

Forestry Statistics 2023

Sources: Environment

Release date:

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Coverage:

United Kingdom

Geographical breakdown:

Country

Issued by: Forest Research, Northern Research Station,
Roslin, Midlothian, EH25 9SY

Enquiries: statistics@forestresearch.gov.uk

Statistician: Simon Maxwell, 0300 067 5997

Website: www.forestresearch.gov.uk/statistics/



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, data, technical support and consultancy services.

11.5 Sources: Environment

Introduction

The statistics presented in the Environment chapter of this release cover:

- woodland types and habitats;
- populations of wild birds;
- populations of woodland butterflies;
- public opinion on tree health.

Data sources and methodology

Woodland types and habitats

Data on woodland types and habitats comes from the National Forest Inventory (NFI) [Woodland Ecological Condition in Great Britain: Statistics](#) report. Published in February 2020, the report presents data from the first field survey cycle which ran from 2010 to 2015. The accompanying report on [NFI Woodland Ecological Condition Scoring Methodology](#) provides more detailed information on definitions and methodology.

Populations of wild birds

Population indices for wild birds are a framework indicator for sustainable development. The data published here are based on those published in the [Wild bird populations in the UK](#), 1970 to 2021 statistical release (published in April 2023), rescaled here to give year 2010 = 100 instead of year 1970 = 100. The report, produced by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC).

The index for woodland specialists was recalculated in 2007 to include 4 additional species; this affected the indices for total woodland birds and (to a lesser extent) all

birds. A further change in 2015 resulted in the removal of one woodland specialist species from the index.

Populations of woodland butterflies

Population trends for pollinating insects form one of the UK's biodiversity indicators. The data published here are based on the [UK Biodiversity Indicators 2022 report](#), published in December 2022 (revised in May 2023) by Defra, Butterfly Conservation, UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, BTO and JNCC. The index has been rescaled to give year 2010 = 100, instead of year 1990 = 100, in order to match the woodland bird index (see above). The all-species butterfly index includes 50 species, of which 24 are commonly found in woodland.

In addition to the unsmoothed index (black line in Figure 5.3), a smoothed index (blue line) is presented along with 95% confidence intervals (grey shaded area) to show the overall trend over time.

Public opinion on tree health and diseases

[Public Opinion of Forestry surveys](#) have been run every 2 years by Forest Research on behalf of the Forestry Commission/Forestry England/Defra, Scottish Forestry, Welsh Government/Natural Resources Wales and every 4 years on behalf of the Forest Service of Northern Ireland. The surveys cover public attitudes to forestry and forestry-related issues. In the UK/England survey, respondents are asked whether or not they agree with a number of statements related to tree health and diseases (Figure 5.4). Further information on the Public Opinion of Forestry surveys, including methodology and quality statement, can be found in the Annex section in each report.

References

[NFI woodland ecological condition in Great Britain: Statistics](#), Forest Research (2020).

[Wild bird populations in the UK, 1970 to 2021](#), Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2023).

[UK Biodiversity Indicators 2022](#), Joint Nature Conservation Committee (2023).

Quality

Limited data are currently available on the environmental aspects of woodlands. Other than Wild Bird Populations, all of the statistics in this chapter are outside the scope of National Statistics, but are included here to give a broad indication of the woodland environment.

Revisions

Statistics on the environment obtained from others are subject to revision whenever the source data are revised.

Our revisions policy sets out how revisions and errors to these statistics are dealt with, and is available on our [Quality of Official Statistics web page](#).

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 2025, with results available in summer 2025.

[Forestry Statistics 2023](#) and [Forestry Facts & Figures 2023](#) will be released on 28 September 2023.

Alice Holt Lodge

Farnham
Surrey, GU10 4LH, UK
Tel: **0300 067 5600**

**Northern Research
Station**

Roslin
Midlothian, EH25 9SY, UK
Tel: **0300 067 5900**

**Forest Research in
Wales**

Environment Centre
Wales
Deiniol Road, Bangor
Gwynedd, LL57 2UW,
UK
Tel: **0300 067 5774**

info@forestresearch.gov.uk

www.forestresearch.gov.uk

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