

Consultative Panel Meeting On behalf of Forestry England

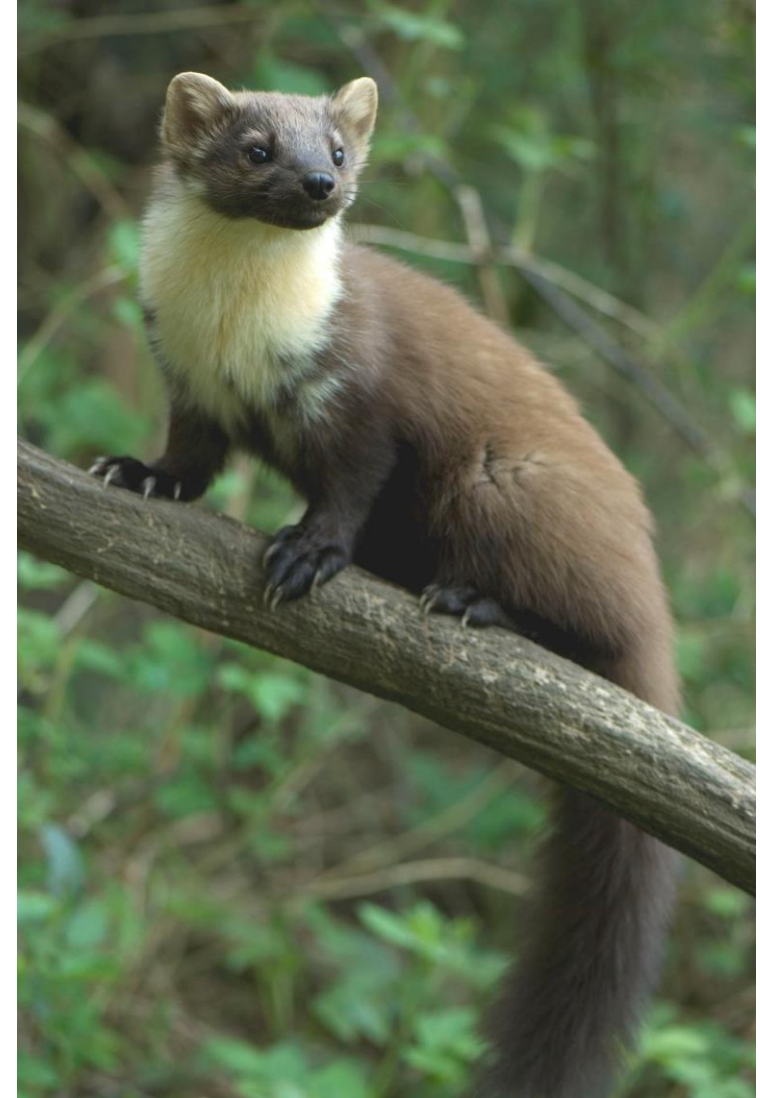
1 December 2022



A team from Forestry England, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, and Wild New Forest has been studying pine martens, which shows clear evidence that a population has become established in the New Forest. The survey team continues to assess the size of the population and their breeding success.

Forestry England also supports a range of projects across the UK to help secure the return of pine martens to England's forests and are monitoring populations in the North York Moors and Kielder.

(image credit Martin Noble)



The HLS team's work is ongoing and so far this year we've been improving habitats at the following locations in the New Forest:

- Open habitat restoration - Seedling and sapling pine removal: 71.6ha at Dur Hill, Markway, Longdown, Ipley
- Woodland restoration - Woodcrates
- Ridge & furrow - Removal of furrows following stump shearing at Turfhill (2.4ha)
- Rhododendron Cut & burn programme: Allum Green, Little Wootton
- Spraying programme: 8 sites treated
- Bracken control - Forage harvesting: 27 sites across New Forest
- Holly coppicing/pollarding - 6 sites treated to benefit epiphytic lichens
- Verge restoration - protection works installed at 17 locations across New Forest, including 810 DTs, 3 barriers and car free ditching.



Verge restoration, before and after.

The next phase of heathland restoration is now underway at Matley Ridge and Denny Inclosure.

This is an important part of the journey of restoring this area back to open habitat, as part of approved works within the Verderers' HSL agreement. The completed work will allow the terrain to slope down, gradually changing from one habitat type to the next, as we restore the grading from dry heath, through humid to wet heath and then into the mire.

The overall aim is to restore this former area of species-rich heathland, rare habitat for which the New Forest is designated, and recognised as an internationally important site for nature conservation.



There has been a wonderful display of fungi in the New Forest this year - a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a stronghold for many rare and endangered species of fungi.

Leaving fungi unpicked means they can be studied and allowed to contribute to the fragile eco-system of the Forest.

We're grateful for the support of local residents and visitors - the vast majority have not picked fungi and respected the special natural environment.



Watching and learning

The New Forest is a Special Protection Area for birds due to the wide range of species which live or visit here attracted by the mix of carefully managed habitats. Our team of New Forest Keepers, spend many hours observing and monitoring the bird's fortunes. Andy Page, Head of the Keeper team, shared a few highlights and observations from this year's breeding season.

Unfortunately, numbers of the endangered curlew remain critically low, as do redshank.

In contrast the nightjar, which fly here from Africa to breed, seem to have done well and being an insect eater were not adversely affected by the hot, dry summer.



Curlew eggs in their nest on the ground.

The pannage season was extended by the Deputy Surveyor and comes to an end on 9 December.

Our rangers have been reminding people to keep their distance and not to stroke them or give them food.

- Keep your distance from the pigs
- Please do not try to stroke or pet the pigs
- Please do not feed the pigs



Keeping on top of repairs is a year-round job for us.

With millions of people walking, running, cycling or horse riding, we spend hundreds of thousands of pounds each year fixing and maintaining hundreds of miles of gravel tracks and roads across the New Forest.



Major repair works began this week to replace a pair of derelict bridges over the old railway track at Longslade that forms part of a popular walking, cycling and horse-riding trail in the New Forest.

The work will cost a 6-figure sum and take specialist contractors around 2 months to complete.

The green light for the works was given following a series of seasonal wildlife surveys over recent years and successfully securing planning permission.

Our car parks at Longslade Bottom and Longslade View will be closed during the works. We hope to minimise closures during this time and look forward to being able to welcome people back to the improved trail.



Our Permissions team received over 4,500 application enquiries last year for permits. The success of permitted events is dependent on a supportive and collaborative approach, which resulted in 1,820 permitted events.

Including 3 social prescribing permissions:

- Healthy Walks
- Parkrun
- Pedall cycle rides

- 26,000 people engaged with sporting events

- 3,150 young people engaged with education and youth activities

- 7 Charity events (1,530 people)



Over recent months, a national tender process has been underway to find a new operator for Forestry England campsites across England, including those here in the New Forest.

The new operator will be The New Forest Agricultural Show Society, through their trading company - Camping in the New Forest Ltd and we are now in the final stage of agreements and legal process.

From 1 December 2022 Forestry England will be operating the campsites, for an interim period ahead of the new operators taking over. For Setthorns campsite people will be able to book up to 31 January 2023 with us at Forestry England. The new operators will be in place from 1 February 2023.



Joint operations to tackle fly-tipping continue this week, stopping vehicles and carrying out checks on waste carriers' licences, the items being carried, and a range of other safety requirements.

Across the New Forest and are working together with Hampshire Constabulary and NFDC on a range of measures to deter and reduce waste being dumped on the Forest and in our car parks.



Forestry England's contractors will be thinning out some trees at Millersford to give the remaining ones more space to grow.

From 6 December for a few weeks there will be further forestry activities at **Turfhill**, removing conifer trees to restore this area back to heathland.

