to be between around 328 and 385 million.

Technical reports, providing further information on household surveys run or commissioned by other organisations, are available from relevant websites (see above).

## Revisions

Most of the statistics in the Social chapter have been previously released in other publications. Figures for earlier years have not been revised from those published in Forestry Statistics 2020.

Our revisions policy sets out how revisions and errors to these statistics are dealt with, and is available at [www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/about-our-statistics/code-of-practice/quality-of-official-statistics/](http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/about-our-statistics/code-of-practice/quality-of-official-statistics/).

## Further information

Further information on social statistics and access to individual survey reports is available from [www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/statistics-by-topic/recreation-statistics/](http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/statistics-by-topic/recreation-statistics/).

Estimates for numbers of visits to the Public Forest Estate in England are provided in the Forestry England Natural Capital Accounts, available at [www.forestryengland.uk/article/natural-capital-accounts](http://www.forestryengland.uk/article/natural-capital-accounts).

## Release schedule

For information on the release schedules of statistics produced by others, see relevant websites (above).

The next Public Opinion of Forestry survey is expected to run in early 2023, with results available in summer 2023.

"Forestry Statistics 2022" and "Forestry Facts & Figures 2022" will be released on 29 September 2022.

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