

Forestry Statistics 2023

Sources: Social

Release date:

28 September 2023

Coverage:

United Kingdom

Geographical breakdown:

Country

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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, data, technical support and consultancy services.

11.7 Sources: Social

Introduction

The data presented in the Social chapter of Forestry Statistics 2023 are based on general population surveys of individuals. This approach is employed for the People and Nature Surveys that run in England and in Scotland, the National Survey for Wales and the Public Opinion of Forestry surveys. (Tables 6.1 to 6.5).

Data Sources and Methodology

Household surveys

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

- [Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment](#) (England, 2009/10 to 2018/19),
- [People and Natural Survey](#) (England, 2020/21 onwards),
- Welsh Outdoor Recreation Survey (2014/15),
- [National Survey for Wales](#) (2016/17 and 2018/19),
- Scottish Recreation Survey (2012/13),
- Scotland's People and Nature Survey (2013/14, 2017/18 and 2019/20),

The [People and Natural Survey](#) for England has also been used to provide information on visitor characteristics in Table 6.2.

Scotland's People and Nature Survey, produced by [NatureScot](#), has replaced the Scottish Recreation Survey.

The [National Survey for Wales](#) has replaced the Welsh Outdoor Recreation Survey and provides statistics on visitor characteristics (Table 6.3).

Public Opinion of Forestry Survey

[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, including visits to woodland (Tables 6.4 to 6.5 and Figure 6.1), and were last run in March 2023. For more information on the Public Opinion of Forestry surveys, including methodology and quality statement, see the Annex section in each report.

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

All 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 2022.

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](#).

Further information

Further information is available from the Forest Research website on the [social statistics](#) and the [Public Opinion of Forestry](#) pages.

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 26 September 2024.

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