

Forestry Facts & Figures 2023

A summary of statistics
about woodland and
forestry in the UK

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- FE/FLS/NRW/FS = Forestry England/Forestry and Land Scotland/Natural Resources Wales/Northern Ireland Forest Service. Private sector = all other woodland, including some other publicly owned woodland.

▲ = Conifers ● = Broadleaves

- 1 ha = 1 hectare (approximately 2.47 acres).
- Figures in the tables are individually rounded, so the constituent items may not sum to the total given.
- One green tonne is equivalent to approximately 0.98 m³ underbark softwood or 0.88 m³ underbark hardwood, and to approximately 1.22 m³ overbark standing softwood or 1.11 m³ overbark standing hardwood.

Woodland area

3,251,000

hectares of
UK woodland

FE/FLS/NRW/FS (000 ha)



| | | | |
|------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| England | 143 | 70 | 214 |
| Wales | 89 | 26 | 115 |
| Scotland | 410 | 57 | 468 |
| Northern Ireland | 54 | 8 | 62 |
| UK | 697 | 161 | 858 |

Private sector (000 ha)

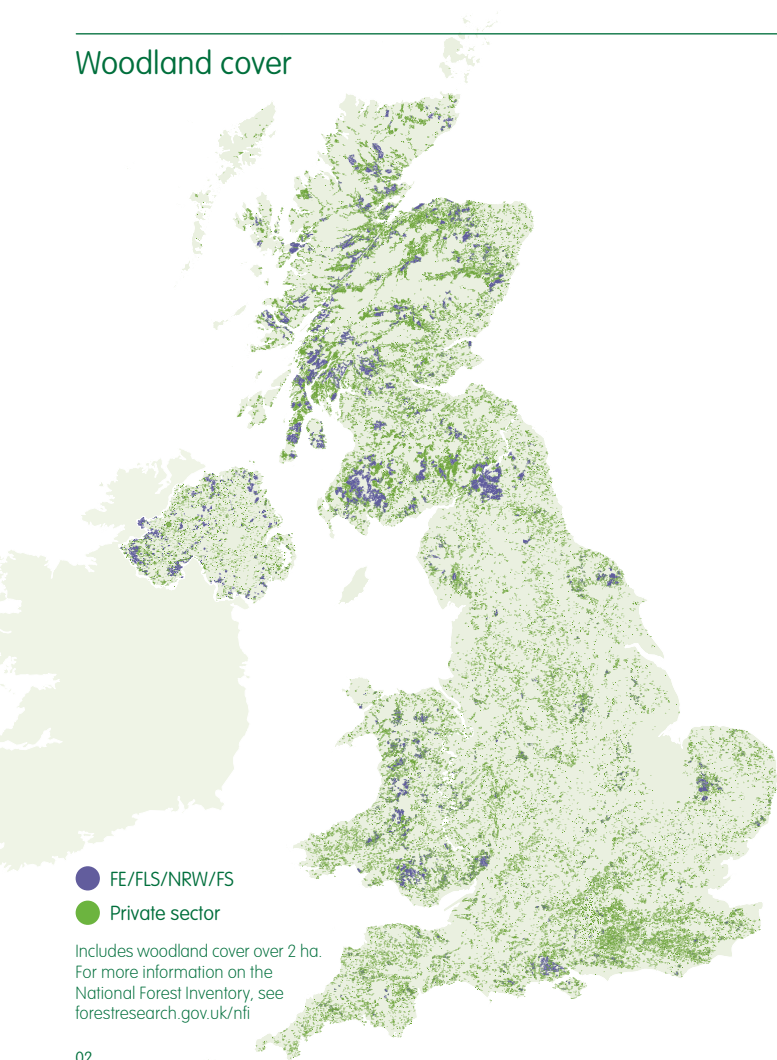
| | | | |
|------------------|------------|--------------|--------------|
| England | 160 | 952 | 1 112 |
| Wales | 50 | 147 | 197 |
| Scotland | 650 | 377 | 1 027 |
| Northern Ireland | 9 | 47 | 56 |
| UK | 869 | 1 524 | 2 393 |

All woodland (000 ha)

| | | | |
|------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| England | 303 | 1 023 | 1 326 |
| Wales | 139 | 173 | 312 |
| Scotland | 1 060 | 434 | 1 494 |
| Northern Ireland | 63 | 55 | 118 |
| UK | 1 566 | 1 685 | 3 251 |

Areas as at 31 March 2023.

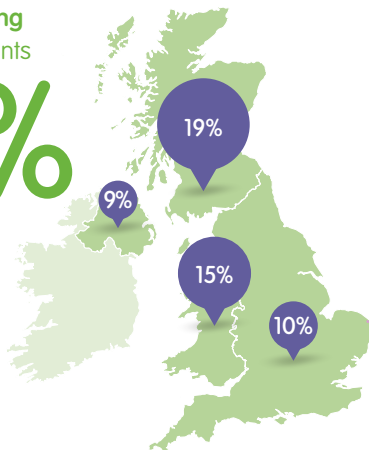
Woodland cover



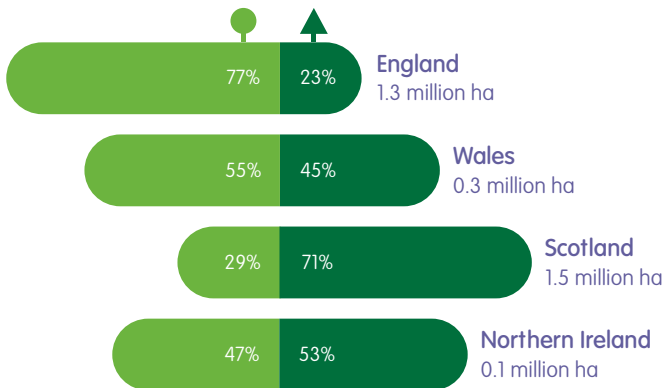
Woodland area is **increasing**
in the UK and now represents

13.4%

of total land area



Broadleaves account for just over **one half** of the woodland area in the UK, but the proportion varies in each country.





1.44 million hectares of woodland in the UK
are **FSC/GiB/PEFC** certified

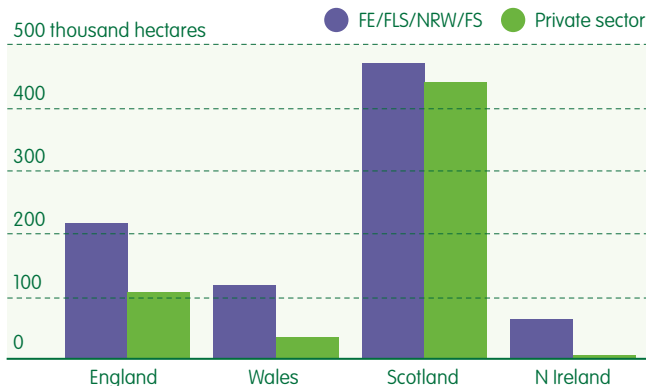
Certified woodland area

44%

UK woodland area certified
to FSC/GiB/PEFC schemes*

100%
Public sector

24%
Private sector

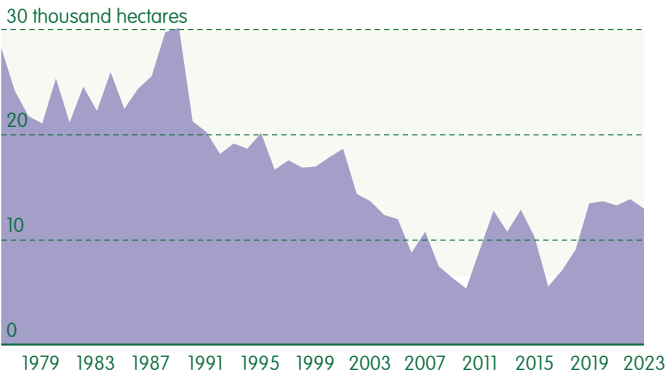


*FSC = Forest Stewardship Council; GiB = Grown in Britain;
PEFC = Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification.

New planting

12,960 hectares of **new woodland** were created in the UK in 2022/23

New planting

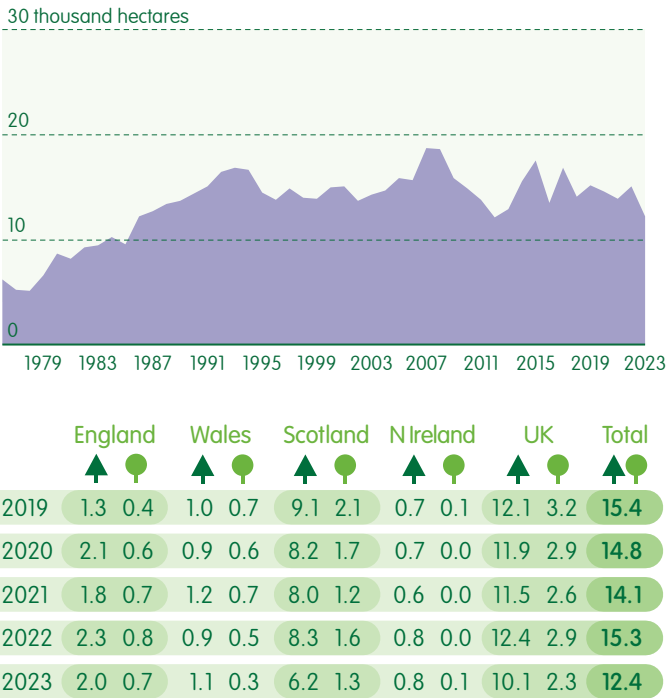


| | England | | Wales | | Scotland | | N Ireland | | UK | | Total | |
|------|---------|-----|-------|-----|----------|-----|-----------|-----|-----|-----|-------|---|
| | ▲ | ● | ▲ | ● | ▲ | ● | ▲ | ● | ▲ | ● | ▲ | ● |
| 2019 | 0.4 | 1.0 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 7.3 | 3.9 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 8.1 | 5.4 | 13.5 | |
| 2020 | 0.2 | 2.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 7.4 | 3.6 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 7.8 | 5.9 | 13.7 | |
| 2021 | 0.2 | 1.9 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 6.9 | 3.7 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 7.3 | 6.0 | 13.3 | |
| 2022 | 0.3 | 2.0 | 0.2 | 0.4 | 6.3 | 4.1 | 0.1 | 0.4 | 6.9 | 7.0 | 13.9 | |
| 2023 | 0.3 | 2.9 | 0.5 | 0.7 | 5.5 | 2.7 | 0.1 | 0.4 | 6.3 | 6.6 | 13.0 | |

Publicly funded restocking

12,390 hectares of publicly funded **restocking** were reported in the UK in 2022/23

Restocking



There was a **7% decrease** in
new planting and a **19% decrease***
in restocking in the UK in 2022/23

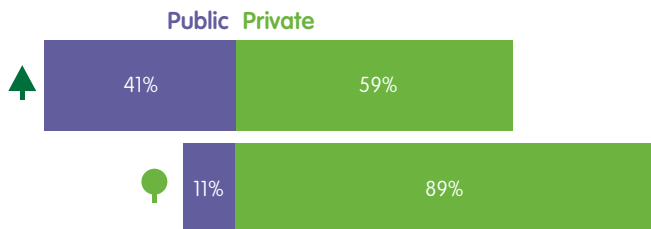
*Data for restocking of private sector woodland in
England in 2022/23 is not currently available.



Timber and wood products

UK wood production

59% of the softwood produced in 2022 came from **private sector** forests



Wood production

Softwood 

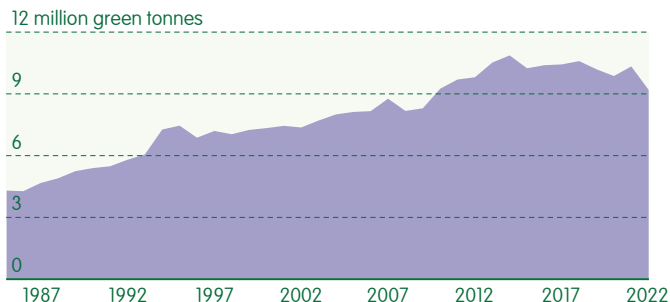
| | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|----------------|--------|-------|-------|--------|-------|
| FE/FLS/NRW/FS | 4 395 | 3 842 | 4 504 | 3 888 | 3 709 |
| Private sector | 6 827 | 5 884 | 5 437 | 6 407 | 5 443 |
| Total | 11 223 | 9 726 | 9 940 | 10 295 | 9 152 |

Hardwood 

| | | | | | |
|----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| FE/FLS/NRW/FS | 88 | 67 | 87 | 96 | 90 |
| Private sector | 746 | 801 | 742 | 727 | 745 |
| Total | 834 | 868 | 829 | 832 | 834 |

UK deliveries

Softwood

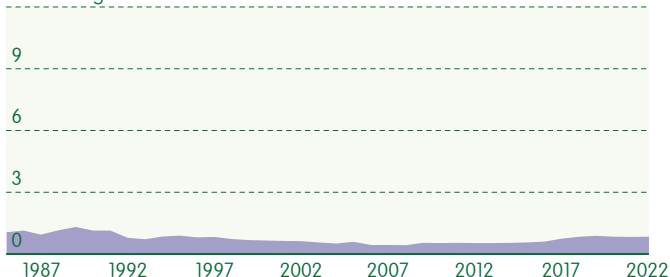


| (000 green tonnes) | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|--------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| Sawmills | 6 337 | 5 898 | 5 837 | 6 268 | 5 452 |
| Pulpmills | 486 | 464 | 383 | 399 | 403 |
| Wood-based panels | 1 210 | 1 316 | 1 248 | 1 508 | 1 229 |
| Fencing | 255 | 262 | 258 | 247 | 232 |
| Woodfuel | 1 900 | 1 900 | 1 850 | 1 600 | 1 600 |
| Other | 174 | 183 | 188 | 176 | 176 |
| Roundwood exports | 264 | 201 | 140 | 168 | 132 |
| Total | 10 626 | 10 225 | 9 904 | 10 366 | 9 224 |

Figures are based on processing industries' purchases of softwood grown in the UK and estimates for woodfuel. Woodfuel reported here is derived from stemwood and includes estimated roundwood use for biomass energy. Other includes shavings and poles.

Hardwood

12 million green tonnes



| (000 green tonnes) | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|--------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Sawmills | 66 | 75 | 62 | 60 | 59 |
| Pulpmills | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Wood-based panels | 1 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| Woodfuel | 700 | 700 | 700 | 700 | 700 |
| Other | 68 | 93 | 66 | 60 | 70 |
| Total | 834 | 868 | 829 | 823 | 834 |

Figures are based on processing industries' purchases of hardwood grown in the UK and estimates for woodfuel and other uses. Woodfuel reported here is derived from stemwood and includes estimated roundwood use for biomass energy. Other includes round fencing and roundwood exports.

UK production of wood products

Sawnwood

3.1 million m³



Paper & paperboard

3.5 million tonnes



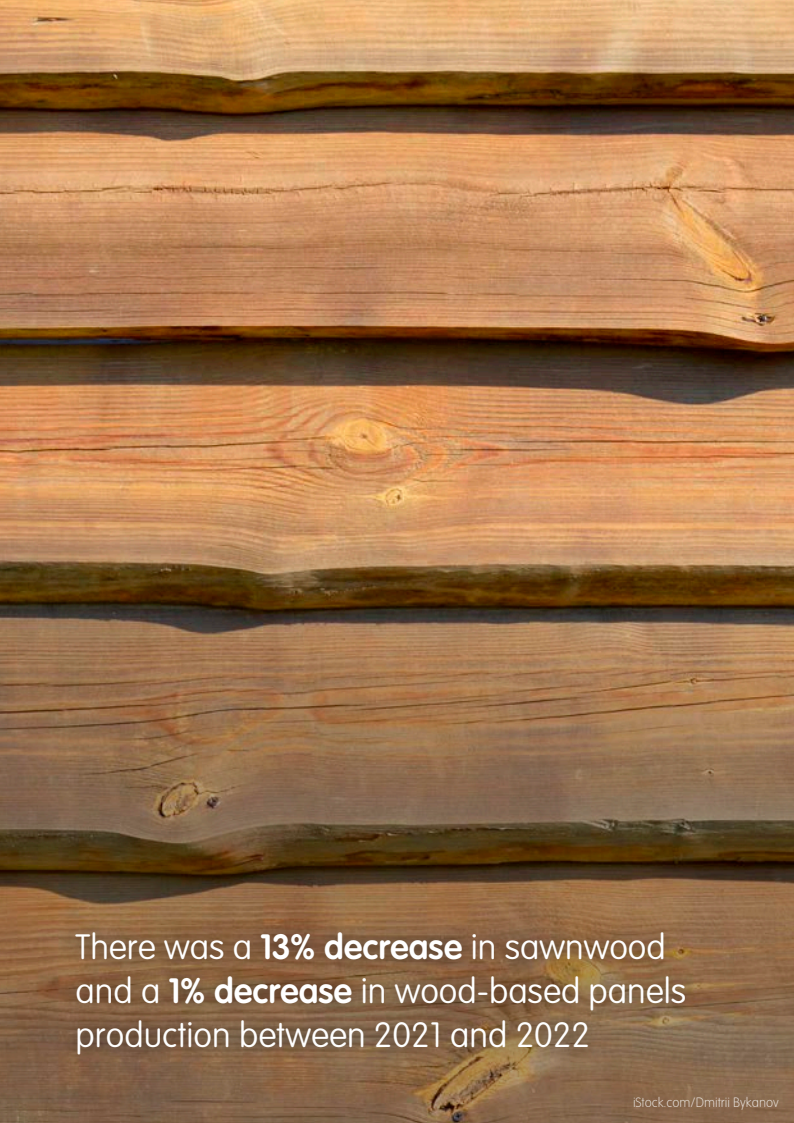
Wood-based panels

3.5 million m³



| | Sawnwood (000 m ³) | Wood-based panels (000 m ³) | Paper & paperboard (000 tonnes) |
|------|-----------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| 2018 | 3666 | 3079 | 3894 |
| 2019 | 3463 | 3246 | 3851 |
| 2020 | 3348 | 2952 | 3631 |
| 2021 | 3611 | 3486 | 3642 |
| 2022 | 3145 | 3466 | 3462 |

Total production from UK mills, including products using imported material. Excludes other wood products (e.g. fuelwood and round fencing), roundwood and intermediate products (e.g. sawmill products, pulp and recovered paper).



There was a **13% decrease** in sawnwood
and a **1% decrease** in wood-based panels
production between 2021 and 2022

Imports and exports



\$11.7 billion

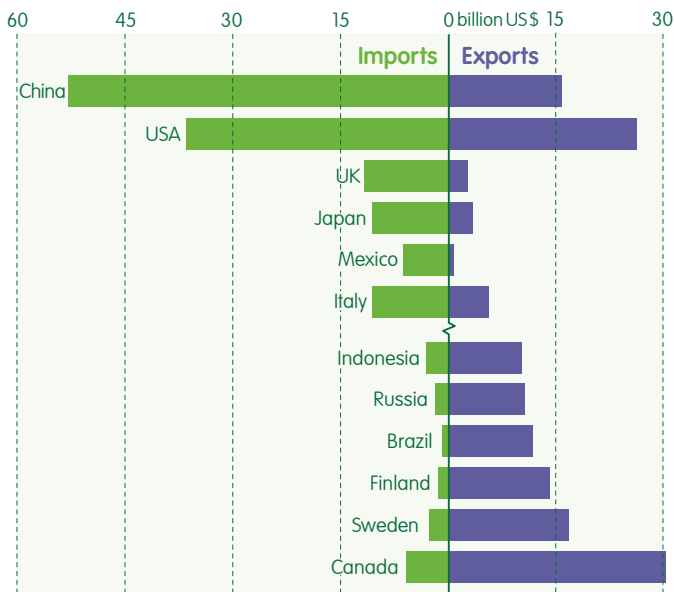
imported to UK

\$2.7 billion

exported from UK



Largest net importers and exporters of forest products in 2021



3rd

The UK is the third largest **net importer** of forest products in the world

Volume (000 m³)

| Imports | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|----------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Sawnwood | 7 213 | 7 040 | 7 218 | 8 159 | 6 506 |
| Other wood | 13 594 | 15 252 | 15 571 | 15 111 | 12 394 |
| Wood-based panels | 3 878 | 3 650 | 3 267 | 3 794 | 3 235 |
| Pulp & paper (000 t) | 6 663 | 6 130 | 5 329 | 5 114 | 6 042 |
| Exports | | | | | |
| Wood (sawn & other) | 925 | 867 | 538 | 581 | 472 |
| Wood-based panels | 295 | 384 | 389 | 321 | 371 |
| Pulp & paper (000 t) | 5 317 | 5 160 | 4 617 | 5 352 | 5 144 |

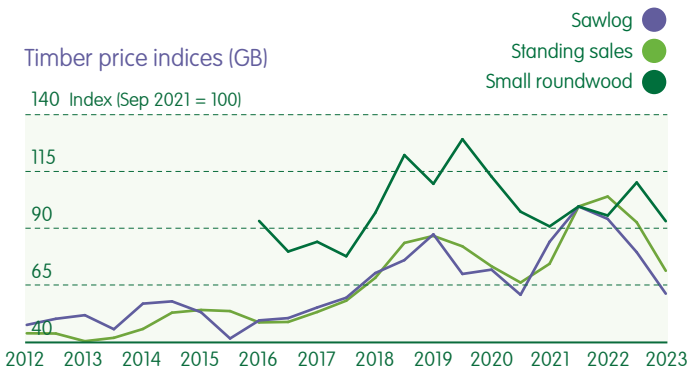
Value (£ million)

| Imports | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Sawnwood | 1 743 | 1 598 | 1 587 | 2 668 | 2 346 |
| Other wood | 1 192 | 1 405 | 1 537 | 1 467 | 1 602 |
| Wood-based panels | 1 201 | 1 134 | 970 | 1 313 | 1 549 |
| Pulp & paper | 4 075 | 4 076 | 3 388 | 3 088 | 5 209 |
| Exports | | | | | |
| Wood (sawn & other) | 91 | 81 | 99 | 141 | 141 |
| Wood-based panels | 103 | 123 | 114 | 158 | 171 |
| Pulp & paper | 1 597 | 1 491 | 1 336 | 1 674 | 1 923 |

'Other wood' includes roundwood, wood charcoal, chips, particles, residues and wood pellets. 'Pulp & paper' includes paperboards and recovered waste paper. 'Wood-based panels' includes veneer sheets. 'Sawnwood' includes sleepers.

Economics

Timber price indices (GB)



Index in real terms. Source: Timber Price Indices: Data to March 2023.

Gross value added in forestry and primary wood processing (£ million) in 2021



£0.76 billion
Forestry

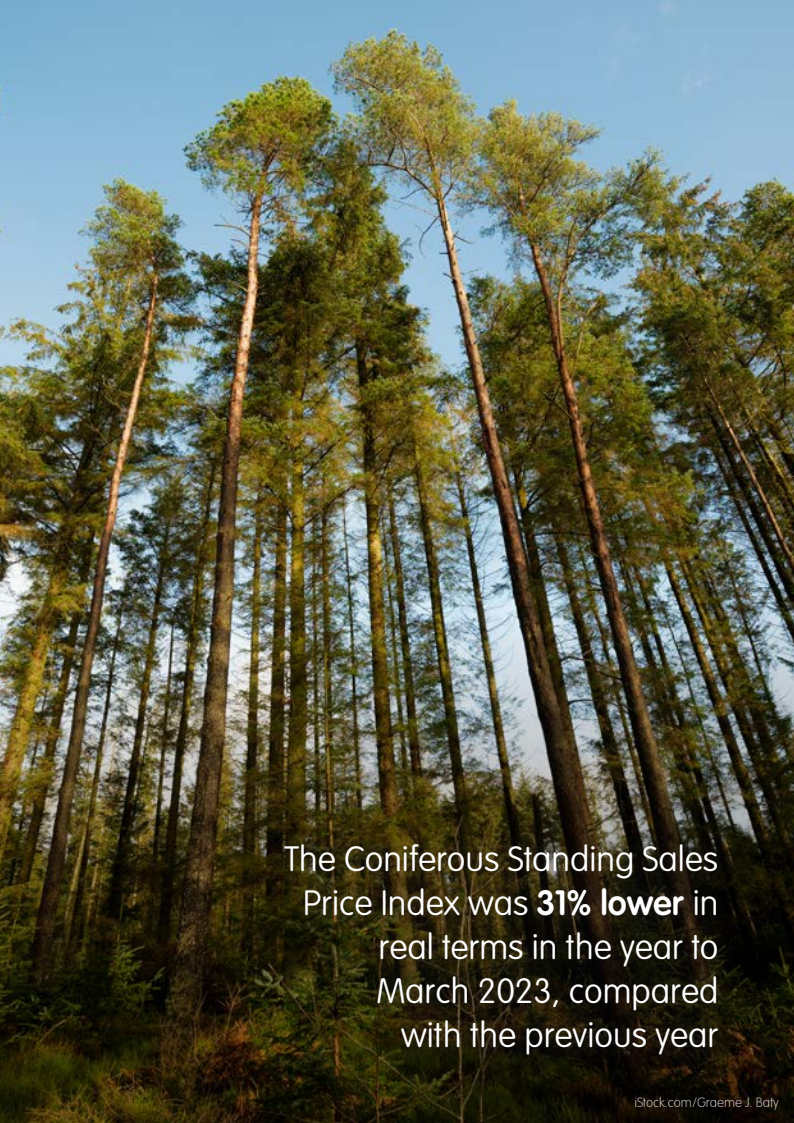
£2.09 billion
Primary wood processing



| | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021* |
|-------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Forestry | 698 | 669 | 724 | 866 | 755 |
| Primary wood processing | 1 490 | 1 874 | 1 562 | 1 494 | 2 094 |
| Sawmilling | 420 | 580 | 496 | 456 | 788 |
| Panels | 363 | 453 | 379 | 396 | 534 |
| Pulp & paper | 707 | 841 | 687 | 642 | 772 |

Excludes secondary wood processing and other wood-using industries.

Source: Annual Business Survey (2022), Office for National Statistics. Note: *estimated.

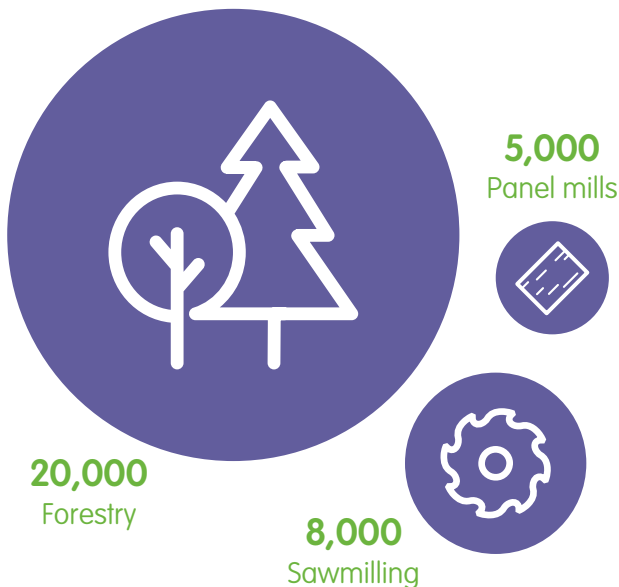


The Coniferous Standing Sales
Price Index was **31% lower** in
real terms in the year to
March 2023, compared
with the previous year

Around **20,000 full-time equivalent staff** were employed by the forestry sector in the UK in 2021



Employment



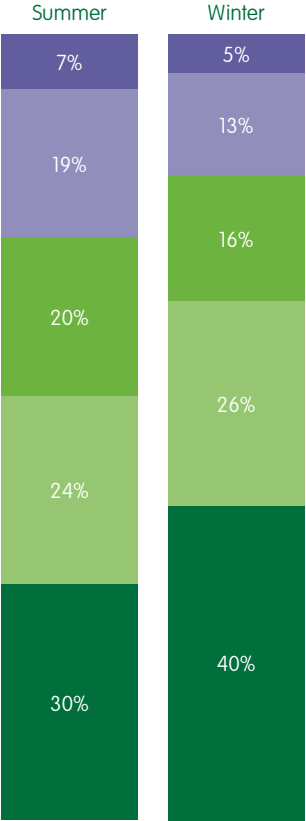
Employment in UK forestry and wood processing

| | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|------------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Forestry | [c] | 16 000 | 18 000 | 19 000 | 20 000 |
| Sawmilling | 9 000 | 10 000 | 7 000 | 8 000 | 8 000 |
| Panels | 5 000 | 6 000 | 5 000 | 5 000 | 5 000 |

Source: Business Register and Employment Survey, Nomis Official Census and Labour Market Statistics, Office for National Statistics. Note: [c] = confidential.

Woodland visits

Frequency of visitors to UK woodland



74%

of the UK population
visited woodlands
in the last few years

Several times per week
Several times per month
About once a month
Less often
Never

Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry
Survey (2023). Results exclude those
that answered 'don't know'.

In 2023, 84% of the UK public agreed that a lot more trees should be planted in response to the threat of **climate change**

Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Survey (2023).



International comparisons

International forest area

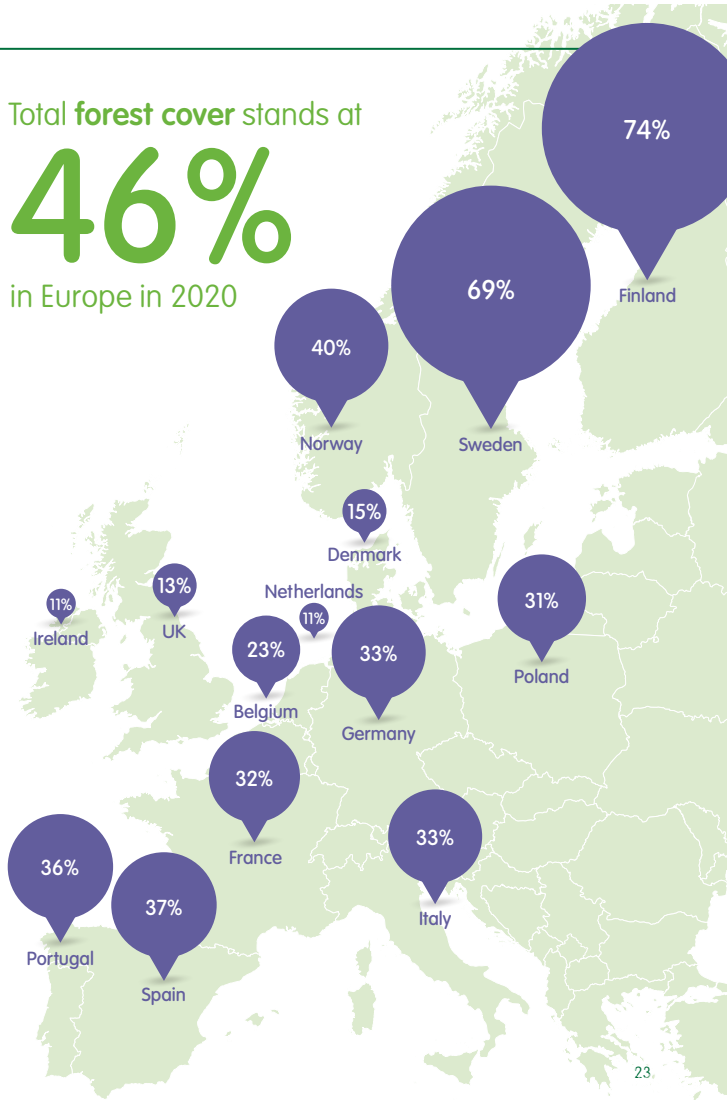
| | Forest area (million ha) | Total land area (million ha) | Forest cover (%) |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Europe | 1 017 | 2 213 | 46 |
| UK | 3 | 24 | 13 |
| EU | 159 | 400 | 40 |
| Denmark | 1 | 4 | 15 |
| Finland | 22 | 30 | 74 |
| France | 17 | 55 | 32 |
| Germany | 11 | 35 | 33 |
| Ireland | 1 | 7 | 11 |
| Italy | 10 | 29 | 33 |
| Spain | 19 | 50 | 37 |
| Sweden | 28 | 41 | 69 |
| Other EU | 51 | 148 | 34 |
| Russia | 815 | 1 638 | 50 |
| Africa | 637 | 2 989 | 21 |
| Asia | 623 | 3 109 | 20 |
| North & Central America | 753 | 2 133 | 35 |
| Oceania | 185 | 849 | 22 |
| South America | 844 | 1 746 | 48 |
| World | 4 059 | 13 039 | 31 |

EU excludes the UK. Cyprus is included in EU total but is part of FAO's Asia region.
These figures are outside the scope of National Statistics.

Total forest cover stands at

46%

in Europe in 2020



International wood removals

4 billion m³

of wood was removed from forests
in the world in 2021, of which:

**Industrial
roundwood**
2 billion m³



Woodfuel
2 billion m³

| (million m ³) | Industrial roundwood | Woodfuel | Total roundwood |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| Europe | 645 | 177 | 822 |
| UK | 8 | 2 | 10 |
| EU | 385 | 132 | 517 |
| Africa | 78 | 720 | 797 |
| Asia | 466 | 702 | 1 168 |
| North & Central America | 538 | 156 | 693 |
| Oceania | 71 | 10 | 81 |
| South America | 249 | 185 | 434 |
| World | 2 049 | 1 954 | 4 003 |

Source: Food and Agriculture Organization (2023).

International production of wood products

Production of wood products from world forests in 2021 was:

Sawnwood
496 million m³



Wood-based panel
402 million m³



Paper & paperboard
417 million tonnes



| | Sawnwood (million m ³) | | Wood-based panels (million m ³) | | Paper & paperboard (million t) | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|---|------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| | ● Production | ○ Apparent consumption | ● Production | ○ Apparent consumption | ● Production | ○ Apparent consumption |
| Europe | 172 | 117 | 94 | 88 | 105 | 91 |
| UK | 4 | 11 | 3 | 7 | 4 | 7 |
| EU | 109 | 84 | 60 | 59 | 83 | 72 |
| Africa | 12 | 16 | 3 | 6 | 3 | 8 |
| Asia | 151 | 196 | 236 | 229 | 206 | 216 |
| North & Central America | 126 | 125 | 47 | 61 | 77 | 83 |
| Oceania | 9 | 8 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| South America | 27 | 18 | 20 | 15 | 16 | 16 |
| World | 496 | 482 | 402 | 403 | 417 | 418 |

Source: Food and Agriculture Organization (2023).

In 2023, 92% of the UK public agreed that
**forests and woodlands are important
places for wildlife**

Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Survey (2023).



Environment

Woodland type

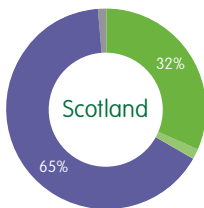
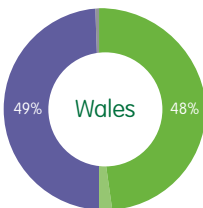
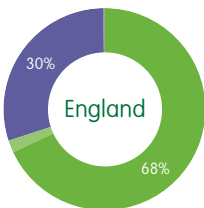
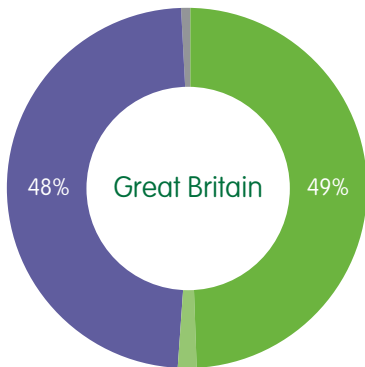
Native trees account for around **one half** of total woodland area in Great Britain, but this varies in each country.

Native

Near native & fragments

Non-native

Not determinable



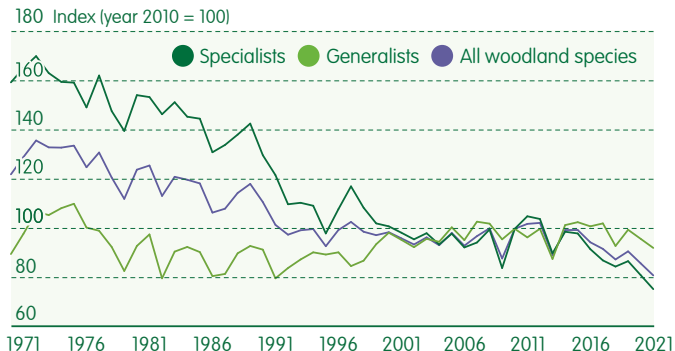
The total area of native woodland in Great Britain is estimated to be around

1.5 million hectares

Source: National Forest Inventory (2020).

Woodland bird populations

The woodland bird population has **fallen by 34%** since 1970



Source: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Joint Nature Conservation Committee, British Trust for Ornithology (2023).


Carbon

The carbon stored in UK forest **soils** accounts for over two-thirds of forest carbon stock.

Soil
Living trees
Deadwood & litter



Carbon stock in UK forests is estimated to have increased from around **3.2 billion tonnes** of carbon dioxide equivalent in 1990 to **4.0 billion tonnes** of carbon dioxide equivalent in 2020.



Projected carbon sequestration from
registered Woodland Carbon Code projects*
increased by 23% between 2022 and 2023

woodlandcarboncode.org.uk

*For projects validated (including verified) and awaiting validation.

Forestry Facts and Figures is an annual summary of forestry statistics compiled by Forest Research on behalf of the forestry authorities in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The full 2023 publication, including details of the sources used and downloadable spreadsheets of data, can be found online at **www.forestresearch.gov.uk/statistics**

The UK Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics. For more information visit **www.statistics.gov.uk**

Responsible statistician: Simon Maxwell.

Enquiries relating to this publication should be addressed to: **statistics@forestresearch.gov.uk**

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