

NEW FOREST
NATIONAL PARK

New Forest
National Park

State of the Park report 2019



State of the Park report 2019

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REVISIONS SHEET

Original document published October 2012

Revision no. and date	Description	Relating to section
Revision 1 30.11.12	Contents page added; introduction amended	Contents and introduction
	Updated figures for SSSIs	Landscapes and habitats
Revision 2 05.11.12 2013 update	Indicators and text information updated where available	All
Revision 3 Jan-April 2016 2016 review	Full review, with updated figures included for the majority of the indicators and updates to much of text information. Includes some amendments where data is no longer collected. The main changes are listed below.	All
Revision 4 May – September 2019 2019 review	Full review, with updated figures for the majority of the indicators and updates to much of text information. Includes some amendments where data is no longer collected.	All
Revision 5 October 2019	Updated traffic count figures	Traffic and Transport
Revision 5 November 2019	Added clarification regarding baseline data where it has changed since the last report	
Revision 5 December 2019	Minor changes from external partners who contributed data	

Introduction

The New Forest is a unique place, with a natural environment of the highest quality, a wealth of archaeology and built heritage, and communities with a strong New Forest identity. It faces many issues and challenges, and a large number of different organisations and individuals are involved in working together to ensure the New Forest remains a special place.

The issues have been described in detail in the National Park Management Plan, published in 2010, which set out a Vision and ten long-term objectives focused on conserving the special qualities of the Park. The Partnership Plan for the National Park, published in 2015, updated the Management Plan and details a series of priority actions for the next five years, to be undertaken by the main organisations involved in the New Forest.

With the current Partnership Plan coming to an end in 2020 it has become necessary to update the State of the Park Report in its current format one final time. The updated version of the Report is an important part of the evidence gathering process for the Partnership Plan. The updated data will identify trends in the various subject areas. This in turn will provide a mandate for the Partnership Plan to address any negative developments or gaps wherever possible.

What is the State of the Park Report?

This State of the Park Report provides the most recent key facts and figures about the special qualities of the National Park and describes their condition at the present time. It forms an important part of the background evidence for the Management Plan / Partnership Plan and is divided into the same chapter headings. The Report also uses 'headline indicators' to show the overall health of the New Forest over time, including both positive changes and areas of concern.

The Report has been compiled by the National Park Authority, with contributions and help from many local and national organisations, including the local councils, the Verderers, Natural England, Forestry England and the Forestry Commission and charities within the National Park. The information it contains has been gathered from a number of sources and to the best of the contributing organisations' knowledge these sources are reliable and the data is correct at the present time.

It is hoped the document will be of general interest to local organisations, communities and policy makers. It will also be used specifically to help in monitoring the new Partnership Plan 2020-2025, assessing whether its objectives are being achieved and indicating some of the areas where resources could be focused in the future.

What does it contain?

The State of the Park Report covers ten topics taken from the first Management Plan that are of direct relevance to the conservation and enjoyment of the National Park, and to the social and economic wellbeing of its communities. They range from local distinctiveness and understanding the special qualities of the Forest to local communities and traffic and transport.

Annex 1 is a Park Profile, listing in tabular form many of the facts and figures found in the document, and Annex 2 provides a simple summary of all the headline indicators and trends.

Each of the main topics includes one or two headline indicators, together with more detailed information to help illustrate the State of the Park for that topic. The Report is not intended to include a comprehensive overview of all data relating to the topic, but key facts and figures are picked out to provide a snapshot in time, and information on recent trends is given wherever available.

The Report as a whole is meant as a starting point for monitoring change in the National Park and is very much a work in progress. It has therefore been published as a 'live' document to allow the addition of further data as it becomes available. This applies in particular to certain indicators, where new survey or research work is still needed, as indicated in the text.






About headline indicators

The eighteen headline indicators are designed to give a very broad indication of the current situation for each of the topics and should be read in conjunction with the more detailed account that goes with them.

The indicators have been chosen because they:

- measure the condition of the National Park and are specific to the New Forest
- relate directly to the objectives in the Management Plan
- can be used to give a broad indication of whether the objectives are being achieved
- rely on data that in general is readily available from a known source and that is repeatable over time

The trend for each indicator is summarised graphically using the following key with brief descriptive text.

-  Baseline data (no comparable trend information available)
-  Improving trend over recent years
-  No change in figures over recent years
-  Decline or negative trend in recent years
-  No current data: to be added when available

Updating the Report

The Report was partially updated in 2013, reviewed in 2016 and again updated in 2019, using the latest information and figures wherever possible. However, in a few cases up-to-date information was not available and therefore several indicators rely on earlier data, as indicated in the text.

Where there are currently gaps in the information this will be added as soon as possible, including any new local research. Where baseline data has changed since the last report or data in this report isn't comparable to last report's data this has clearly been indicated (scheduled ancient monuments, river water quality).

The Report will be fully updated and its headline indicators reviewed once the new Partnership Plan 2020-2025 has been published in 2020.

Local distinctiveness

Management Plan Objective¹: Conserve and enhance the wealth of individual characteristics that contribute to the local distinctiveness of the villages and landscapes of the New Forest

Headline indicators:

(1) **2.7% of scheduled ancient monuments and**

0.3% of listed buildings are at risk

=	Slight increase since 2016 but less monuments at risk in total
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☑	Decrease / positive trend
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(2) **Number of characteristic landscape features either enhanced, degraded or lost**
– data has not been recorded

Data not recorded

The condition of ancient monuments and listed buildings

The percentage of ancient monuments and buildings at risk is widely used as an indicator to show the condition of the built environment of an area.

There were 184 scheduled ancient monuments within the National Park in 2018/19². They range from Bronze Age barrows and burnt mound sites to Iron Age hill forts and settlement sites, with field systems of all periods. Five of these are at risk³ from stock or visitor erosion or damage by animal burrows. At least two monuments will come off the register in 2020. The condition of several monuments on the Crown Lands has been improved over the last few years thanks funding from the Higher Level Stewardship scheme and the Heritage Lottery Fund, while several sites on National Trust land, although still classed 'at risk', now have agreed management programmes in place.

Listed buildings are a key part of the built environment of the National Park. Structures range from grand houses and religious buildings to simple cottages and milestones. 0.3% of the 630 listed buildings (624 in 2016) in the National Park are at risk⁴ (1.8% in 2016).

¹ All headline indicators relate to the original New Forest Management Plan 2010-2015 objectives (continued in the New Forest Partnership Plan 2015-2020).

² Historic England (data provided to NPA), September 2019. The baseline figure of 214 provided in the previous report (2016) is inconsistent with Historic England methodology who count some sites containing e.g. more than one tumulus as one ancient monument.

³ Ibid

⁴ Two listed buildings and two places of worship; Historic England, November 2018

Location of features of the historic environment

There are 20 conservation areas in the National Park, covering approximately 7,500 ha.⁵ They include those areas in which the settlements and their landscape settings are of particular local historic value. Management plans are being produced to conserve their character and the overall condition of Conservation Areas will be assessed regularly.

In addition, seven historic parks and gardens are listed on the English Heritage register within the National Park: Exbury House, Pylewell Park, Cadland House, Hale Park, Rhinefield House, Brockenhurst Park and Avon Tyrrell⁶. At present there is no formal assessment of their condition, or comprehensive data showing other parks and gardens of local significance.

Non-statutory historic sites and features

Designated cultural heritage sites represent only a small proportion of all the features of cultural heritage within the National Park. 1,765 buildings of local historic interest have been formally identified⁷, with others likely to be added to this list. In addition, there are over 200 archaeological sites⁸ that meet the criteria of national importance, most of which are on publicly owned land and are therefore already afforded a degree of protection.

Adding to knowledge about cultural heritage

The 'New Forest remembers - untold stories of World War II' project carried out archaeological surveying of part of the National Park including an airborne infra-red Lidar survey (light detection and ranging), mapping work and field surveys, assessing the Second World War archaeological sites and their conservation needs. In addition, a First World War project supported local community groups in undertaking their own research and recording family memories of the Great War.

Both projects involved more than 100 public events and have resulted in an extensive on-line archive of photos, stories and archaeological information.

Lidar survey data covering the Crown Lands is revealing a wealth of new information and is assisting in the identification and protection of designated and undesignated sites. Over 3,000 new sites have been verified by surveys on the ground between 2010 – 2020. Some of these are being brought back into favourable condition through New Forest Higher Level Stewardship Scheme funding. The scheme has seen 865

⁵ NPA data, September 2019

⁶ Historic England, National Heritage List for England (accessed June 2019)

⁷ NPA data, June 2019

⁸ NPA data, June 2019

volunteer survey days take place to date. As well as this, the HLS LiDAR exhibition saw 20,000 people in attendance, along with 800 young people attending a 'Digital Archaeology' weekend.⁹

Ancient and veteran trees

The New Forest contains one of the highest concentrations of ancient and veteran trees in the UK. They are of national importance for biodiversity, and in particular for the many rare lichens and dead-wood invertebrates they support. They are also highly important for their cultural and historic value.

The New Forest Ancient Tree Hunt has helped to record the location and sizes of veteran and ancient trees throughout the National Park, adding the information to the national database held by the Woodland Trust. About 1,500 ancient and veteran trees have been recorded within the National Park, mainly comprising oak, beech and holly. Around 50 trees have girths of between 6.0m and 8.8m and are likely to be 400 years old or more.¹⁰

During 2018 and 2019 the NFNPA has worked in partnership with the NGO Buglife and the People's Trust for Endangered Species and Forestry England to start to establish the status and distribution of the nationally rare Noble chafer beetle – an example of a species reliant on the deadwood resource of the Park's woodlands.

In 2018 (New Forest Centre) and 2019 (Bournemouth University) there has been a travelling photographic exhibition on the ancient and remarkable trees of the New Forest to engender care and respect for the many large and characterful trees of the Forest. This was produced by photographer David Russell and supported by the NFNPA.

Village Design Statements

Village Design Statements describe the character and features of local distinctiveness within individual parishes and may include information on buildings of local historical interest, the landscape setting of the village, land uses and important views. They also suggest guidelines to conserve the character of the area in the event of any new development. Village Design Statements are produced and agreed by the local community and can be adopted by the planning authority as Supplementary Planning Documents. Seven villages have completed Village Design Statements¹¹ – for details see the 'Local communities' section of this Report.

⁹ All data NPA, September 2019

¹⁰ All data NPA, August 2019

¹¹ NPA data, June 2019

Landscapes and habitats

Objective: Protect and enhance the large-scale cultural landscapes and semi-natural habitats of the New Forest

Headline indicators:

(1) 53% of SSSIs (by area) are in favourable condition



Slight increase / positive trend

(2) 30,318 hectares of land is managed according to conservation objectives



No change in the last 3 years

Condition of SSSIs

Sites of Special Scientific Interest together form a network of the most important sites for nature conservation across the country. The New Forest has a higher proportion of SSSIs (by land area) than any other national park and is particularly well-known for the large New Forest SSSI in the heart of the National Park. In addition, a further 19 smaller SSSIs cover much of the New Forest coast.

53% of the total SSSI area is in favourable condition. This figure has increased in recent years as a result of large-scale habitat restoration work, and further improvements are likely in forthcoming years. Nevertheless, a significant proportion of the SSSI units in the Park are not yet in favourable condition. A very small percentage of SSSIs are unfavourable with no change or declining in condition¹².

Condition of Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Condition	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Favourable	33.6%	34.0%	34.0%	45.2%	51.5%	51.9%	51.9%	52.1%	52.9%	52.9%	53%
Unfavourable recovering	60.7%	64.0%	64.5%	52.7%	46.4%	46.1%	46.1%	45.8%	43.2%	43.2%	42.5%
Unfavourable no change	0.9%	0.5%	0.5%	1.2%	1.3%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	2.7%	2.7%	3%
Unfavourable declining	4.7%	1.6%	1.0%	0.9%	0.8%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.2%	1.2%	1.4%
Part destroyed¹³	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Destroyed¹⁴	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

¹² All data from Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre; figures are for March of each year shown. Figures for 2019 from Natural England's Evidence Report on SSSI Condition in National Parks, May 2019; taken from national 'Monitoring Environmental Outcomes in Protected Landscapes (MEOPL)' provided as part of national KPI figures for National Parks England

¹³ Very small areas have been affected, but insufficient to show as a percentage.

¹⁴ As above

Other nature conservation designations

The New Forest is internationally recognised for the value and quality of its natural habitats. About 54% of the National Park is given protection as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) or Ramsar Site. These cover much of core of the Park and the coastal areas and are all also Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). In addition, local non-statutory designations include 391 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, which comprise a further 5% of the National Park.¹⁵

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest 32,187 ha (57% of the National Park)
- International sites ¹⁶ 90,909 ha (RAMSAR, SPA, SAC)
- Local Nature Reserves (statutory) 416 ha (0.73 % of the National Park)
- Non-statutory sites (SINCs) 3,040 ha (5% of the National Park)

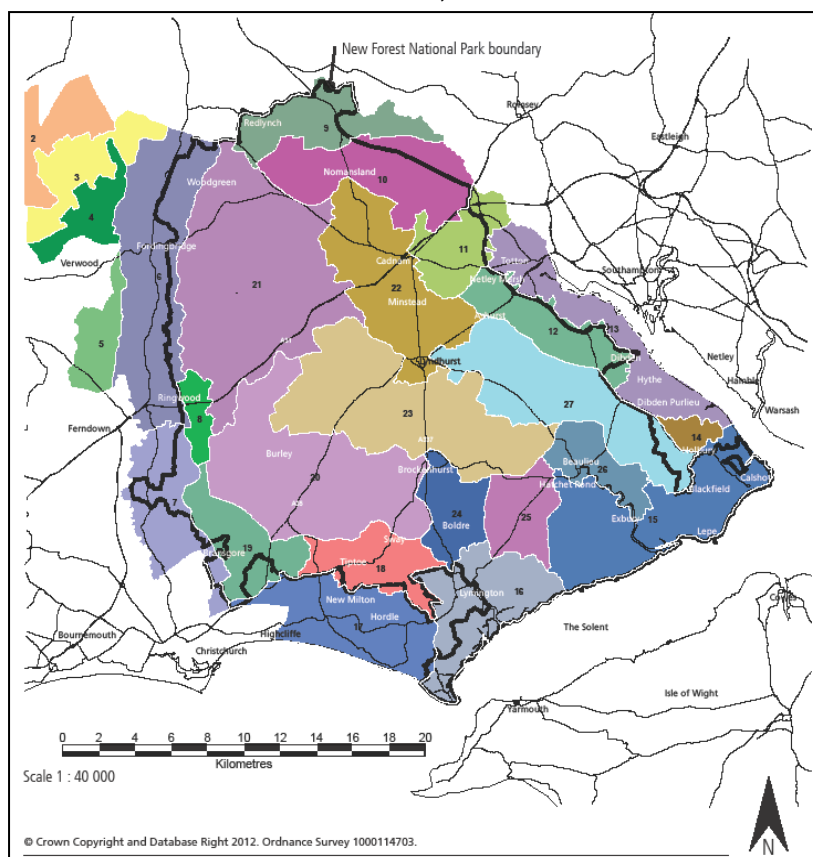
Whilst there is no comprehensive assessment of the condition of non-statutory wildlife sites, the work of the Authority in partnership with landowners suggests that grasslands are likely to be losing their nature conservation interests unless they are the subject of careful management and within agri-environment or other grant schemes.

¹⁵ All data from HBIC report 2017/18; December 2018

¹⁶ total figure: RAMSAR: 30,149 ha; SPA: 30,119 ha; SAC: 30,641 ha

The character of the landscape

The Landscape Character Assessment for the National Park and New Forest District was updated in 2010 and published as part of the Landscape Action Plan for the Park in 2013. It identifies 19 distinctive Character Areas within the National Park and describes the current condition, issues and trends for each.



Landscape Character Areas within the National Park

6. Upper Avon Valley
7. Lower Avon Valley
8. Poulner Woods and Pastures
9. Landford Forest Farmlands
10. West Wellow Heaths and Commons
11. Copythorne Forest Farmlands
12. Hythe and Ashurst Forest Farmlands
15. North West Solent Estates
16. Lymington and Pennington Coastal Plain
18. Sway Pasture & Smallholdings
19. Bransgore Woods and Pastures
20. Southern Heathland and Forest
21. Northern Heathland and Forest
22. Furzey Woodland and Villages

Land managed according to conservation objectives

30,318 hectares (53.5% of the land area) of the National Park is managed primarily to enhance the characteristic landscapes and habitats of the New Forest.¹⁷ This is based on land that is within Higher Level Stewardship Schemes with specific conservation targets, and land managed through a formal conservation management plan or agreement.

Other land may also be in positive management, particularly privately-owned amenity or farmland, or historic parks and gardens, but no definitive data is available, and overlaps may occur with Higher Level Stewardship Schemes. Therefore, these have not been included in the overall figures.

¹⁷ data from NPA, HBIC and Natural England, September 2019

Breakdown of land under conservation management

Category	2006 (ha)	2011 (ha)	2015 (ha)	2018/19 (ha)
Higher Level Stewardship Scheme	————	23,451	23,730	20,613 ¹⁸
English Woodland Grant Scheme ¹⁹	3,235	2,854	2,764	————
National Nature Reserve	1,199	1,199	1,199	1,199 ²⁰
Local Nature Reserve	412	416.5	416.5	416 ²¹
Countryside Stewardship Scheme	18,395	43	0	5,102 ²²
Other nature reserves or sites managed for their landscape/conservation value ²³	2,485.4	2,502.8	2,586.8	2,988
TOTALS	25,726.4	30,466.3	30,696.3	30,318

These figures show a slight decrease between 2015 and 2019, largely due to lower uptake and coverage of Higher Level Stewardship Schemes within the National Park and the discontinuation of the Woodland Grant Scheme. The Countryside Stewardship Scheme was introduced 2016, with stricter eligibility criteria and less overall funding available.

Habitat and landscape restoration

A number of major projects have taken place over the last few years to enhance the landscapes and habitats of the National Park. Most have drawn on external funding from the European Union and national government.

The New Forest Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) is England's largest agri-environment scheme designed to restore and enhance the internationally important habitats in the New Forest. Habitat restoration work in HLS scheme areas is being

¹⁸ Natural England, August 2019

¹⁹ Closed for new applications in September 2014; now part of the new Countryside Stewardship Scheme. The figures include 'live' agreements for woodland improvement, management, planning and creation, but not woodland assessment or regeneration grants. Based on information from FC database.

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ HBIC report 2018

²² Natural England, August 2019

²³ Total area of sites managed by the National Trust, Wildlife Trusts, the Woodland Trust, Pondhead Conservation Trust, Hoburne Bashley, includes two new RSPB nature reserves in 2019 (data provided by the RSPB)

undertaken by Forestry England to maintain them in good condition, which is necessary for continued Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designation. The HLS scheme must also improve the condition of each Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) unit within the New Forest SAC.

Since 2016, works under the HLS scheme achieved the following:²⁴

	2016	2017	2018
Wetland restoration sites: total length of restored channels and drains (metres)	1,518	5,103	5,803
Wetland restoration sites: total ha of SSSI units benefiting from restoration work	1,238	299	399
Rhododendron removal through herbicides and cut and burn (ha)	33.38	16.45	29.89
Restoration of species-rich grassland and wood pasture (ha)	4.86	12.85	6.02
Timber extraction (ha)	1.85	8.2	1.71

Our Past, Our Future is a National Lottery Heritage Fund Landscape Partnership Scheme which has included a number of projects to restore New Forest habitats. The projects run from 2016 till 2020, since the start of the scheme the following has been achieved:

Grassland and heathland restoration (scrub clearance, introducing grazing regimes)	28 privately owned SINCs	44.28 hectares
Woodland restoration (thinning birch, rhododendron removal, and creation of glades and rides)	22 privately owned woodland sites	132 hectares
Restoration and creation of boundary features (hedgelaying, coppicing and planting up of gaps)	8 privately owned sites	4,078m
Restoration of lowland mixed deciduous woodland	Planted over 18,000 trees at Foxbury (National Trust)	29.23 hectares
Himalayan Balsam removal	Privately owned riverbank	53km

In addition, specific enhancement projects currently on-going include the New Forest Non-Native Plants Project (Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust) and the restoration of Foxbury (National Trust). In 2018, the RSPB took ownership of

²⁴ All data provided by Forestry England, August 2019

'Franchises Lodge' in the Wiltshire part of the National Park. This reserve is a 386 ha woodland of deciduous and conifer trees that has largely been inaccessible to the public for many years and the acquisition has made it possible to restore and enhance areas of wood pasture and recreating open heath.

Populations of ground nesting birds

The New Forest holds nationally important populations of nightjar, woodlark and Dartford warbler. There are also significant populations of breeding waders, including lapwing, snipe and redshank, all of which have been subject to major national declines in recent years.

Various surveys of ground nesting bird species in the New Forest have been carried out since the 1960s, although methodologies have varied.

The breeding wader survey carried out this spring determined the number of breeding pairs present in 2019. This produced a breeding population estimate of 68 Lapwing territories, 40 Curlew territories and 7 Redshank territories, within the area surveyed in the New Forest in 2019. Comparisons with previous surveys in 2014, 2004 and 1994 indicate that the breeding populations of Curlew and Lapwing have declined sharply in recent years. However, Forestry England have doubts around the efficacy of the 2014 Curlew data and concerted targeted fieldwork by a small group under the auspices of 'Wild New Forest' over the intervening years have shown a much reduced but stable population of around 40 pairs/occupied territories which is commensurate with the 2019 data gathered. That said, the 2019 breeding population of Lapwing and Curlew within the New Forest appear to be declining and robust regular monitoring is desirable to tease out normal population fluctuations from more insidious long term declines.

Comparisons with previous surveys would indicate that the breeding population of Woodlark within the New Forest has increased since the 2014 survey and is comparable with surveys prior to 2014. However, the downward trend indicated in the 2014 survey needed a more robust analysis and explanation than was given at the time and Forestry England are confident that the current population is at the least stable and at best increasing.

The survey carried out by Hampshire Ornithological Society, commissioned by Forestry England, produced a breeding population estimate of 143 Dartford Warbler territories within the area surveyed in the New Forest in 2018. This represents a marked decrease compared with previous surveys in 1994 and 2006, undoubtedly due to the unusually cold weather experienced in February/March 2018. The dataset compiled provides a robust baseline of the current breeding population of Dartford Warbler in the New Forest, and allows comparison with future surveys. The unusually cold spells with lying snow for two periods in late winter 2018 are thought to have

severely affected the population, both within the New Forest and elsewhere in the species range.

The ability to deliver future comprehensive surveys may partly depend on resources such as extension of agri-environment support for the Open Forest and other areas of suitable habitat as well as the dedicated work undertaken by Forestry England and volunteers such as Wild New Forest and Hampshire Ornithology Society.

Current and historical estimates of ground nesting bird populations²⁵

	Estimated number of breeding pairs / territories					
Lapwing	1981	1993	1994	2004	2014	2019²⁶
	250-450	190	84-87	117	144	68
Redshank	1981	1993	1994	2004	2014	2019
	105-140	69	54-57	42	13	7
Curlew	1981	1993	1994	2004	2014	2019
	120	96	132	99	123	40
Snipe	1981	1993	1994	2004	2014	
	120-200	87	156	111	102	
Nightjar	1981	1992		2004/5	2013	
	78	313		629	544	
Woodlark	1986		1997	2006	2014	2019
	36		182	143	134	169
Dartford warbler	1984		1994	2006	2014	2018
	187		535	420	268	143

River water quality

The Environment Agency monitor the water quality of rivers in the National Park, based on both ecological and chemical status. Of the total river length of 482 km, about 280 km are covered by Water Framework Directive monitoring stations. The Agency has changed the methodology and sampling points for assessing status since data was first produced, therefore caution should be exercised in reaching conclusions in respect of any trends.

The figures below show a decline in the length of rivers with good water quality between 2011 and 2016. No rivers fall within the highest or lowest categories for water

²⁵ Data from 'The New Forest' (Colin Tubbs 2001), 'New Forest Waders 1994' (Colin and Jennifer Tubbs, 1994), 'Bird Monitoring in the New Forest' in Biodiversity in the New Forest (ed, Adrian Newton, 2010), 'New Forest Breeding Waders Survey 2004' (RSPB) 'New Forest National Park Survey of Nightjar 2013' (RPS), 'New Forest Woodlark 2014 Survey Report' (RPS), New Forest Breeding Waders 2014 Survey Report (RPS).

²⁶ All data from 2018/19 provided by Forestry England; territories surveyed within the HLS area in the New Forest and adjoining commons

quality, in common with most of the other English National Parks.²⁷ The NFNPA is working in partnership with the Freshwater Habitats Trust in hosting the New Forest Catchment Partnership as part of the Catchment Based Approach²⁸. Reasons for failure of ecological status have been addressed in recent years in the Beaulieu sub-catchment through the Living Waters element of the 'Our Past Our Future' Heritage Lottery Fund Project.

Water quality monitoring in the New Forest National Park

Quality rating	2009-2011 (km)	2010-2012 (km)	2014 (km)	2016 (km)
High quality	0	0	0	0
Good quality	98.8	82.6	64.7	37.7
Moderate quality	142.8	158.9	186.2	163.7
Poor quality	38.8	39.0	26.1	0
Bad quality	0	0	0	0
Total river length (km)	280.4	280.5	277	201.4

Figures for 2016 have been downloaded from the Environment Agency Catchment Planning System for the New Forest Water Framework Directive (WFD) Catchment and are current as of 1st October 2019. These summarise Water Body Classification in 2016. Any lengths quoted (km) are based on WFD Waterbody River length. For the purposes of this exercise, Solent and Southampton Water WFD Coastal Waterbodies were excluded from calculations as these are not exclusive to the New Forest WFD Catchment. The figures provided for 2016 should not be used as a direct comparison to figures published in previous versions of the State of the Park Report.

²⁷ Figures up to 2015 based on Water Framework Directive monitoring by the Environment Agency, supplied to Natural England's Protected Landscapes monitoring project; 2016 figures provided directly by the Environment Agency.

²⁸ <https://catchmentbasedapproach.org/>

Land management

Management Plan Objective: Encourage land management that sustains the special qualities of the National Park

Headline indicators:

(1) **There are 665 practising commoners in the New Forest**

=	No significant change since 2009
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(2) **5,486 hectares of privately-owned farmland and estates benefit from environmental land management schemes**

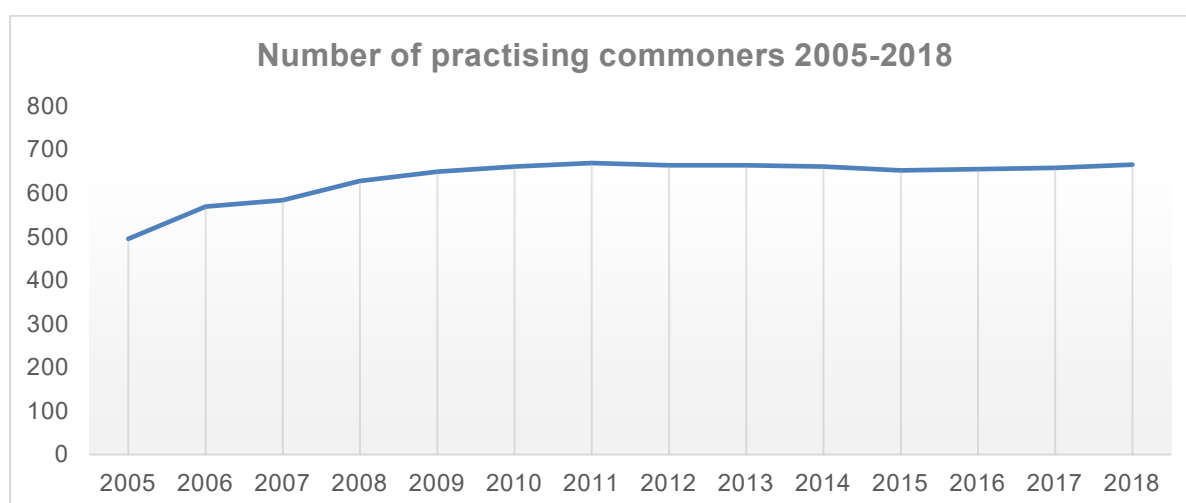
✗	Decrease of hectareage since 2015
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Trends in commoning

Commoning has played a vital role in creating the landscapes and habitats of the Forest over many hundreds of years, and the grazing of commoners' stock remains the only sustainable way of managing the extensive areas of Open Forest. It is also a strong part of the culture and rural life of the National Park.

There has been no significant change in the number of practising commoners since 2009, although there have been some minor annual variations. In 2018 the figure stood at 665.²⁹ Nevertheless, commoners are still concerned about the long-term viability of commoning, and in particular the high costs of land and housing in the area (especially affecting young commoners), the low returns from the sale of ponies and the pressures from other land uses and activities.³⁰

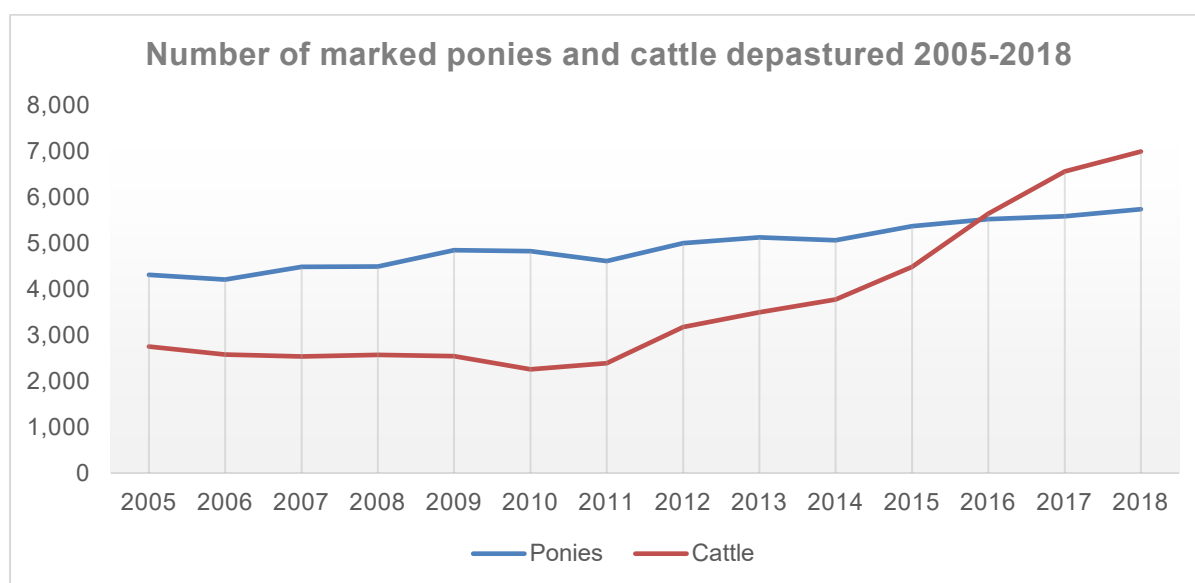
Number of practising commoners



²⁹ Verderers of the New Forest; figures based on the Marking Fee Register, September 2019

³⁰ Census of New Forest Commoners, 2011; next census due in 2021

Number of marked ponies and cattle depastured



The total number of marked animals depastured on the New Forest has increased overall in recent years, and there has been a rise in marked depastured cattle. 13,597 marked stock was depastured in 2018, of which 42% were ponies and 51% cattle (in 2015, 50% were ponies and 42% cattle). Historically cattle numbers dropped slightly until 2010 until a steady rise took over numbers of ponies in 2016. It should be noted that not all animals registered are actually depastured, and cattle are not depastured all year round on common land.

It is estimated that about 6,000 ha of back-up land is currently used to support commoning in the Forest³¹ which is a relatively large increase compared to 2015 (4,250 ha). The majority is rented or used through informal arrangements with others, and only about 30% of commoners own all the back-up land they use. About a quarter of commoners would like access to more back-up land to help with their commoning activity.³²

Since 1992, 15 dwellings have been built through the Commoners Dwellings Scheme specifically to provide affordable houses in perpetuity for the use of established and practising commoners. The scheme is administered by the National Park Authority. In addition, Forestry England, National Trust and some of the larger private estates have stocks of local houses, a proportion of which are rented to commoners or others involved in the local land-based economy.

³¹ Verderers Grazing Scheme data, September 2019

³² Census of New Forest Commoners, 2011; next census due in 2021

Environmental stewardship and land management advice

In 2019 there were 70 separate environmental stewardship schemes in operation within the National Park.³³ The most extensive scheme is the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship Scheme, designed to encourage continued conservation grazing of the Open Forest habitats. Covering 20,613 hectares, it is the largest environmental land management scheme in England and mainly applies to publicly owned land in the Forest.

All environmental land management schemes in operation within the National Park 2012 – 2019

Scheme type	2012 (ha)	2013 (ha)	2015 (ha)	2018 (ha)	2018 (No.)	2019 (ha)	2019 (No.)
Higher Level Stewardship	23,451	23,529	23,730	23,494	19	20,613	11
Higher Level / Entry Level Stewardship	4,005	4,410	5,286	3,285	32	2,870	27
Entry Level Stewardship	1,979	2,097	1,301	25	2	0	0
Organic Entry Level Stewardship	226	153	152	0	0	0	0
Countryside Stewardship	125	125		615*	8	5,102	32
TOTALS	29,786	30,314	30,470	27,419	61	28,585	70

* new scheme

The headline indicator measures the extent of the environmental land management schemes in place on the enclosed and privately owned farms and estates, amounting to a total of 6,421 ha in 2012, a total of 7,105 ha in 2015, and down to a total of 5,486 in 2019.³⁴ The figures show a slight increase over the last 3 years, but may decline in the future as current schemes come to an end and there is increased competition for the more targeted new Countryside Stewardship schemes.

The New Forest Land Advice Service³⁵ has been operating since 2010 as an independent body offering New Forest-specific advice and training for commoners, farmers and other landowners. Up to 2018 it had responded to 1,375 requests for

³³ All data provided by Natural England, August 2019

³⁴ Excludes major public or voluntary sector land managers such as Forestry Commission, Hampshire County Council, National Trust and Hampshire and Isle of White Wildlife Trust. Data provided by Natural England, October 2019

³⁵ The New Forest Land Advice Service is an independent body funded by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and the National Park Authority

advice ranging from woodland, grassland and hedgerow management to help in accessing agri-environment scheme and other funding. This level of requests has continued / been consistently high between 2016 and 2019. In addition, NFLAS have, since 2016, been delivering a range of proactive projects giving advice to a new audience of landowners of different habitat types.

The farming economy

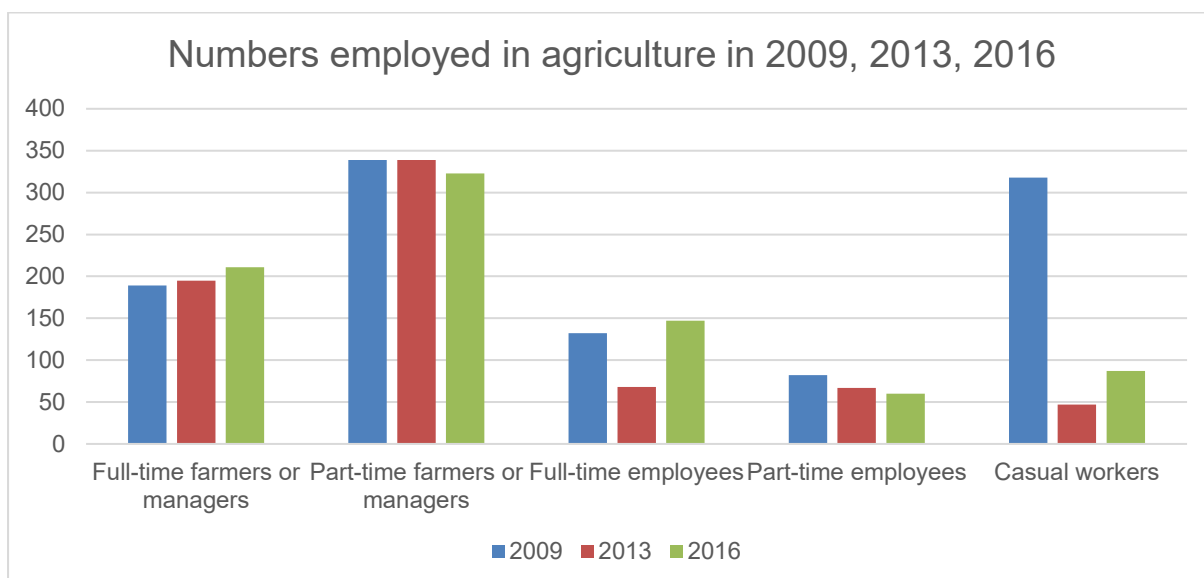
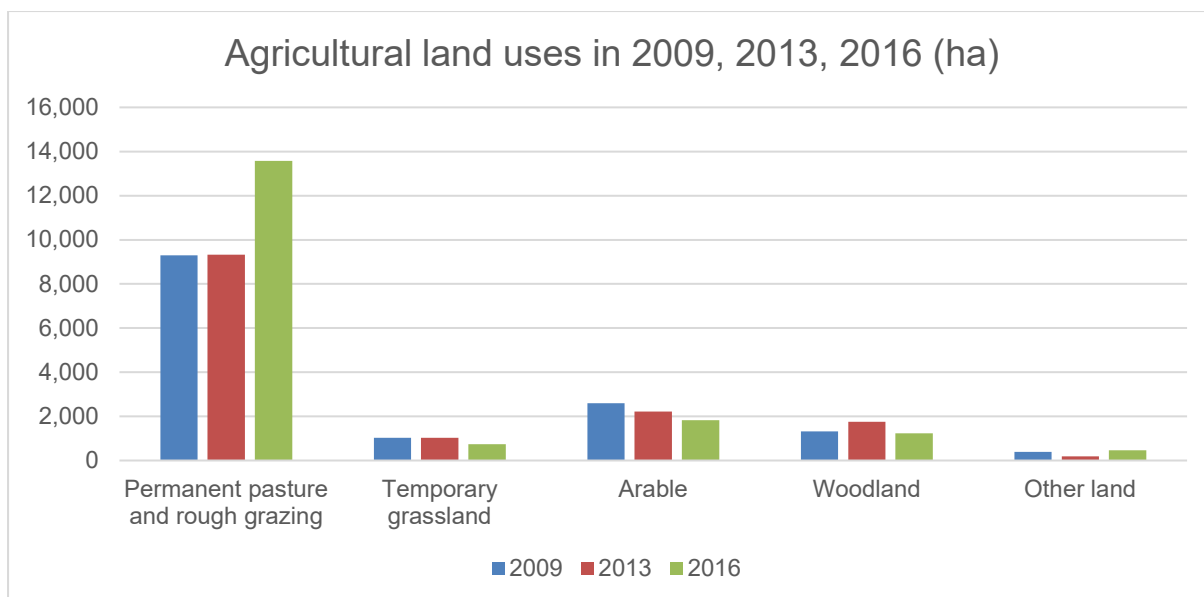
The farming data below is derived from the Defra June Survey of Agriculture and Horticulture, 2016. This is updated every three years³⁶ and currently relates to commercial holdings only³⁷. It therefore does not include the high proportion of smaller holdings in the National Park but does indicate changes in farming affecting the majority of the land area.

The total area of farmed land has increased since 2009. In 2016 this amounted to 17,845 ha (compared to 14,626 ha in 2009), or about 31% of the National Park (compared to 26% in 2009). The most important land use was 13,582 ha of permanent grass and rough grazing (9,328 ha in 2013). By comparison, crops and fallow covered 1,820 ha (2,225 in 2013) and farm woodland 1,239 ha (1,760 ha in 2013).

The most significant changes between 2009 and 2016 in commercial holdings were an increase in the number of holdings involved in non-dairy livestock grazing (158 in 2013 to 238 in 2016); a slight decrease in the area of woodland (1,320 ha in 2013 to 1,239 ha in 2016); a drastic decrease in the area of horticultural crops (153 ha in 2013 to 56 ha in 2016), a drastic decrease in the number of dairy cattle (1,895 in 2013 to 845 in 2016), whilst beef cattle increased slightly from 2,441 in 2013 to 2,610; and also a drastic decrease in the number of pigs (6,925 in 2013 to 3,219 in 2016). In addition, there was a slight increase of people employed in agriculture overall (716 in 2013 to 828 in 2016).

³⁶ The next dataset, for 2020, is due to be published in autumn 2021.

³⁷ Commercial holdings are defined by Defra as holdings with 5ha or more of agricultural land, more than 0.5ha of vegetables or with more than a certain number of stock (10 cows, 50 pigs, 1000 poultry).



Forestry and woodland management

Within the National Park there is a total of 20,882 ha of woodland³⁸ (about 36% of the land area), of which 6,761 ha is classed as ancient woodland.³⁹

Forestry England manage 12,027 ha of the total woodland area, including 7,402 ha of Inclosures and 4,625 ha of ancient pasture woodlands (the Ancient and Ornamental

³⁸ Forestry Commission England National Forest Inventory (NFI) Woodland Map spatial data, March 2017; taken from national 'Monitoring Environmental Outcomes in Protected Landscapes (MEOPL)' provided as part of national KPI figures for National Parks England

³⁹ Forestry England, 2019

Woodlands). The majority of other woodland is privately owned and more than half of this (about 4,000 ha) was being actively managed through Forestry Commission grants and licenses⁴⁰, which entails work to an agreed management plan. Other woodlands may also be in active management, but in many cases there is no requirement for a license and so such work (for instance small-scale coppicing) is unrecorded.

In 2018/19 Forestry England produced about 22,000 cubic metres of timber.

⁴⁰ Forestry England / Forestry Commission (2019)

Climate change

Management Plan Objective: Plan for the likely impacts of climate change on the special qualities of the New Forest and reduce the overall environmental footprint of the National Park

Headline indicators:

(1) The overall carbon footprint of the National Park amounted to 522.83kt of CO₂ in 2006

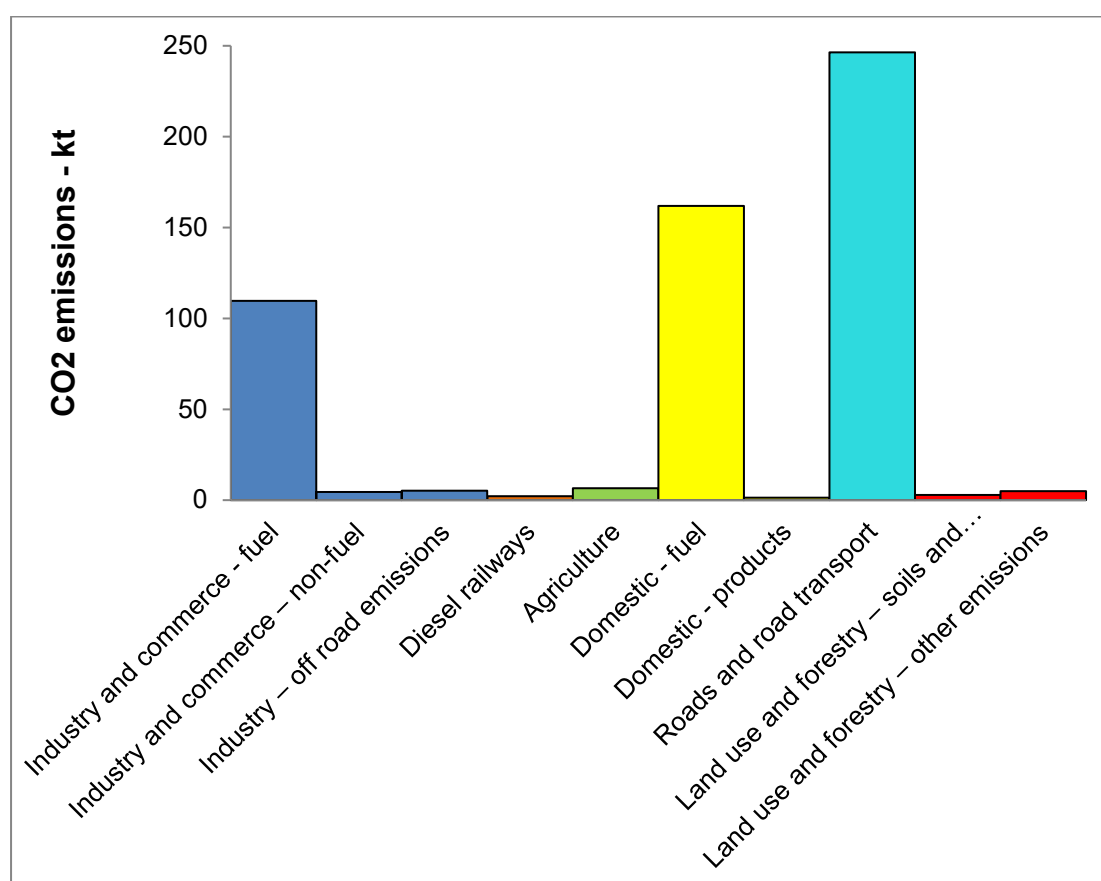
○	2006 baseline figure
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(2) Wetland and coastal habitats cover 4,624 ha of the National Park

=	No significant change since 2010
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The carbon footprint of the National Park⁴¹

Carbon emissions in the National Park, 2006, in kilo tonnes



⁴¹ Data on the carbon footprint of National Parks is provided by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. The most up-to-date figures are from 2006, but it is hoped that more recent data will be made available by the Government.

The total of 522.83kt of CO₂ in 2006 made the New Forest the fourth largest producer of CO₂ of the ten English National Parks. By far the highest emissions (47%) were generated by roads and road transport, while 31% resulted from domestic energy use (higher than any of the other National Parks) and a further 21% came from energy use in the industrial and commercial sector. Agriculture accounted for just 1% and land-use and forestry for 1.5% - both very low figures compared to nearly all the other Parks.

Community-based initiatives

There are a number of initiatives taking place which aim to reduce carbon emissions within the Park. Since 2006/7 the National Park's Sustainable Communities Fund provided grant-aid for 113 projects that have had a direct impact on the carbon footprint of the area. They include 53 renewable energy projects such as the installation of biomass boilers, ground source heat pumps, solar panels and energy audits in community buildings and businesses across the New Forest.

The National Park Authority also promotes sustainable living through the Big Green Weekend event with 250 visits to properties in 2019. Local residents with sustainable homes open their doors to the public showcasing renewable technologies and energy efficient homes.

New Forest Transition is part of the global Transition movement, working to create low carbon communities. In the New Forest area it runs community events to reuse old clothing, repair items and promote local food. The Schools Energy project has engaged with over 6,000 pupils promoting energy saving in the school and at home.

Changes to wetland and coastal habitats

Wetland and coastal habitats are sensitive to climate change and so have been chosen as a headline indicator to show any long-term impacts on the National Park. In particular these habitats may gradually become reduced in area as a result of projected drier summers and rising sea levels (see below). However, it should be borne in mind that other factors, such as changes in drainage systems, coastal defences and water abstraction, may also have an impact.

The combined area of these habitats is currently 4,624 ha⁴². While there have been some variations in the figures since 2011, this is due largely to incomplete or uncertain survey information (see below).

⁴² March 2019 figures, Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre.

Extent of wetland and coastal priority habitats

Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat	Area within National Park (ha)					Comments
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2017/18	
Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh	1,509	1,505	1,470	1,470	1,398	Further survey needed
Lowland fens ⁴³	1,849	1,849	1,848	1,848	1,849	Comprehensive data
Reedbeds	59	60	81	81	57	Further survey needed
Saltmarsh and intertidal mudflats ⁴⁴	1,198	1,199	1,205	1,205	1,231	Data partly verified
Coastal sand dunes	12	7	7	7	5	Data partly verified
Coastal vegetated shingle	28	49	49	49	49	Comprehensive data
Maritime cliff and slopes	1	2	2	2	3	Comprehensive data
Saline lagoons	28	32	32	32	32	Comprehensive data
TOTALS	4,684	4,703	4,694	4,694	4,624	

Climate projections for the New Forest

The UK Climate Projections are produced by the MET Office Hadley centre, the official source of climate change data. The projections use a comprehensive range of factors to model the impact of different emissions scenarios known as relative concentration pathways (RCP). The overland projections below are for South East England and are drawn from RCP 6.0 which factors in population growth, economic development and varying levels of mitigation.⁴⁵

The projections for sea-level rise show a range of outcomes dependant on how the world reduces its Green House Gas emissions. RCP 2.6 reflects a future in which the world implements sizeable emissions reduction, whereas RCP 8.5 represents a future where the world fails to switch to a low carbon future.⁴⁶

⁴³ Includes mire habitats

⁴⁴ Salt marsh and intertidal mudflats have been combined to avoid misleading figures while data for these habitats is being verified

⁴⁵ UKCP18 Science Overview Report November 2018 (Updated March 2019)

⁴⁶ Ibid

Overland climate change projections relevant to the New Forest based on RCP 6.0⁴⁷

	Projected change 2020-2039	Projected change 2050-2069	Projected change 2080-2099
Average annual temperature	Rise of 0.9°C	Rise of 1.6°C	Rise of 3.1°C
Average summer temperature	Rise of 1.1°C	Rise of 2.1°C	Rise of 4.2°C
Average winter temperature	Rise of 0.8°C	Rise of 1.4°C	Rise of 2.5°C
Average summer precipitation	Reduction of 8%	Reduction of 17%	Reduction of 30%
Average winter rainfall	Increase of 7%	Increase of 9%	Increase of 19%

The projections for sea-level rise show a range of outcomes dependant on how world reduces its Green House Gas emissions. RCP 2.6 reflects a future in which the world implements sizeable emissions reduction, whereas RCP 8.5 represents a future where the world fails to switch to a low carbon future.⁴⁸

Sea Level Rise 2007-2100 (compared to 1981-2000 baseline)⁴⁹

Emissions Pathway	RCP 2.6 (low)	RCP 4.5 (medium)	RCP 8.5 (high)
Rise (meters)	0.29-0.69	0.36-0.82	0.52-1.13

⁴⁷ Source: <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/approach/collaboration/ukcp/index> (accessed September 2019)

⁴⁸ UKCP18 Science Overview Report November 2018 (Updated March 2019)

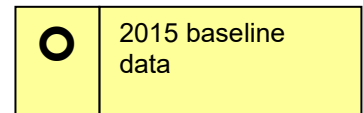
⁴⁹ Source: <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/approach/collaboration/ukcp/index> (accessed September 2019)

Tranquillity

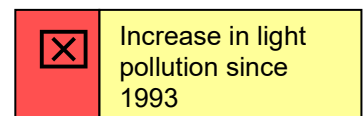
Management Plan Objective: Maintain and enhance the tranquillity of the National Park

Headline indicators:

(1) 51% of the National Park is classed as highly tranquil, very tranquil or moderately tranquil

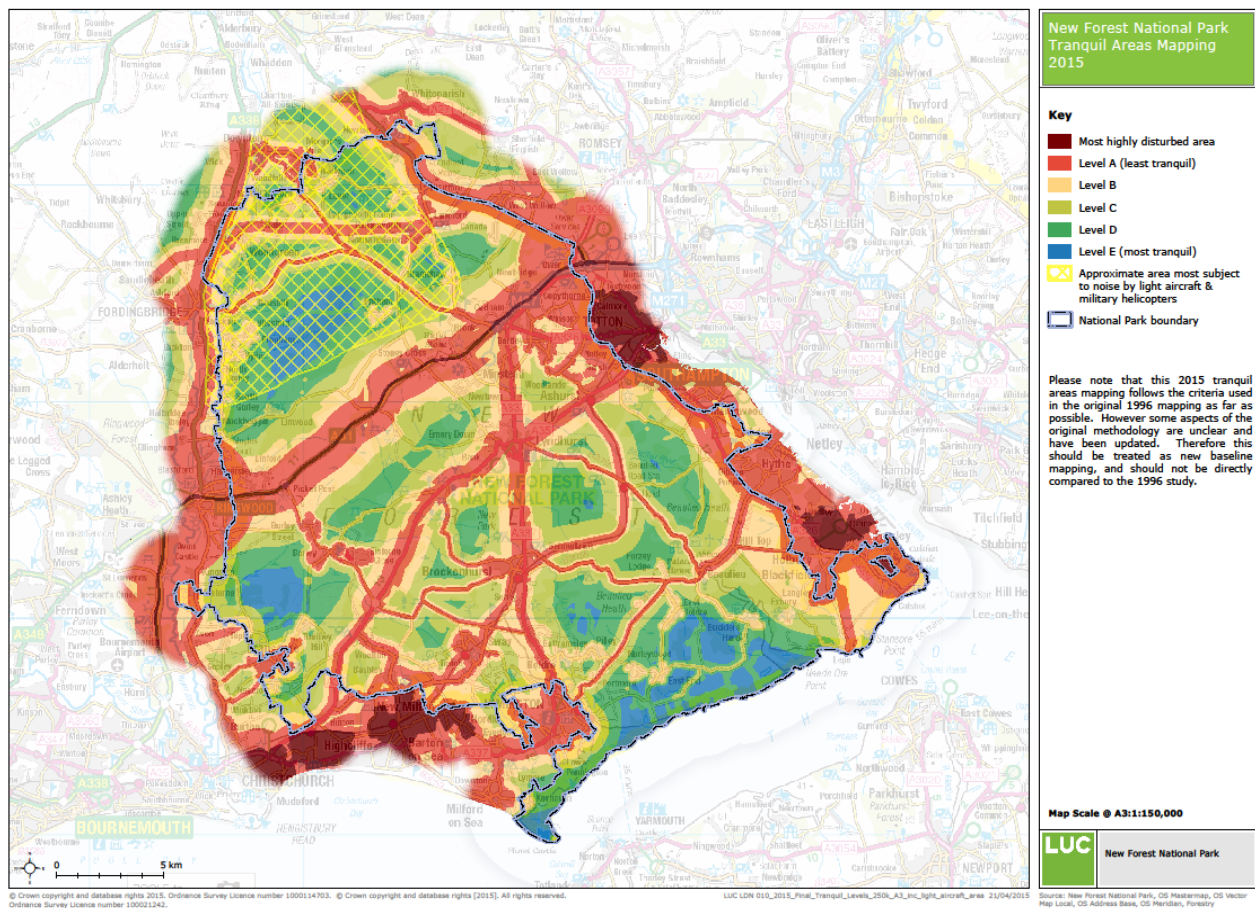


(2) Extent of light pollution affecting the dark skies of the National Park (see maps below)



Tranquillity areas mapping

A tranquil areas map was produced for the New Forest in 2015, updating the previous 1996 mapping. The study showed broad levels of tranquillity and disturbance based on road noise, size of settlements, recreational activity and the visual impacts of



buildings and other structures in the landscape. It also indicated the area most affected by noise from light aircraft and military helicopters.

Although the results were broadly similar to the earlier mapping, some of the original methodology was unclear and had to be updated. The area was also extended to show the whole of the National Park and surrounding area. The two maps are therefore not directly comparable for monitoring purposes. The new mapping included ground-truthing work by local volunteers and the final methodology has been designed to make the study repeatable in the future.

The tranquillity levels used in the mapping follow a continuum from the least to the most tranquil. However, 51% of the National Park broadly falls within the 'tranquil categories', with the remainder subject to varying levels of disturbance.

The areas of highest tranquillity are the southern coastal fringe, the Beaulieu Road area, Hinchelsea Moor and the north western heaths and woodlands. The greatest disturbance occurs along the A31/M27 corridor, extending some distance into the Open Forest, and areas adjacent to parts of the Waterside.

Tranquillity level	Area (hectares)	Percentage (rounded)
Level E - highly tranquil	3,426	6%
Level D - very tranquil	11,124	20%
Level C - moderately tranquil	14,454	25%
Level B - partly disturbed	12,254	22%
Level A - disturbed	15,395	27%
Most highly disturbed	145 ⁵⁰	Less than 1%

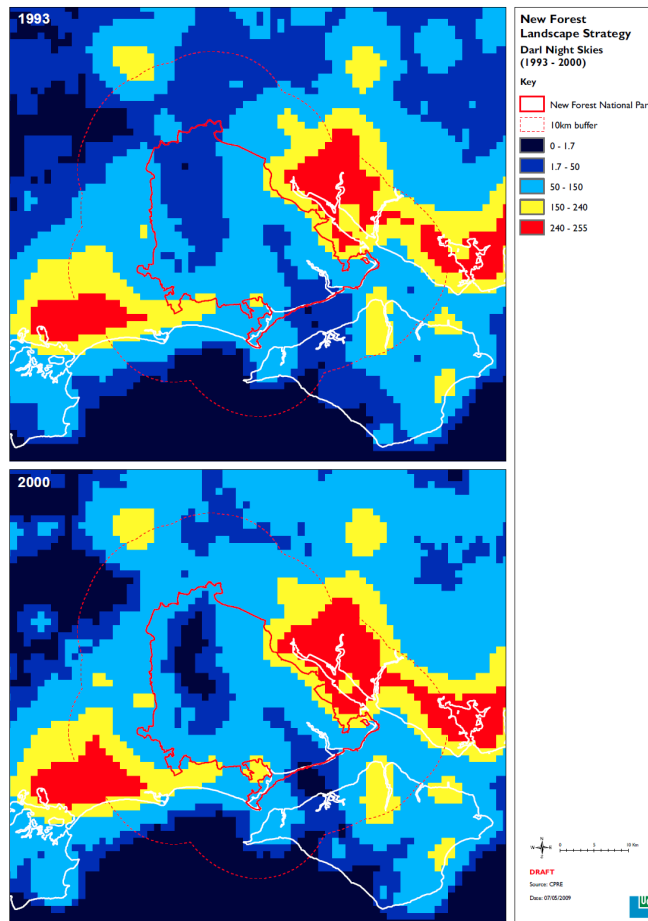
Light pollution and dark night skies

The extent of light pollution and its effect on the dark night skies within the National Park has been measured as part of national light pollution mapping commissioned by CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England). Historic satellite images date from 1993 and 2000⁵¹. New mapping was undertaken by CPRE in 2015/16, again based on satellite imagery, but using a slightly different methodology and providing more detailed information.

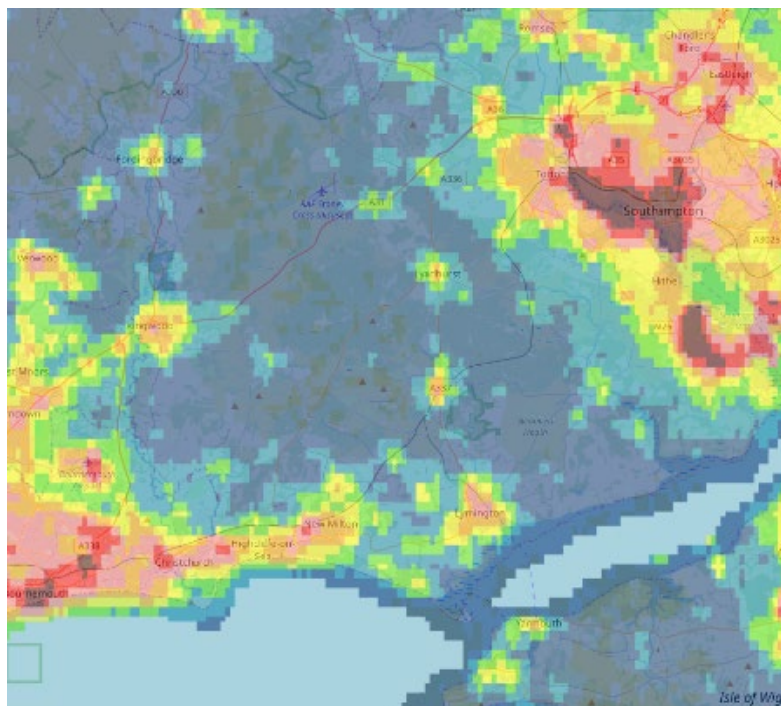
⁵⁰ Includes 22km of the A31/M27, calculated with average width of 44m.

⁵¹ This data was provided by the NOAA-NESDIS National Geophysical Data Centre in the USA, and processed by Land Use Consultants and Nigel Press Associates, on behalf of CPRE. The data is derived from their DMSP satellites, and provides a relative value for the amount of light reflected back to the satellite from the ground.

Dark night skies in and around the National Park, 1993, 2000 and 2015 – illustrative maps using satellite imagery



2015:



An American weather satellite captured the night time view of the UK in September 2015 at 1:30am. The image above clearly shows the boundary of the New Forest National Park and the locations of emanating light. The brightness of light from neighbouring urban centres such as Bournemouth and Southampton can be seen, which leads to skyglow effects visible from within the National Park to the west and east. The NFNPA supported the research carried out by CPRE who crowdfunded from protected landscapes to obtain and interpret the data from the satellite, with landscape consultants LUC providing the interpretation. Since 2015 Hampshire County Council have adopted a policy of switching off some street lights in and around the New Forest National Park, between midnight and 4:30am. This has the potential to reduce some light pollution although much of the night time light that can be seen on the map within the National Park boundary is due to lighting of domestic and commercial properties and also utility company compounds.⁵²

⁵² <https://www.nightblight.cpre.org.uk/maps/>, accessed August 2019

Understanding the special qualities of the New Forest

Management Plan Objective: Achieve a shared understanding and appreciation of the special qualities of the National Park by local people, visitors and organisations

Headline indicator:

(1) 83% of people visiting the National Park have an understanding of its special qualities (2015)

=	No significant change between 2011 and 2015
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Defining the special qualities

The special qualities of the New Forest are those qualities that define it, make it unique and recognisable and distinguish it from all other places in the country.

They include:

- its outstanding natural beauty
- the extraordinary diversity of plants and animals
- a unique historic, cultural and archaeological heritage
- an historic commoning system
- the iconic New Forest pony
- tranquillity
- strong and distinctive local communities
- opportunities for quiet recreation, learning and discovery
- a healthy environment

Based on the New Forest Visitor Survey 2015, using a sample of those visiting the National Park at various locations, 83% of people had an understanding of the special qualities. There was no significant difference between this and the figure of 86% from the survey in 2011 – and no comparative surveys have since been done. However, a new indicator is to be considered in 2020.

The qualities that most people felt were special compared to other areas were: wildlife, ponies, peace and tranquillity, natural beauty, unspoilt countryside, openness, freedom to walk, woodland and the proximity of sea and forest. This emphasises, in particular, an appreciation of the special character of the New Forest's natural environment.

The information network

Visitor information is provided at many different locations across the National Park and surrounding area:

- A network of nine Local Information Points in village shops, pubs, cafés and post offices
- Visitor information at the New Forest Heritage Centre, St Barbe Museum and Art Gallery and Ringwood Gateway
- Seasonal visitor information at popular recreation sites including the Reptile Centre, Bolderwood and car parks when rangers attend with a mobile unit
- Seasonal visitor information at Brockenhurst train station during July and August, delivered by sustainable travel ambassadors who help people find and use car-free transport such as cycling, walking, rail and the New Forest Tour

Environmental education for young people and adults⁵³

An extensive range of high-quality outdoor education, with a strong emphasis on sustainability and inclusion, is provided by the 27 organisations which comprise the New Forest National Park Educators' Forum, offering outdoor learning to over 60,000 young people each year. The National Park Authority offers a Travel Grant Scheme to eligible schools within or close to the park boundary, which in 2018-19 enabled over 3,000 children and young people to access the education provision offered by the Forum members (2,400 in 2015).

Two organisations provide formal education specifically featuring the special qualities of the National Park. The National Park Authority worked with 11,000 students during 2018-19 (10,000 in 2015), visiting local schools and meeting groups out in the Forest. The New Forest Heritage Centre focuses particularly on learning about the cultural history of the Forest. 2,000 students visit the Centre or receive outreach sessions annually.

Funding for certain outdoor education visits to the Crown Lands and commoners' holdings is currently available through the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship Scheme. 50 visits (the maximum number permitted under the agreement) received funding during 2018/19.

External funding has provided the opportunity for the NPA to employ eight Apprentice Rangers over 4 years (2016-2020). This is a partnership project with Kingston Maurward College and experience gained from working with each of the five New Forest Ranger teams; National Trust, Forestry England, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, Hampshire County Council and New Forest National Park Authority. So

⁵³ All data by NPA, August 2019

far, all four apprentices have been successful in obtaining jobs within the conservation sector after completion of the apprenticeship.

Public events relating to the special qualities

A number of local organisations run regular public events celebrating the natural and cultural heritage of the National Park at sites that they manage. They include Hampshire County Council, Forestry England, National Park Authority, New Forest Heritage Centre, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and the National Trust.

Larger events that attract a New Forest-wide audience are usually arranged by partnerships involving several organisations. In 2018 these included⁵⁴:

- Three Wild Play days. Spring: Hurst Spit (360 people), Summer: Whitefield Moor (840 people), Autumn: Holmsley (550 people); in 2015 there were about 800 people in total involved in Wild Play.
- 'Marine Wonders' at Lepe Country Park (650 people)
- National Park Stand at the New Forest Show (4,000 people); 2,900 in 2015
- Lymington-Keyhaven Open Day (1,000 people)

A number of local history and archaeological projects with a strong learning theme have taken place since 2011. These relate in particular to coastal heritage and the two World Wars and are described under 'Local distinctiveness'.

Ranger services

Forestry England, National Trust and Hampshire County Council all have ranger services, enabling direct contact with people using the National Park. The largest is Forestry England, with five rangers and 60 volunteer rangers, focusing on the Crown Lands of the National Park. The National Park Authority currently employs ten full-time equivalent rangers (four in 2015), six of whom are dependent on external funding. They work throughout the National Park promoting responsible use of the New Forest and increasing users' understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities. Rangers attend local events, liaise with local businesses and help communities with projects which improve their local environment. In total the National Park Authority Ranger service had contact with 20,000 people during 2018.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ NPA, September 2019

⁵⁵ Ibid

Volunteering opportunities

Within or close to the National Park there were 31 organisations in 2018⁵⁶ (23 organisations in 2015) that organise volunteer work directly relevant to the conservation, public understanding and enjoyment of the Park.

Forestry England has two of the strongest volunteer teams: the volunteer rangers and the two trees conservation volunteers. The National Park Authority leads several volunteer projects, including many through the Heritage Fund Landscape Partnership which contributed about 4,429 volunteer days since 2016.

The National Park Authority also runs an annual Volunteer Fair at which different organisations can recruit new volunteers. The event in January 2019 attracted 50 organisations and 700 visitors. It resulted in several hundred people signing up as local volunteers.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ NPA, September 2019

⁵⁷ Ibid

Enjoying the National Park

Management Plan Objective: Enhance people's enjoyment and quality of experience of the National Park, while safeguarding the special qualities of the area

Headline indicator:

(1) 96% of people are highly satisfied with their experience of the National Park (2015)

=	No significant change since 2011
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Visitor satisfaction

The New Forest Visitor Survey 2015 found that 96% of visitors rated the overall enjoyment of their visit to the New Forest as either 'very high' (67%) or 'high' (30%). This is very similar to the figure of 97% from the 2011 survey. The New Forest as a destination on the website TripAdvisor is rated very highly. It has a certificate of excellence and 97% rate the destination as either Excellent (80%) or Very good (17%).

Visitor numbers and activities

In 2018 a study was carried by RJS Associates in a desk-based calculation, using trend data for local populations, tourism etc. This indicated that in 2017 there were 15.2 million visitor days for leisure and recreation, by 1.4 million individuals (representing an annual rise since 2005 of about 1%).⁵⁸

The key findings were:

1. The New Forest National Park had an estimated 15.2m visitor days in 2017.
2. Visitor days in 2017 were up 12.4% on 2004 levels.
3. There were approximately 13.9m trips to the New Forest National Park in 2017.
4. These trips were made by 1.4m unique visitors in 2017.
5. The number of unique visitors has increased by nearly 22% since 2004. Trips have increased by 12.3%.
6. Dog walking and going for a short walk were the main activities among visitors.
7. Main visitor activities varied by different visitor groups.
8. Staying visitor groups (i.e. holiday makers staying in the NFNP, and visitors making day trips from holiday accommodation outside the NFNP) peaked in summer.
9. Day visitors from home were less seasonal – with trips spread more evenly throughout the year.
10. The greatest number of visitor days are generated by a small number of local walkers who visit very frequently throughout the year.
11. By 2037 there could be 17.6 million visitor days to the National Park.

⁵⁸ New Forest National Park Recreation and Leisure Visits (October 2018), RJS Associates Ltd

Other national parks have higher resident populations (Lake District, Peak District and South Downs) and higher numbers of visitor days (Broads, Lake District and South Downs). However, because over half (56%) of the New Forest is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), the New Forest probably has about double the number day visits to its protected habitat than any other national park.⁵⁹

As a result of research jointly commissioned by local planning authorities, new data on visitors to the heathlands and woodlands of the New Forest throughout the year will be available in late 2019.⁶⁰

Public access, rights of way and cycle routes

There is statutory public access to 29,652 ha of land within the National Park, focused largely on the Crown Lands and adjacent commons. This amounts to 52% of the total land area – a higher proportion than any of the other English National Parks except for Northumberland (78%), the Yorkshire Dales (62%) and the Lake District (55%).

The public rights of way network includes 326 km of footpaths and bridleways, of which 62% have been classed as ‘easy to use’ by the highway authorities⁶¹. In addition, there are 171 km of cycle routes on forestry tracks and 16 km of signed National Cycle Network cycle routes. Recreational cycling is popular with visitors, serviced by nine cycle hire facilities within and around the National Park.

The rural communities fund is provided by Hampshire County Council and the National Park Authority. 45 projects were funded between 2006 and 2019, including path re-surfacing, replacement gates and local access information. Other fundraising efforts also help to finance rights of way improvements. In 2019 a total of 28,200 was raised through fundraising efforts in partnership with the British Mountaineering Trust and the National Grid’s Landscape Enhancement Initiative.⁶²

Under-represented groups

In 2005, young people between the ages of 16 and 24 years were the group least likely to visit the National Park, making up only 5% of all visits.⁶³

⁵⁹ NPA, September 2019

⁶⁰ Research undertaken by Footprint Ecology to collect visitor data via on-site surveys, counts of parked cars and telephone surveys

⁶¹ 2015 figures

⁶² NPA, September 2019

⁶³ New Forest Visitor Survey, 2005

Age data for visits to the National Park (2005)

Age range	Number of visits	Percentage of all visits
0-15 years	1,818	18%
16-24 years	448	5%
25-34 years	956	10%
35-44 years	1,541	16%
45-54 years	1,465	15%
55-64 years	1,817	18%
65 years or more	1,794	18%

However, much of the educational work of the National Park Authority and other organisations catering for group visits is aimed at young people, including community groups, schools and colleges.

The National Park Authority also worked with people from black and minority ethnic communities and young people through different phases of the Mosaic project. These initiatives involved finding and supporting ‘champions’ to help raise awareness and understanding about the New Forest amongst their communities.

Significant numbers of young people also benefit from time in the New Forest through schemes such as Duke of Edinburgh Award, John Muir Award, National Citizen Scheme and a partnership known as Youth Action Project.

The inclusive cycling project, PEDALL, is currently providing opportunities for people with a wide range of disabilities to access Forest cycle tracks – totalling over 2,000 rides a year.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ NPA, September 2019

Local communities

Management Plan Objective: Strengthen the well-being, identity and sustainability of rural communities and the pride of local people in their area

Headline Indicators:

(1) Number of rural parishes with key local services:

96% have a village hall

92% have a pub

68% have a village shop or general store

64% have a primary school

48% have a post office

4% have a police station or mobile police office

⊗	Decrease in some key services between 2004 and 2019
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(2) There are 107 local fairs, festivals and events held regularly within the National Park

○	2011 baseline figure
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Rural services and facilities

A survey of 25 rural parishes within the National Park was carried out in 2004, 2009, 2015 and 2019 to show any changes in the level of important services available locally to rural communities.⁶⁵

Service	No. of parishes 2004	No. of parishes 2009	No. of parishes 2015	No. of parishes 2019	Trend
Village shop / general store	19 (76%)	18 (72%)	18 (72%)	17 (68%)	⊗
Post office	18 (72%)	15 (60%)	14 (56%)	12 (48%)	⊗
Pub	23 (92%)	23 (92%)	22 (88%)	23 (92%)	=
Garage (car repairs)	14 (56%)	14 (56%)	12 (48%)	14 (56%)	=
Village Hall	24 (96%)	24 (96%)	24 (96%)	24 (96%)	=
Primary school	16 (64%)	16 (64%)	16 (64%)	16 (64%)	=
Children's play area	13 (52%)	13 (52%)	13 (52%)	15 (60%)	☑
Sport and recreation facilities	18 (68%)	18 (68%)	18 (68%)	18 (68%)	=
Police station / mobile office	9 (36%)	9 (36%)	5 (20%)	1 (4%)	⊗

⁶⁵ Information submitted to NFNPA by parish councils through the New Forest Consultative Panel in 2004 and 2009, and through parish clerks in 2015 and 2019. Where parish councils didn't submit a survey, the data was collected through research by the NFNPA

Most local services and businesses have been maintained over the last 15 years, even though there has been a slight decline in village shops. There has been a loss of two village post offices and at least one currently under threat of closing down. In addition, there is a continuing trend of loss or reduction in a number of other services, including mobile libraries, local policing (including mobile offices) and banking facilities. The loss, or significant reduction, of local bus services has been especially noticeable over the last few years.

A number of funding sources are available to help communities improve their local services and facilities⁶⁶:

- Since 2006/7 the National Park's Sustainable Communities Fund has part-funded 58 projects, including Woodgreen Community Shop, building improvements to Sway Youth Centre and the creation of a kitchen garden at Burgate School. The fund is managed by the National Park Authority and supports communities to strengthen their wellbeing and sustainability.
- Between 2014-2020, the New Forest LEADER Local Action Group allocated grants worth in total £1.2 million to 39 small rural businesses within New Forest District and the southern parishes of Wiltshire and Test Valley. LEADER grants enabled these businesses to grow and create new jobs. LEADER funding is from the EU Rural Development Programme.
- The Rural Communities Fund, managed by Hampshire County Council, supports Parish Councils, community groups and organisations in rural Hampshire. The priorities of the scheme are to build community resilience and encourage self-help. Since 2015 it has helped to fund more than 80 projects, including grant-aid for village shops at Martin and East Boldre, Countryside Access improvements at Milford on Sea and Hordle, and Countryside Access and Flood Alleviation projects in Brockenhurst.⁶⁷

Local fairs, festivals and other events

This indicator helps to measure the level of community activity and the extent to which local traditions are being kept alive and new ones created. The data from 2011 is based on information contributed by 28 of the parishes and towns within the National Park. In 2019 there has been a further survey of local events. The total number of local fairs, festivals and seasonal events has largely stayed the same within the last few years. The majority of events fall into one of six main categories: local carnivals or

⁶⁶ NPA, August 2019

⁶⁷ More information can be found at: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/community/grants/grants-list/rural-communities-fund>

festivals, arts-related events, village or church fetes, agricultural and horticultural shows and events reflecting rural traditions.

Specific events include the Steam Apple Pressing Weekend in Burley, the Copythorne and Netley Marsh steam fairs, the Minstead Flower & Vegetable Show and many others. The New Forest Show is the biggest annual event and strongly reflects the rural traditions of the area.

Affordable housing

Most villages within the National Park have some level of affordable housing for people with a local connection (managed by either a housing association or the councils). Since the establishment of the New Forest National Park, 56 affordable dwellings have been completed in the Park (although where there wasn't a legal obligation in place to keep them affordable in perpetuity, about 10 have since been sold on the open market). In excess of 3,300 households in the New Forest District Council area are on the 'Homesearch' housing needs register and are seeking accommodation.⁶⁸

The Lloyds Bank National Parks Review indicates that the average price for a house within the National Park was £643,371 in 2019, about 15 times the average wage of people living in the Park⁶⁹. This is a very high house price to wages ratio compared to other parts of the country outside London and makes the New Forest the most expensive national park in England and Wales.

Neighbourhood Plans, Parish Plans and Village Design Statements

These documents are initiated and produced by local communities and enable residents to work together to help to shape the future of their area. Neighbourhood Plans are part of the statutory planning process and include development policies for the local area. Parish Plans set out a vision and series of priority actions for the parish, based on issues raised by the community. Village Design Statements include guidelines for the design of any future development with the aim of conserving the local character and distinctiveness of the area. The majority of the parishes and towns within the National Park have produced at least one of these documents over the last 10 years.⁷⁰

Document	Number of parishes (July 2019)
Neighbourhood Plans in progress (partly within the National Park)	6
Parish Plans completed or in preparation	9
Village Design Statements completed	7

⁶⁸ New Forest District Council Housing Strategy, December 2018

⁶⁹ Lloyds Banking Group survey of 12 national parks, October 2019

⁷⁰ NPA, July 2019

Economy

Management Plan Objective: Develop a diverse and sustainable economy that contributes to the well-being of local communities

Headline Indicators:

(1) There are over 2,500 businesses within the National Park



Overall increase since 2011

(2) The National Park has an unemployment rate of 0.4% ⁷¹

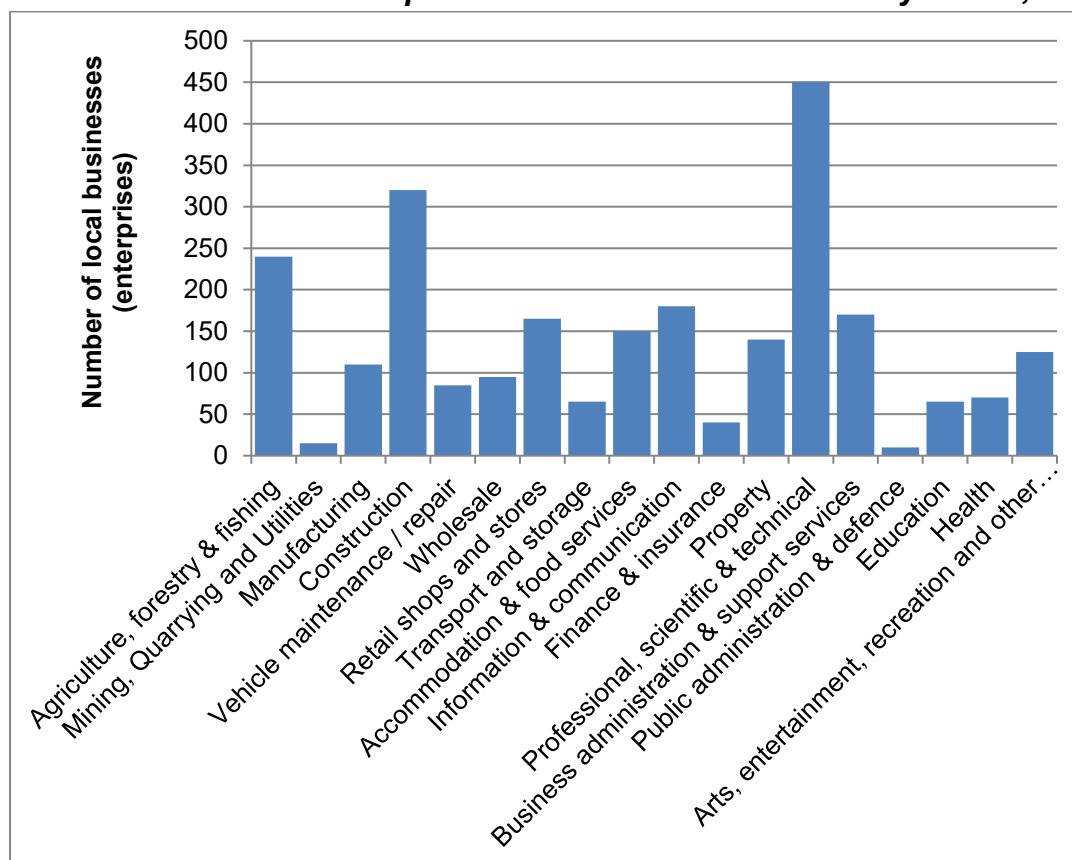


Unemployment within the National Park continues to be very low

Business activity

In 2015 there were 2,540 businesses in the National Park⁷². Although numbers have fluctuated slightly from year to year this represents an overall increase of 110 enterprises since 2011.

Number of business enterprises within the National Park by sector, 2015



⁷¹ August 2018 figures, Hampshire County Council

⁷² Individual enterprises, figures provided by the Office for National Statistics, March 2015

A very broad range of types of businesses are represented, with the largest sectors, in terms of the numbers of individual businesses, being professional, scientific and technical services⁷³ (450), construction (320) and agriculture, forestry and fishing (240). Overall this represents a higher density of businesses per square kilometre than in any other English National Park except the South Downs.⁷⁴

In March 2018 there were 2,643m² of employment floor space available for development in the National Park, as measured by unimplemented planning permissions for new development⁷⁵, providing a good pipeline of new business space for the immediate future. Between April 2017 and March 2018, the total new employment floor space completed from permissions in the National Park was 1,393m², which was slightly above the long-term trend. However, the changes to the system of permitted development rights, whereby offices can be converted to dwellings without requiring planning permission, has led to some offsetting losses of office floorspace over recent years and this will require monitoring.

Employment

The percentage of people unemployed within the National Park remained low compared to figures for the south east and the UK throughout the last economic recession and during the subsequent years. It is now near its lowest level for the last 15 years, with 0.4% of the working age population claiming unemployment benefits in August 2018.⁷⁶ This equates to 85 people, with the majority falling into the 25-49 years age category.

Residents of the National Park in active work are employed in a wide range of businesses and services based either within or outside the Park. The health and social work sector, wholesale and retail, professional and technical services and education are all particularly important employers.⁷⁷

⁷³ Including a variety of consultancies, advertising and specialist services

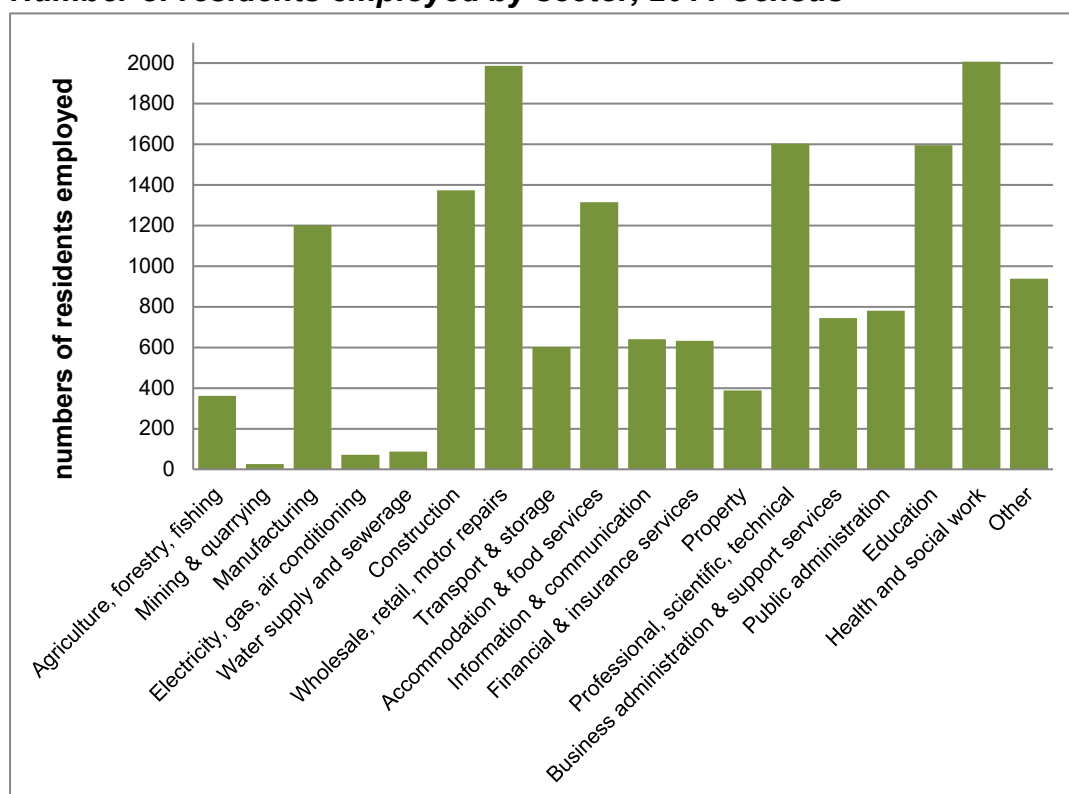
⁷⁴ 'Valuing England's National Parks' report for National Parks England, 2013

⁷⁵ NPA, September 2019

⁷⁶ Data from Hampshire County Council

⁷⁷ 2011 Census, Office for National Statistics

Number of residents employed by sector, 2011 Census



The tourism industry

Tourism is of substantial importance to retail and other business sectors, and provides considerable economic benefits to the National Park, including local jobs. It is estimated that the economic impact of visitors was £303 million during trips or holidays in the National Park in 2018, a rise of about 23% since 2014.⁷⁸ The tourism sector employed 3,540 people (full time equivalent) in 2018 within the National Park, a rise of over 6% since 2014.⁷⁹

Locally there has been a strong focus on sustainable tourism for a number of years. Through Go New Forest's network of 300 tourism businesses, the New Forest is able to promote sustainability in practice. Car-free holidays are the current focus of tourism initiatives, with continued expansion of the New Forest Tour and Beach Bus services.

The New Forest Marque

The New Forest Marque has been developed to promote products that have been grown, reared, caught, brewed, processed or produced in the New Forest using locally sourced raw ingredient or materials. Hospitality and retail members who offer their customers New Forest Marque produce are also an important sector of the

⁷⁸ STEAM figures for the National Park, 2018.

⁷⁹ Ibid

membership. The New Forest Marque is run independently by New Forest Produce Ltd. The logo represents the True Sign of Local Produce recognising the provenance of a Marque members' product. Currently (September 2019) there are 158 businesses that are members of the Marque, all of whom have met eligibility criteria, are able to market their products using the New Forest Marque logo and take advantage of the New Forest Marque network.

The breakdown of Marque businesses is shown below. Associate Members are local business who wish to encourage the unique farming and Commoning traditions that help to shape our surroundings and to support a thriving rural economy.

Sector	Number of members
Food and Drink	67
Craft	33
Hospitality and Retail	53
Associate Members	5

Traffic and transport

Management Plan Objective: Reduce the impacts of traffic on the special qualities of the National Park and provide a range of sustainable transport alternatives within the Park.

Headline indicators:

(1) **17% of staying visitors used sustainable transport to reach the National Park (2015)**

=

No significant change between 2011 and 2015

(2) **There were 63 fatalities to commoners' stock on roads in the National Park in 2018**

✓

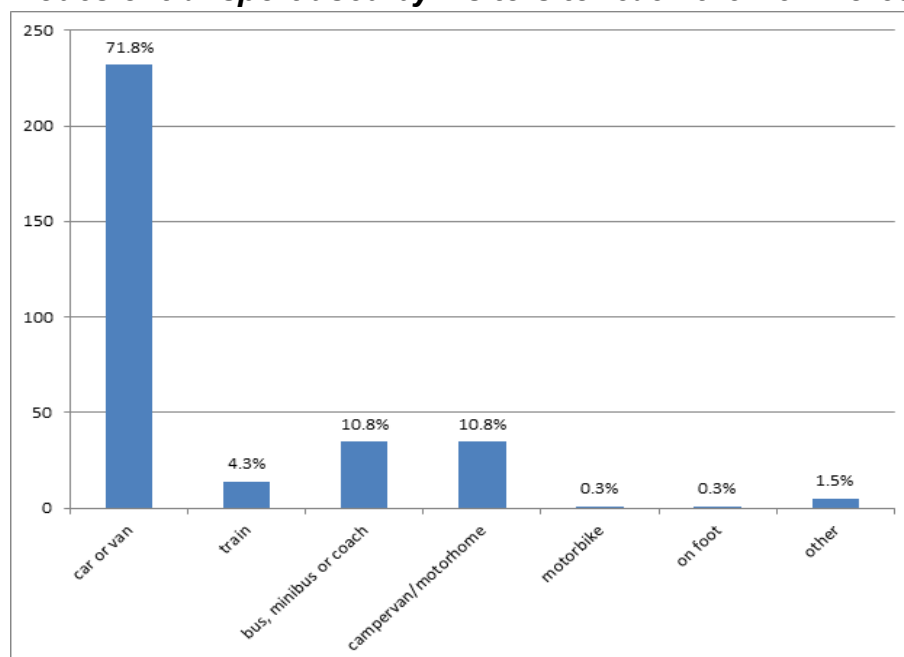
General trend of lower fatalities since 2007

Sustainable transport use in the National Park

A series of visitor and resident surveys have suggested that the vast majority of staying visitors use private cars, vans or motorhomes in order to reach the National Park.

In 2015 this amounted to 83%, with the remaining 17% using sustainable transport modes, including walking, cycling, train, coach and bus.⁸⁰ There has been no significant change since 2011, when 14% of staying visitors used sustainable transport to access the Park.

Modes of transport used by visitors to reach the New Forest



⁸⁰ New Forest Visitor Survey, 2015.

Sustainable modes of transport are used more frequently by visitors once they are within the Park. The 2015 survey indicates that 43% of visitors choose sustainable means of travel within the area, including walking, cycling and coach trips.

Several successful Local Sustainable Transport Fund bids have been made by National Park Authority, Hampshire County Council and the South Downs National Park Authority, resulting in a range of new sustainable transport initiatives. The 2015/16 bid was worth just over £2m, divided between the two National Parks.

Public transport provision

Hampshire County Council decided to cut a total £1.1m of public support for some unprofitable timetables amid ongoing reductions in central government funding; this took effect in April 2019. Within the Park, this has resulted in the frequency of some services being reduced, although as far as possible, communities that currently have some form of public transport service will retain a transport link.

The exception to this trend is the New Forest Tour, which continues to maintain three expansive routes, serving much of the National Park and adjacent areas. The Tour provides a seasonal open-top bus experience linking visitor attractions, settlements, accommodation providers and transport interchanges. Discounts at local businesses and attractions en route are offered as an incentive to visit car-free with the benefit of supporting the local economy. Passenger journey numbers have risen from 9,016 in 2006 to almost 40,000 in 2018.⁸¹ Although weather plays a significant role in its success, an upward trend is visible since its introduction.

In the summer of 2018, the Bluestar 9 service, supported by the National Park, was extended to include travel between Langley Farm and Lepe. 1,389 passengers used this service⁸² and it was re-introduced in 2019. Furthermore, the service will be continuing on Sundays throughout the winter of 2019.

The rail network also provides significant opportunities. More than one million passenger journeys were made during 2017/18. The Lymington to Brockenhurst Community Rail Partnership (CRP) provides a particular focus for the local community to become active in managing and promoting this distinctive branch line between Brockenhurst and Lymington Pier.

⁸¹ NPA, September 2019

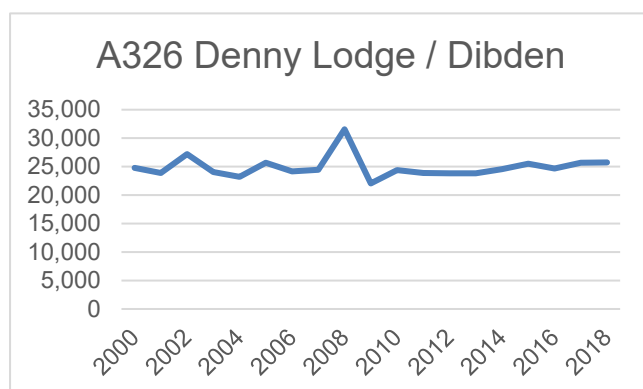
⁸² Ibid

Traffic in the National Park

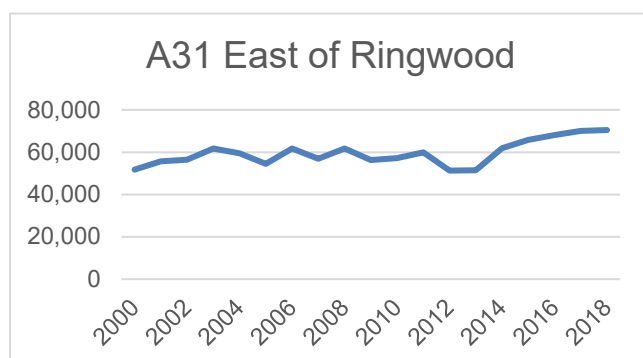
Both the Department for Transport (DfT) and Hampshire County Council provide traffic flow data on specific set points on an annual basis. The DfT publish their data regularly on their website (<https://roadtraffic.dft.gov.uk/#6/55.254/-6.053/basemap-regions-countpoints>). Whilst DfT data is collected via manual counts based on a 12-hour day and then factored up to an AADF (Annual Average Daily Flow), Hampshire County Council have a number of permanent traffic count sites located on Hampshire roads. They count from inductive loops cut in the highway so they never move, and count actual daily traffic all year round. Despite some minor variations due to battery life and reliance on mobile phone signals, this method is very reliable and accurate. Especially at sites like Lyndhurst there is a good network of permanent counters, which have the advantage of recording seasonal variations.

The graphs below show the daily averages in both directions calculated from all traffic counts over the course of the year on a number of routes within the National Park, taken from Department for Transport and Hampshire County Council traffic counters.

Traffic counts on selected routes – Department for Transport (DfT) data⁸³

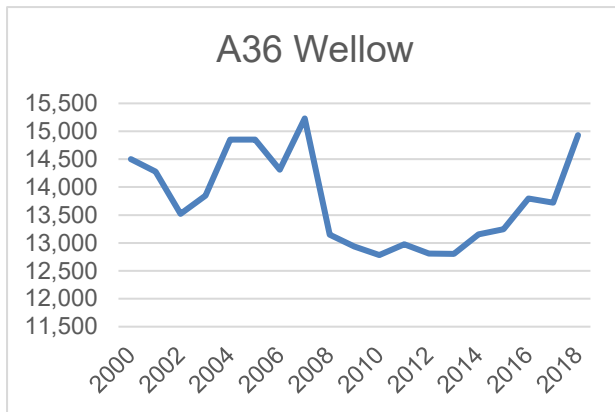


The A326 at Denny Lodge / Dibden only shows a very slight increase in traffic volumes since 2010, by about 1,000, and generally not much fluctuation compared to 2000 to 2010.

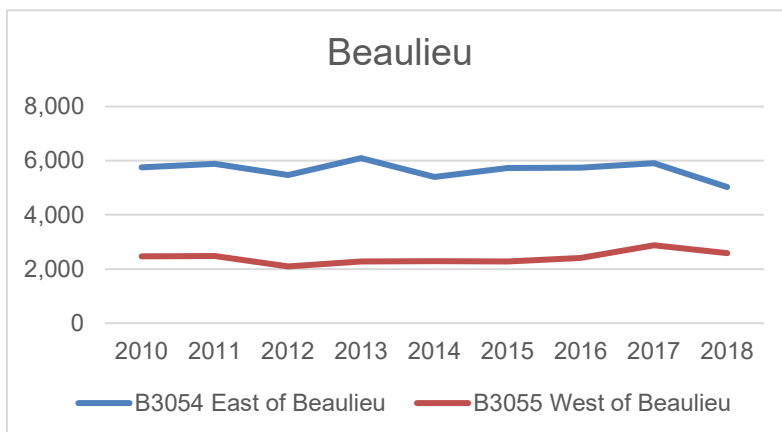


The A31 traffic count is located at the east of Ringwood (Picket Post). Whilst traffic volumes have been relatively stable between 2000 and 2014, there has been a gradual rise since, with the highest numbers recorded in 2018.

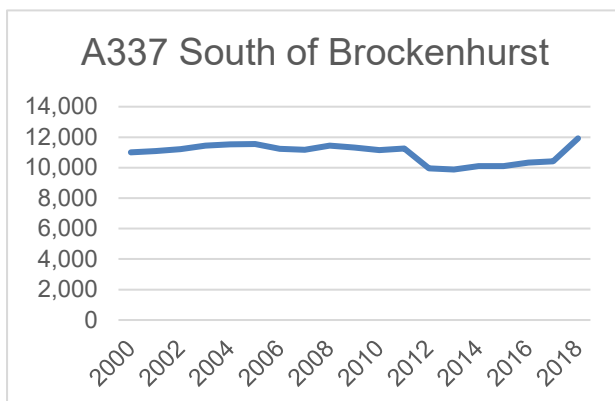
⁸³ <https://roadtraffic.dft.gov.uk/#6/55.254/-6.064/basemap-regions-countpoints>; accessed September 2019



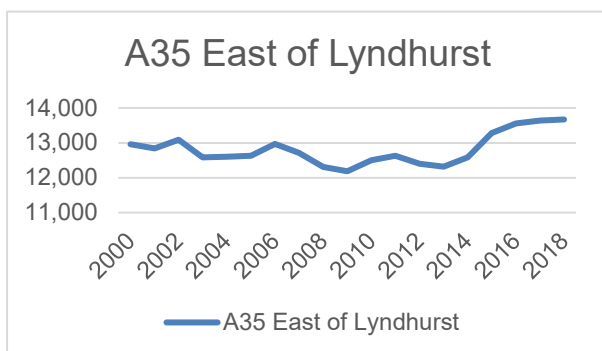
There was a sharp drop in traffic volumes in 2008 on the A36 in Wellow but figures increased again since and are now almost back to 2007 levels.



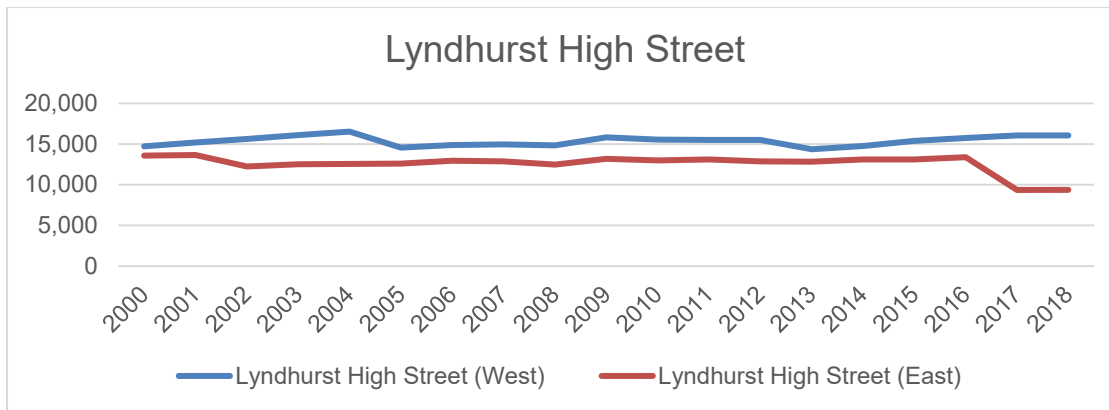
Traffic volumes outside Beaulieu have stayed relatively stable since 2010 and there has been a drop in 2018.



Traffic on the A337 south of Brockenhurst remained stable over the last few years and there was a drop in volumes in 2012. However, traffic slowly increased again in subsequent years.

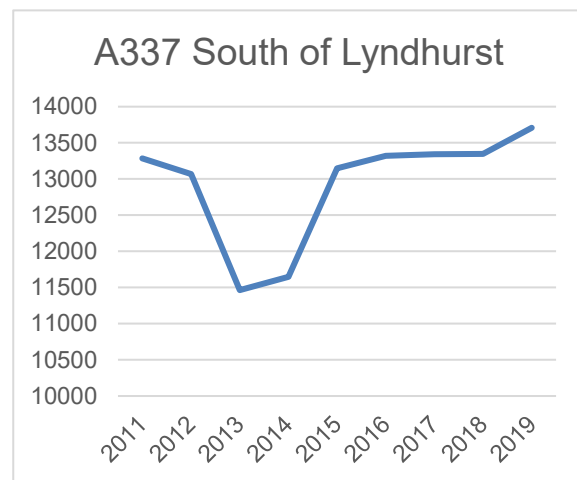
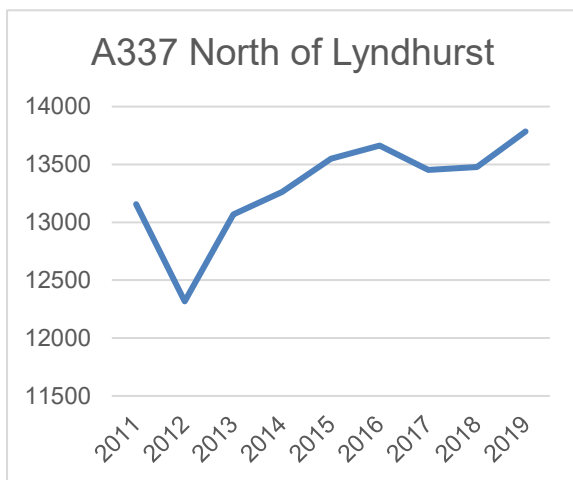


Traffic levels outside Lyndhurst measured on the A35 gradually dropped between 2000 and 2013 but have slowly increased in the last five years.

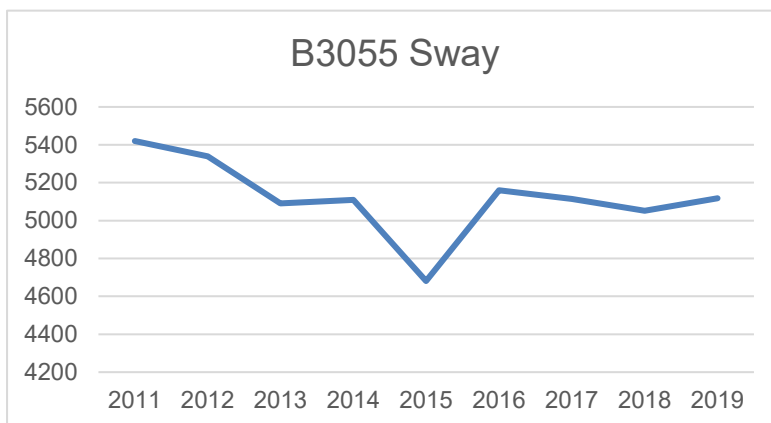


Similar, traffic volumes on Lyndhurst High Street have not increased since 2000 according to DfT data.

Traffic counts on selected routes – Hampshire County Council (HCC) data⁸⁴

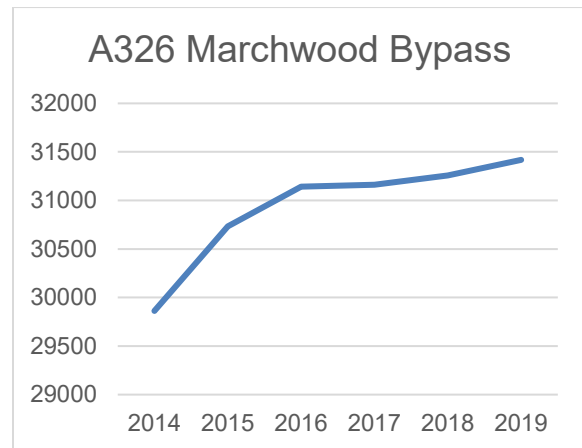
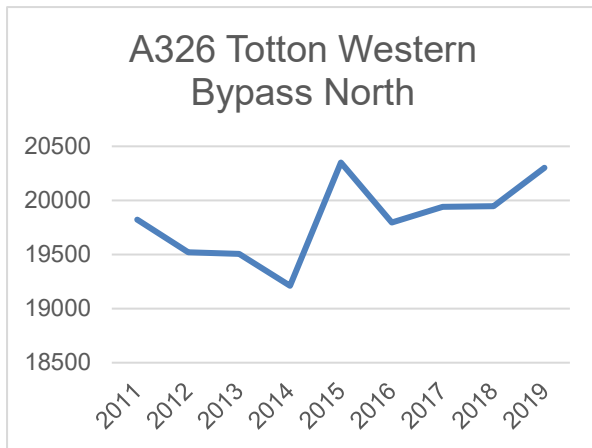


Both graphs above show that despite some drops in traffic volumes on the A337 outside Lyndhurst over the last few years, traffic is slowly increasing. It is however interesting to note that traffic counts in 2018 were about the same as 2011.



Traffic on the B3055 in Sway dropped significantly between 2011 and 2015 and despite slowly increasing volumes since, traffic in 2019 is still below 2011 figures.

⁸⁴ Directly provided to the NPA by Hampshire County Council, October 2019



Traffic volumes on the A326 have been rising over the last five years. On the northern part of the A326 traffic dropped until 2014 but has been rising again and current levels are almost back at 2015 levels. Slightly further south, near Marchwood, traffic has increased steadily since 2014, by about 2,000 vehicles.

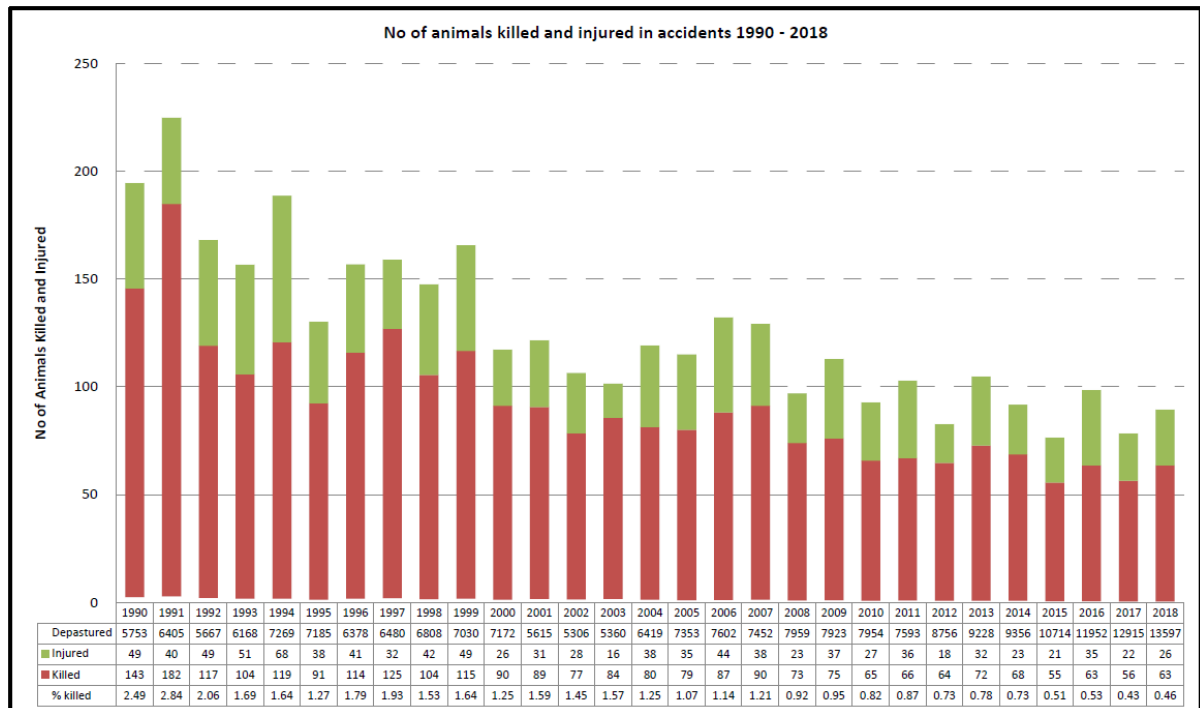
Animal accidents

The number of accidents involving commoners' stock has fluctuated over time, but the trend since 2007 has been generally downwards, despite an overall increase in the numbers of stock on the Open Forest. The total of 55 animal deaths in 2015 was the lowest figure ever recorded. By comparison, the highest ever number of deaths was 313 in 1962 (before the Perambulation and main roads were fenced and gridded).⁸⁵

Work continues to further reduce the number of accidents through awareness-raising campaigns (especially during the winter months when there are more accidents), speed enforcement operations and other initiatives, involving the police, Verderers, Commoners Defence Association and the National Park Authority.

⁸⁵ Verderers of the New Forest, July 2019

Numbers of accidents involving Commoners' stock since 1985



Annex 1 Park Profile

A summary of facts and figures about the National Park

Area		Data sources
Total area	56,652 ha	National Park Authority, 2019
Area in New Forest District	53,197 ha	
Area in Salisbury District	3,019 ha	
Area in Test Valley District	442 ha	
No. of parishes and towns with land wholly or partly within the National Park	37	
Crown lands	26,800 ha	National Park Authority, 2012
Perambulation	37,500 ha	Natural England, 2000
National Trust managed land	Approx. 1,500 ha	National Trust, 2019
Natural England managed land	1,199 ha	Natural England, 2019
Hampshire Wildlife Trust managed land	1,191 ha	HIWWT, 2019
Hampshire County Council Countryside Services managed land	426.13 ha	Hampshire County Council, 2019
Woodland Trust managed land	25.8 ha	National Park Authority, 2012
Population		
Total population	35,345	National Park population estimates, October 2019, Office for National Statistics
Percentage by age	Up to 14 years: 13.88% 15 – 29 years: 11.48% 30 – 64 years: 47.1% 65 years or older: 27.45%	2011 Census, Office for National Statistics
No. of settlements with population of more than 3,000	3	2011 Census, Office for National Statistics
Housing		
Average house price	£643,371	Lloyds Bank National Parks Review, October 2019

Employment		
Percentage unemployed	0.4% in August 2018	Hampshire County Council
Average annual earnings	National Park: £41,940 New Forest District: £26,585	Defra Rural Statistics 2010 Annual summary of earnings, place of work by Local Authority, 2017, Office for National Statistics
Natural habitats	Area / Percentage	
Area of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)	32,187 ha (56% of land area) – 20 sites	Hampshire Biological Information Centre, December 2018
Area of National Nature Reserves (NNRs) - all are also SSSIs	1,198 ha (2.11% of land area) – 3 sites	Hampshire Biological Information Centre, December 2018
Area of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) - all also SSSIs	30,119 ha (53.16% of land area) – 3 sites	Hampshire Biological Information Centre, December 2018
Area of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) - all also SSSIs	30,641 ha (54.08% of land area) – 4 sites	Hampshire Biological Information Centre, December 2018
Area of Ramsar sites - all also SSSIs	30,149 ha (53.21% of land area) – 3 sites	Hampshire Biological Information Centre, December 2018
Area of LNRs (Local Nature Reserves)	416 ha (0.73% of land area) – 3 sites	Hampshire Biological Information Centre, December 2018
Area of SINC's / County Wildlife Sites	3,041 ha (5.36% of land area); 391 SINC's	Hampshire Biological Information Centre, December 2018
Total area of woodland	20,865 ha	Forestry Commission, 2015
Total area of woodland / forest managed by Forestry England	12,027 ha	Forestry England, 2019
Total area managed by Forestry England (Woodland and Open)	26,813 ha	Forestry England, 2019
Total area of ancient woodland	6,761 ha	Forestry England, 2019

Total Area of Open Forest Woodland (Ancient & Ornamental and other)	4,625 ha	Forestry England, 2019
Area of Crown Land Inclosure woodland	7,402 ha	Forestry England, 2019
Coastal habitats	42km coastline at high water mark 2,846 ha of coastal priority habitats	Hampshire County Council, 2006 Hampshire Biological Information Centre, March 2015
Area of farmland	17,845 ha (holdings of more than 5 ha)	Defra, 2019
Length of watercourses	482 km	Environment Agency, 2011
Cultural heritage	Number	
Number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments	184	National Park Authority, 2019
Number of Conservation Areas	20, covering 7,500 ha	National Park Authority, 2019
Number of Listed Buildings	630	National Park Authority, 2019
Historic Parks and Gardens on EH Register	7	English Heritage, 2019
Recreation and access	Number / percentage	
Area of land with open public access	29,652 ha	National Park Authority, 2015
Length of public rights of way	326 km	Wiltshire Council, Hampshire County Council, 2015
Total number of visitor days	15.2 million	RJS Associates, 2017

Annex 2 Summary of headline indicators and trends

Local distinctiveness		
2.7% of scheduled ancient monuments are 'at risk'	=	Slight increase since 2016 but less monuments at risk in total
0.3% of listed buildings are 'at risk'	☑	Decrease / positive trend
Number of characteristic landscape features either enhanced, degraded or lost		Data not recorded
Landscapes and habitats		
53% of SSSIs (by area) are in favourable condition	☑	Slight increase / positive trend
30,318 hectares of land is managed according to conservation objectives	=	No change in the last 3 years
Land management		
There are 665 practising commoners in the New Forest	=	No significant change since 2009
5,486 hectares of privately-owned farmland and estates benefit from environmental stewardship schemes	☒	Decrease of hectareage since 2015
Climate change		
The overall carbon footprint of the National Park amounted to 522.83kt of CO2 in 2006	○	2006 baseline figure
Wetland and coastal habitats cover 4,624 ha of the National Park	=	No significant change since 2010
Tranquillity		
51% of the National Park is classed as highly tranquil, very tranquil or moderately tranquil	○	2015 baseline data
Extent of light pollution affecting the dark skies of the National Park - see map within Report	☒	Increase in light pollution since 1993

Understanding the special qualities of the New Forest		
83% of people living in or visiting the National Park have an understanding of its special qualities	=	No significant change between 2011 and 2015
Enjoying the National Park		
96% of people are highly satisfied with their experience of the National Park (2015)	=	No significant change since 2011
Local communities		
Number of rural parishes with key local services: 96% have a village hall 92% have a pub 68% have a village shop or general store 64% have a primary school 48% have a post office 4% have a police station or mobile police office	✗	Decrease in some key services 2004 to 2019
There are 107 local fairs, festivals and events held regularly within the National Park	○	2011 baseline figure
Economy		
There over 2,500 businesses within the National Park	✓	Overall increase since 2011
The National Park has an unemployment rate of 0.4%	✓	Unemployment within the National Park continues to be very low
Traffic and transport		
17% of staying visitors used sustainable transport to reach the National Park	=	No significant change between 2011 and 2015
There were 63 fatalities to commoner's stock on roads in the National Park in 2018	✓	General trend of lower fatalities since 2007