



# LEARNING ABOUT THE NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK

## 1 Key Facts and Figures

Mist and autumn colour, Minstead Road

## The National Park family

The New Forest is one of a family of 14 national parks across England, Wales and Scotland. These represent some of the most beautiful areas of countryside in the UK.

National parks were first set up in the USA to protect wilderness areas. The first ever national park was created in Yellowstone, USA in 1872. The first national park in the UK was the Peak District which was designated in 1951.

## The New Forest National Park

The New Forest became a National Park in March 2005 and the New Forest National Park Authority took on its full duties in April 2006. The New Forest became the first national park in the south of England.

### Purposes of the New Forest National Park

The New Forest National Park has two purposes. These are:

- to conserve and enhance (look after) the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Park, and
- to encourage understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities.

In addition the National Park has a duty to foster the social and economic well being of communities within it.

### Location of the New Forest National Park

The New Forest National Park is mostly in South-west Hampshire with a small part in Wiltshire. It stretches from Southampton Water in the east to the Avon Valley in the west and from the edge of the Wiltshire Downs in the north to the shores of the Solent coast in the south.

### New Forest National Park



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## Why is it so special?

**Within the National Park boundary lie some of the most special landscapes in the world. Different people have different views on what makes the New Forest such a special place. Some of these are shown below:**

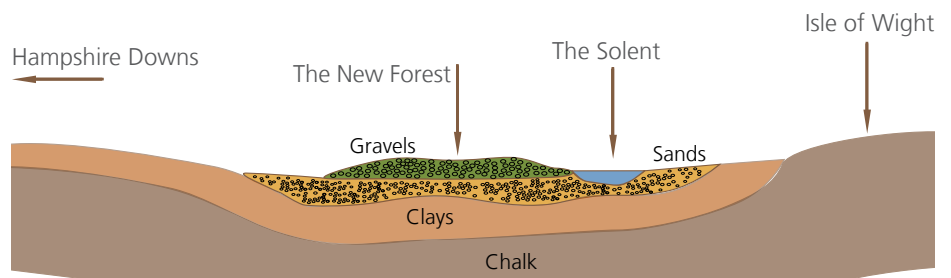
- outstanding natural beauty: the sights, sounds and smells of ancient woodland and unspoilt coastline
- an extraordinary diversity of plants and animals, many of international importance
- a unique archaeological, historic and cultural heritage, from royal hunting ground to ship-building
- an historic commoning grazing system that maintains so much of what people know and love as 'the New Forest'
- the iconic New Forest Pony together with donkeys, pigs and cattle roaming free
- a working landscape based on commoning, farming and forestry
- tranquility at the heart of the busy and built up south
- wonderful opportunities for quiet recreation, learning and discovery
- a healthy environment: fresh air, clean water and a sense of wilderness



## Physical features

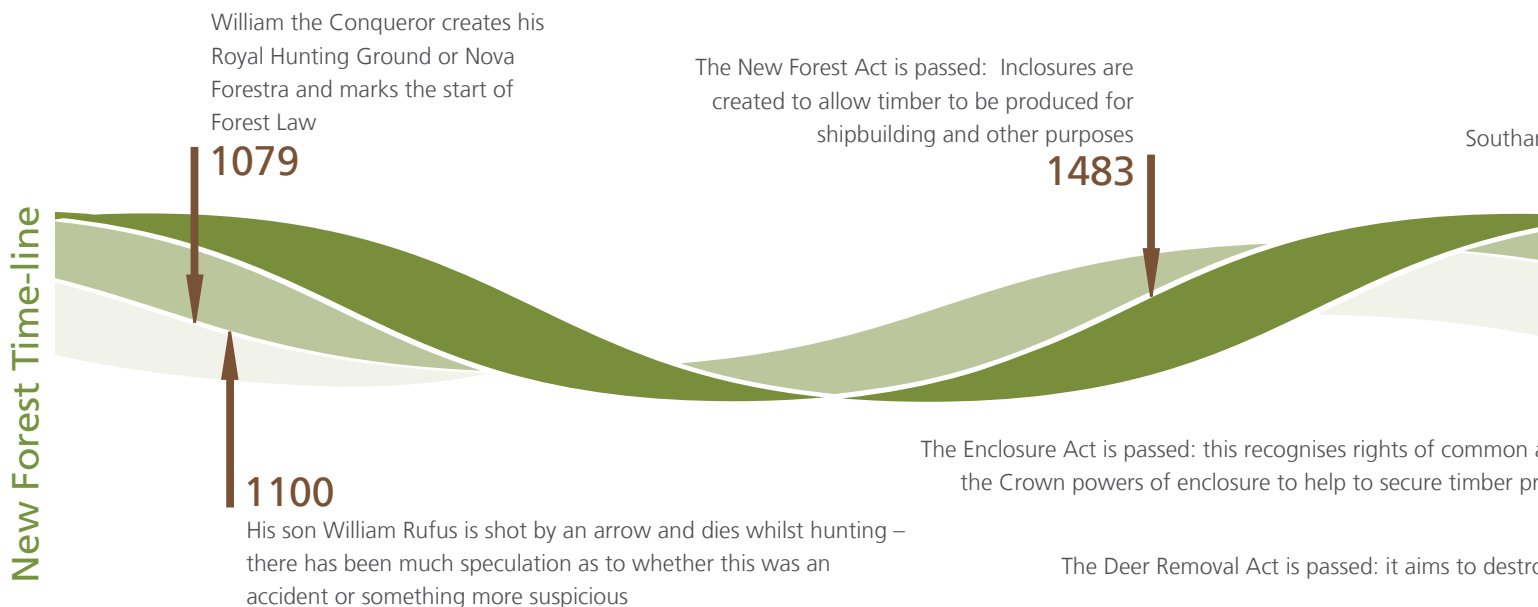
### Geology

The New Forest consists of layers of sand and gravel overlying a layer of clay. Both the sands and gravels allow water to pass through the gaps between the particles (they are permeable rocks). The clay will allow water to pass through but as the particles are much smaller, the gaps become easily saturated. Once this happens water cannot pass through the rock and it becomes impermeable.



### Main rivers

The River Lymington begins as a spring emerging on Stoney Cross Plain. It then winds south easterly for 25 km before entering the Solent at Lymington. The river supports a variety of wildlife including freshwater invertebrates such as stoneflies and mayflies. It is also home to a variety of fish such as the Brown Trout and the Bullhead. Other key rivers include the Beaulieu River, the River Darkwater and the Blackwater.





There are **37** parishes and towns wholly or partly within the National Park and over **34,000** people live within the Park boundaries.

Only three settlements within the National Park have over **3,000** people, the largest is Brockenhurst with **3,400** people followed by Sway and Lyndhurst.

Over **38,000** hectares (nearly **67%**) of the National Park is covered by the historic 'Perambulation'. This is the area in which common rights apply and commoner's livestock can roam freely. The historic system of commoning, together with traditional farming, continues to shape the landscape of much of the National Park.

There are **4** railway stations within the National Park: Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Beaulieu Road and Sway.

A 3D pie chart illustrating the distribution of land use. The chart is divided into four segments: a large brown segment for Woodland (39.2%), a green segment for Open Forest (34.5%), an orange segment for Farmland (24.74%), and a very small blue segment for Coastal (1.56%). The chart is presented in a 3D perspective, showing the thickness of the slices.

Land Use Category	Percentage
Woodland	39.2%
Open Forest	34.5%
Farmland	24.74%
Coastal	1.56%

## Recreation

The National Park receives an estimated **13.5** million day-visits a year. It is thought that these visits generate over **£120** million spending a year and support more than **2,500** jobs in the New Forest National Park.

Some of the most common forms of recreation include walking, cycling, horse riding, visiting tearooms and cafes and sightseeing.

Over **60%** of the visits are day visits by people who live in or close to the National Park.

The New Forest Act is passed: this removes restrictions on common grazing and constitutes the court of Verderers

1877

...mpton to Dorchester railway is constructed: this allows more visitors to access the New Forest

1847

1698  
and gives  
production

by all the deer in the Forest... but is unsuccessful

Government gives  
the New Forest  
special status  
equivalent to a  
national park and  
the New Forest  
Heritage Area is  
created

1992

The New Forest gains national park status and becomes the 14th national park to be created in the UK

2005

2006

The New Forest National Park Authority is created to look after the interests of the National Park

1851

1924

The Forestry Commission takes over the management of the New Forest's Crown Land

## Facts and figures

- Main rivers: Lymington and Beaulieu
  - Former Royal Hunting Forest
- Over **1,000** years old • **500** commoners
- Size: **220** square miles • Population: More than **34,000** people
  - Over **7,000** animals graze the Open Forest
  - Less than half the forest is covered by trees
    - **26** miles of coastline
    - **235km** of public footpaths
  - Highest point: Telegraph Hill (**167m**)
    - Receives an estimated **13.5** million day-visits a year
- Main settlements: Lyndhurst, Brockenhurst and Sway
- Oldest tree: Common Yew in Brockenhurst Church Yard (believed to be **1,000** years old!)
- Tallest tree: Wellingtonia in Rhinefield Drive (**55** metres tall!)

## Conserving and enhancing the National Park

**The National Park Authority works in partnership with many other organisations to ensure that the New Forest is conserved for future generations to enjoy.**

**Dogs:** The New Forest is a great place to walk dogs but please keep them within sight and under control at all times. To help birds rear their young safely keep dogs on the tracks between March and July. Some beaches are out of bounds to dogs during the summer; look out for local restrictions.

**Driving:** The 40mph speed limit on unfenced roads greatly reduces the number of accidents involving animals. Slow down and give ponies and other forest animals a wide berth; they have little road-sense! Be especially careful at night.

**Fire:** Because uncontrolled forest fires are a great threat, campfires are generally not allowed in the New Forest. Barbecue sites are provided for hire at Wilverley and Anderwood car parks by the Forestry Commission (023 8028 3141 or [www.forestry.gov.uk/newforest](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/newforest)) and at Lepe Country Park by Hampshire County Council (please book in advance: 023 8089 9108 or [www.hants.gov.uk/lepe](http://www.hants.gov.uk/lepe)).

**Cycling:** Keep to the waymarked tracks. Give way to walkers and horse riders, and call out a warning when approaching them. Ride in single file on narrow roads and never more than two abreast. Wear bright colours to be visible and always use lights in the dark.

**Forest management:** Take notice of any warning signs and keep a safe distance from work sites. Only pass a vehicle loading timber when told it is safe to do so.

**Litter:** Please take your litter home.

**Ponies:** Please don't feed the ponies. They may look friendly but they can bite and kick – especially mares with foals – and hand fed ponies tend to gather near roads and become aggressive with other visitors. There's plenty of natural forage for them in the Forest.



Dog walkers at Ragged Boys Hill

## Further reading and useful information

Other New Forest National Park Authority fact files

Forestry Commission fact files: [www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-62LHYL](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-62LHYL)

*The New Forest its character and heritage:* NFDC & Forestry Commission, 2005

*The New Forest Official Guide:* NFDC and Forestry Commission, 1993

*The New Forest:* Colin R. Tubbs, 2001

*New Forest:* Clive Chatters and Mike Reid, 2006

[www.newforestnpa.gov.uk](http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk) Factsheet available on CD, in large-print, or Braille on request

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