

# Forestry Facts & Figures 2021

A summary of statistics  
about woodland and  
forestry in the UK



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- FE/FLS/NRW/FS = Forestry England/Forestry and Land Scotland/Natural Resources Wales/Northern Ireland Forest Service.

Private sector = all other woodland, including some other publicly owned woodland.

 = Conifers  = Broadleaves

- Figures in the tables are individually rounded, so the constituent items may not sum to the total given.
- One green tonne is equivalent to approximately 0.98 m<sup>3</sup> underbark softwood or 0.88 m<sup>3</sup> underbark hardwood, and to approximately 1.22 m<sup>3</sup> overbark standing softwood or 1.11 m<sup>3</sup> overbark standing hardwood.

# Woodland area

# 3,229,000

hectares of  
UK woodland

FE/FLS/NRW/FS (000 ha)



England	150	62	212
Wales	96	19	115
Scotland	426	41	467
Northern Ireland	55	7	62
UK	728	129	856

Private sector (000 ha)

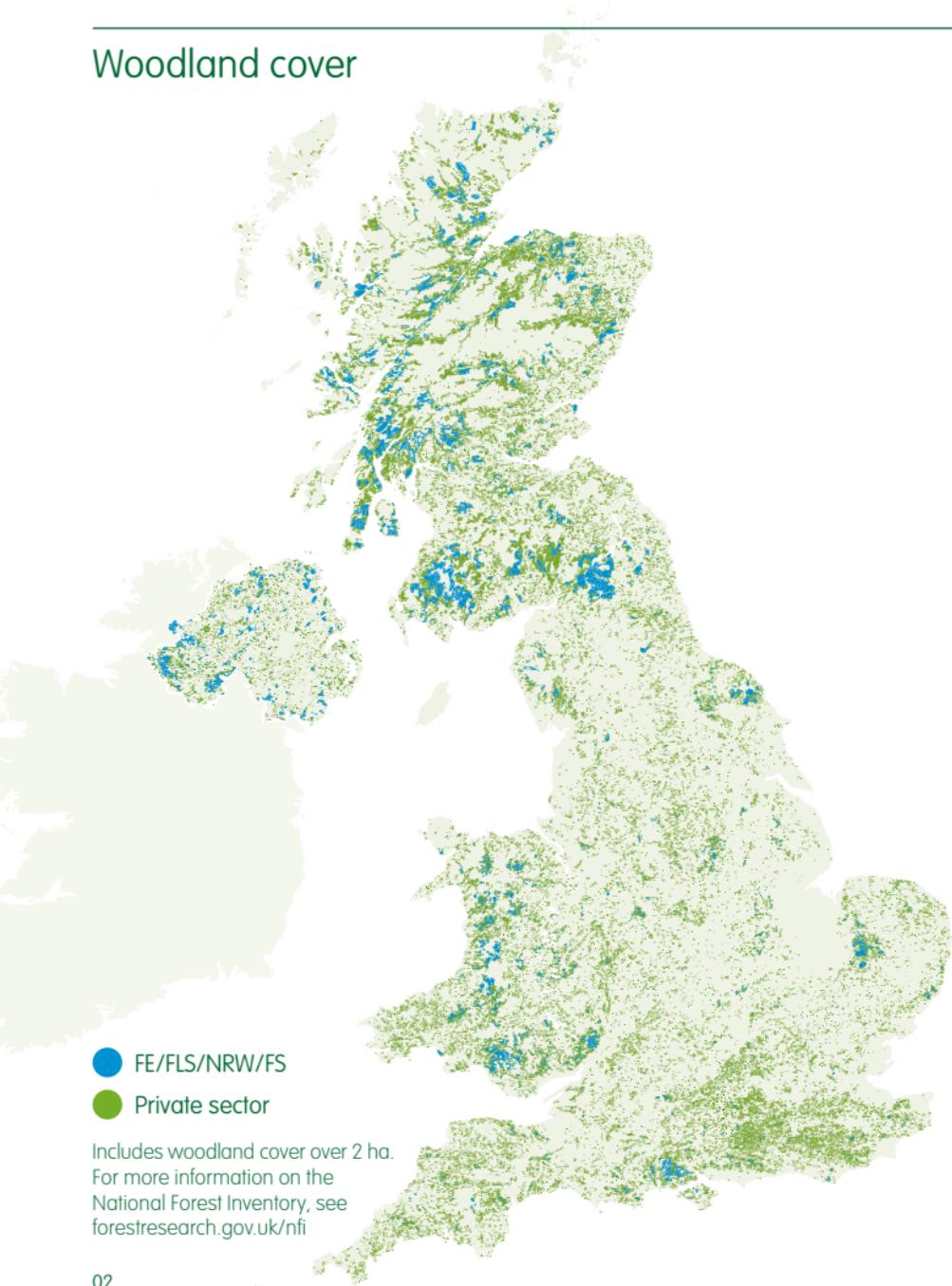
England	192	917	1109
Wales	56	140	195
Scotland	662	350	1012
Northern Ireland	8	48	56
UK	917	1455	2372

All woodland (000 ha)

England	342	979	1320
Wales	152	158	310
Scotland	1088	392	1480
Northern Ireland	64	55	119
UK	1645	1584	3229

Areas as of 31 March 2021.

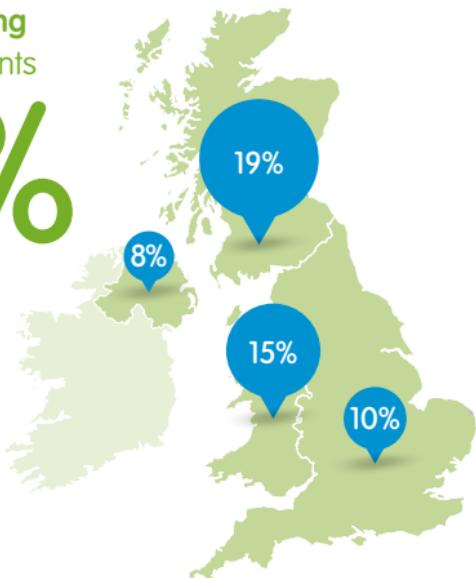
## Woodland cover



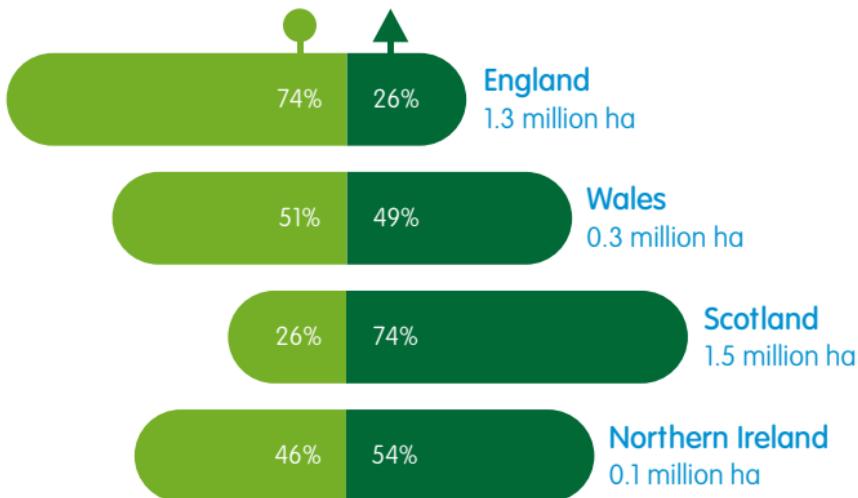
Woodland area is **increasing** in the UK and now represents

# 13.3%

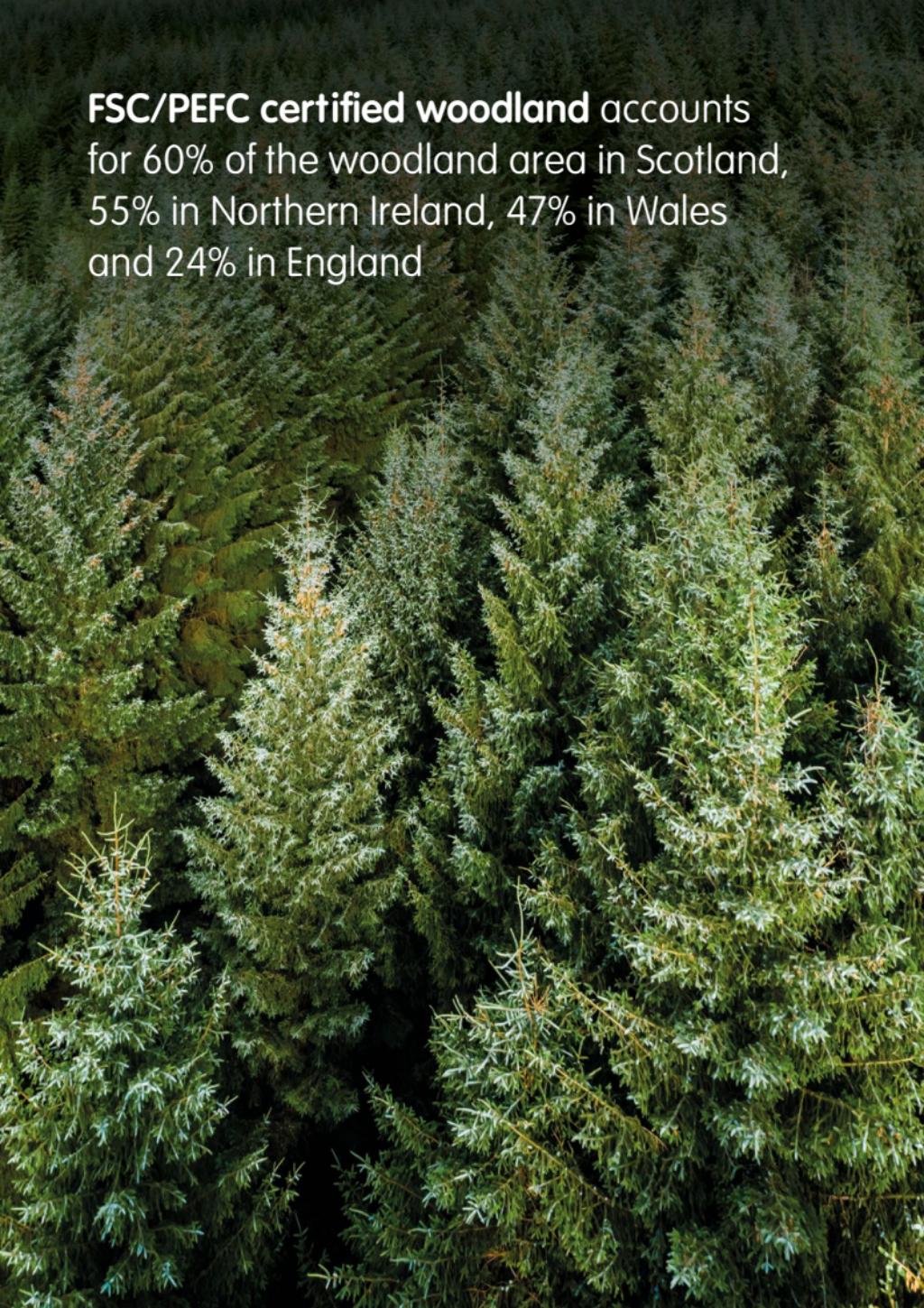
of total land area



Conifers account for around **one half** of the woodland area in the UK overall, but the proportion varies in each country.



**FSC/PEFC certified woodland** accounts for 60% of the woodland area in Scotland, 55% in Northern Ireland, 47% in Wales and 24% in England



## Certified woodland

# 44%

UK woodland area certified

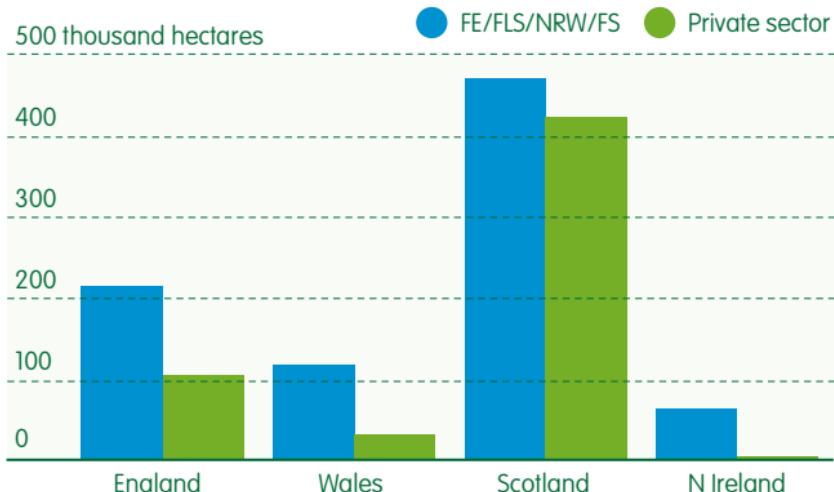
to FSC/PEFC schemes\*

100%

Public sector

23%

Private sector



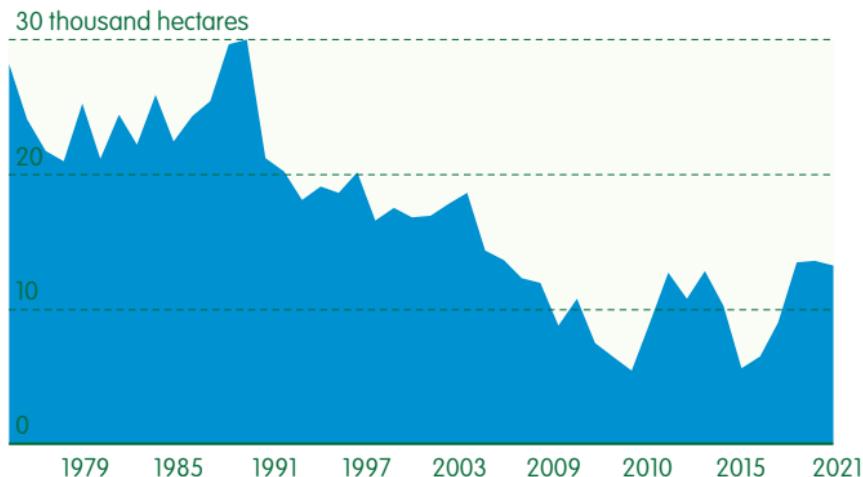
\* FSC = Forest Stewardship Council; PEFC = Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification.

## New planting

# 13,300

hectares of new woodland  
were created in the UK  
in 2020–21

New planting (000 ha)

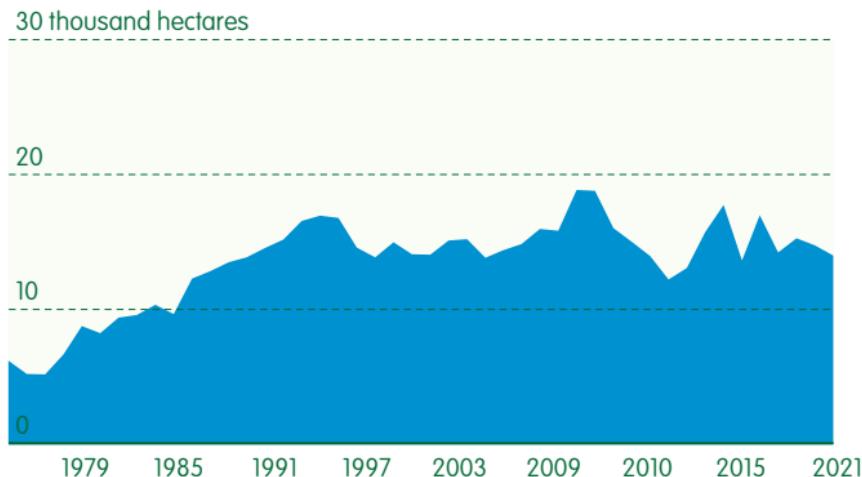


	England	Wales	Scotland	N Ireland	UK	Total	
2017	0.1	1.0	3.2	1.5	3.6	3.0	6.5
2018	0.2	1.3	4.7	2.5	5.1	3.9	9.0
2019	0.4	1.0	7.3	3.9	8.1	5.4	13.5
2020	0.2	2.1	7.4	3.6	7.8	5.9	13.7
2021	0.2	1.9	6.9	3.7	7.3	6.0	13.3

## Restocking

**14,100** hectares of publicly funded **restocking** were reported in the UK in 2020–21

Restocking (000 ha)



	England	Wales	Scotland	N Ireland	UK	Total	
2017	2.0	1.0	9.1	2.0	1.1	3.7	17.1
2018	1.6	0.5	8.1	1.5	0.9	0.1	11.5
2019	1.3	0.4	9.1	2.1	0.7	0.1	12.1
2020	2.1	0.6	8.2	1.7	0.7	0.0	11.9
2021	1.8	0.7	8.0	1.2	0.6	2.6	14.1

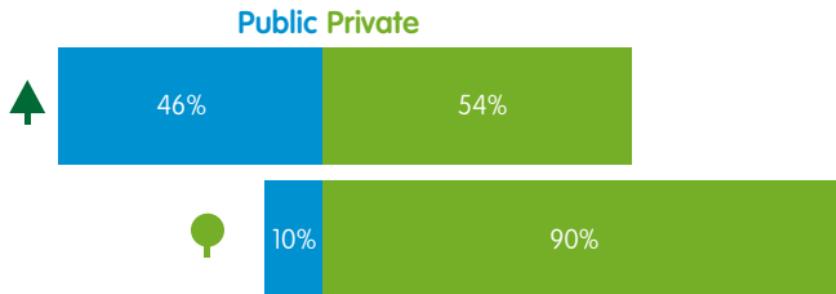
A photograph showing a large pile of cut logs stacked vertically on the right side of the frame. In the foreground, several logs are lying horizontally. A tractor tire is visible in the bottom right corner. The background shows a dense stand of tall, thin trees, likely pine or similar softwood. The lighting suggests a bright day.

Around 82% of UK  
softwood production  
in 2020 was from  
**certified woodlands**

# Timber and wood products

## UK wood production

**54%** of the softwood produced in 2020 came from **private sector** forests



### Wood production (000 of green tonnes)

Softwood	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
FE/FLS/NRW/FS	5 011	4 761	4 522	3 937	4 614
Private sector	5 734	6 075	6 827	5 884	5 434
<b>Total</b>	<b>10 745</b>	<b>10 836</b>	<b>11 349</b>	<b>9 822</b>	<b>10 050</b>

### Hardwood

FE/FLS/NRW/FS	68	85	88	68	87
Private sector	528	652	746	801	743
<b>Total</b>	<b>596</b>	<b>737</b>	<b>835</b>	<b>869</b>	<b>830</b>

## UK deliveries

### Softwood

12 million of green tonnes

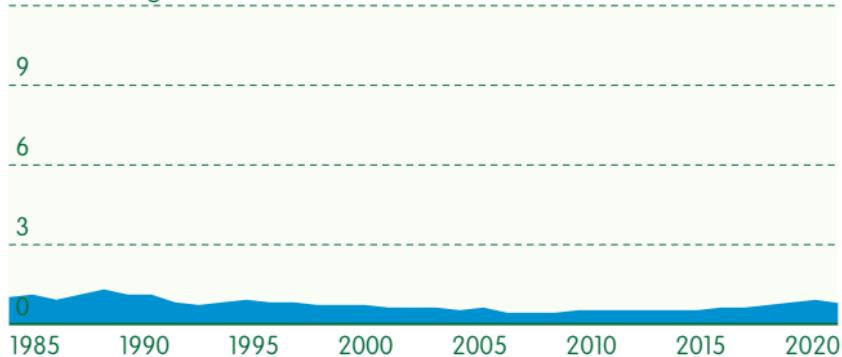


(000 of green tonnes)	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Sawmills	6 504	6 568	6 319	5 880	5 826
Pulpmills	423	442	486	464	383
Wood-based panels	1 248	1 059	1 210	1 316	1 248
Fencing	277	283	255	262	257
Woodfuel	1 550	1 600	1 900	1 900	1 850
Other	178	170	174	183	188
Roundwood exports	231	331	264	201	140
<b>Total</b>	<b>10 412</b>	<b>10 453</b>	<b>10 608</b>	<b>10 207</b>	<b>9 891</b>

Figures are based on processing industries' purchases of softwood grown in the UK and estimates for woodfuel. Woodfuel reported here is derived from stemwood and includes estimated roundwood use for biomass energy. Other includes shavings and poles.

## Hardwood

12 million of green tonnes



(000 of green tonnes)	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Sawmills	74	65	66	76	62
Pulpmills	0	0	0	0	0
Wood-based panels	0	0	1	0	2
Woodfuel	400	600	700	700	700
Other	122	71	68	93	66
<b>Total</b>	<b>596</b>	<b>737</b>	<b>835</b>	<b>869</b>	<b>830</b>

Figures are based on processing industries' purchases of hardwood grown in the UK and estimates for woodfuel and other uses. Woodfuel reported here is derived from stemwood and includes estimated roundwood use for biomass energy. Other includes round fencing and roundwood exports.

## UK production of wood products

### Sawnwood

3.3 million m<sup>3</sup>



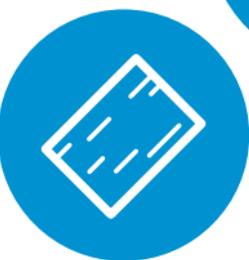
### Paper & paperboard

3.6 million tonnes



### Wood-based panels

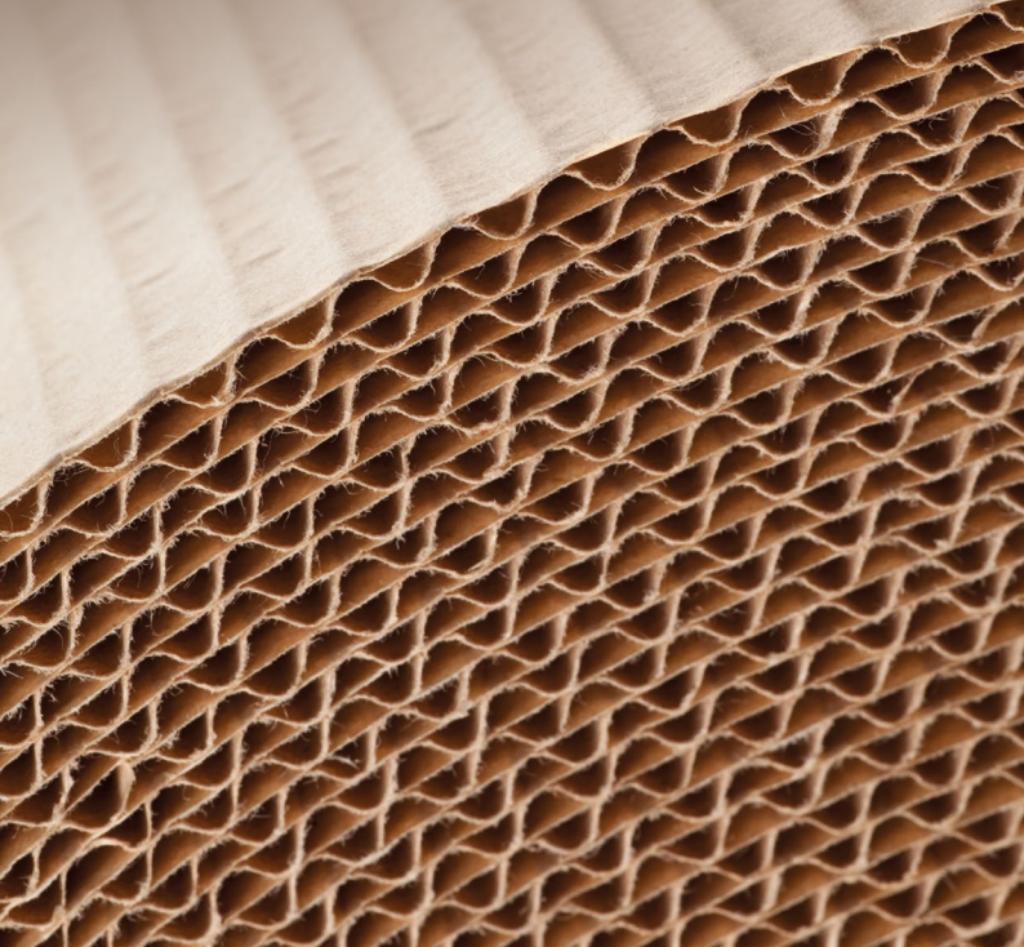
3.0 million m<sup>3</sup>



	Sawnwood (000 m <sup>3</sup> )	Wood-based panels (000 m <sup>3</sup> )	Paper & paperboard (000 tonnes)
2016	3 665	3 033	3 677
2017	3 760	3 176	3 858
2018	3 658	3 079	3 894
2019	3 455	3 246	3 851
2020	3 340	2 952	3 631

Total production from UK mills, including products using imported material. Excludes other wood products (e.g. fuelwood and round fencing), roundwood and intermediate products (e.g. sawmill products, pulp and recovered paper).

Production of wood products  
**decreased** by 3% for sawnwood, 9%  
for wood-based panels and 6% for paper  
and paperboard between 2019 and 2020



# Imports and exports

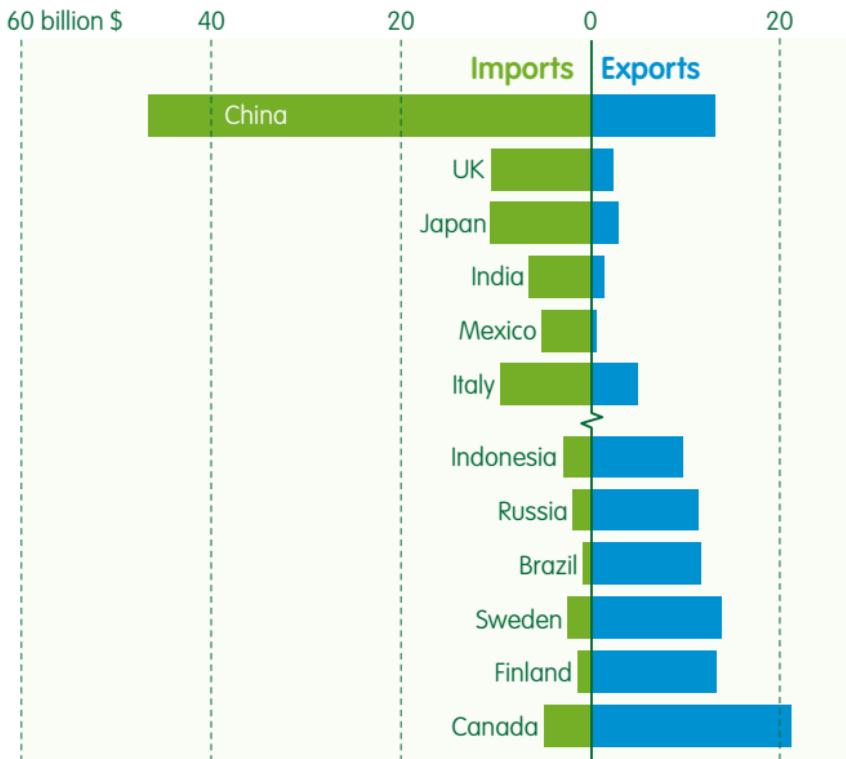


\$10.6 billion  
imported to UK



\$2.2 billion  
exported from UK

Largest net importers and exporters of forest products in 2019



**2nd**

The UK is the second largest net importer of forest products in the world

### Volumes (000 m<sup>3</sup>)

Imports	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Sawnwood	6 794	7 663	7 213	7 040	7 218
Other wood	11 158	11 569	13 595	15 368	15 571
Wood-based panels	3 410	3 800	3 878	3 650	3 267
Pulp & paper (000 t)	7 092	6 798	6 663	6 130	5 386
Exports					
Wood (sawn & other)	1 034	1 044	925	867	530
Wood-based panels	314	374	295	384	389
Pulp & paper (000 t)	5 700	5 528	5 317	5 160	4 617

### Values (£ million)

Imports	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Sawnwood	1 423	1 636	1 743	1 598	1 587
Other wood	1 000	1 051	1 239	1 492	1 537
Wood-based panels	1 010	1 155	1 201	1 134	969
Pulp & paper	4 003	4 004	4 075	4 076	3 385
Exports					
Wood (sawn & other)	76	102	110	100	99
Wood-based panels	91	109	103	123	114
Pulp & paper	1 307	1 651	1 597	1 491	1 336

'Other wood' includes roundwood, wood charcoal, chips, particles, residues and wood pellets. 'Pulp & paper' includes paperboard and recovered waste paper. Wood-based panels include veneer sheets. Sawnwood includes sleepers from 2017.

# Economics



Index in real terms. Source: Timber Price Indices: Data to March 2021.

## Gross value added in forestry and primary wood processing (£ million)

	£0.65 billion	£1.57 billion			
Forestry		Primary wood processing			
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Forestry	658	596	698	669	645
Sawmilling	474	413	420	580	477
Panels	323	316	367	453	357
Pulp & paper	738	610	707	841	733
Total	2 193	1 935	2 188	2 188	2 212

Excludes secondary wood processing and other wood-using industries.  
Source: Annual Business Survey (Office for National Statistics).



The Coniferous Standing Sales Price Index was **1% higher** in real terms in the year to March 2021, compared with the previous year

There were around  
7,000 full-time  
equivalent staff  
employed by **primary**  
**wood processors**  
in the UK in 2020



# Employment



Employment in UK forestry and wood processing

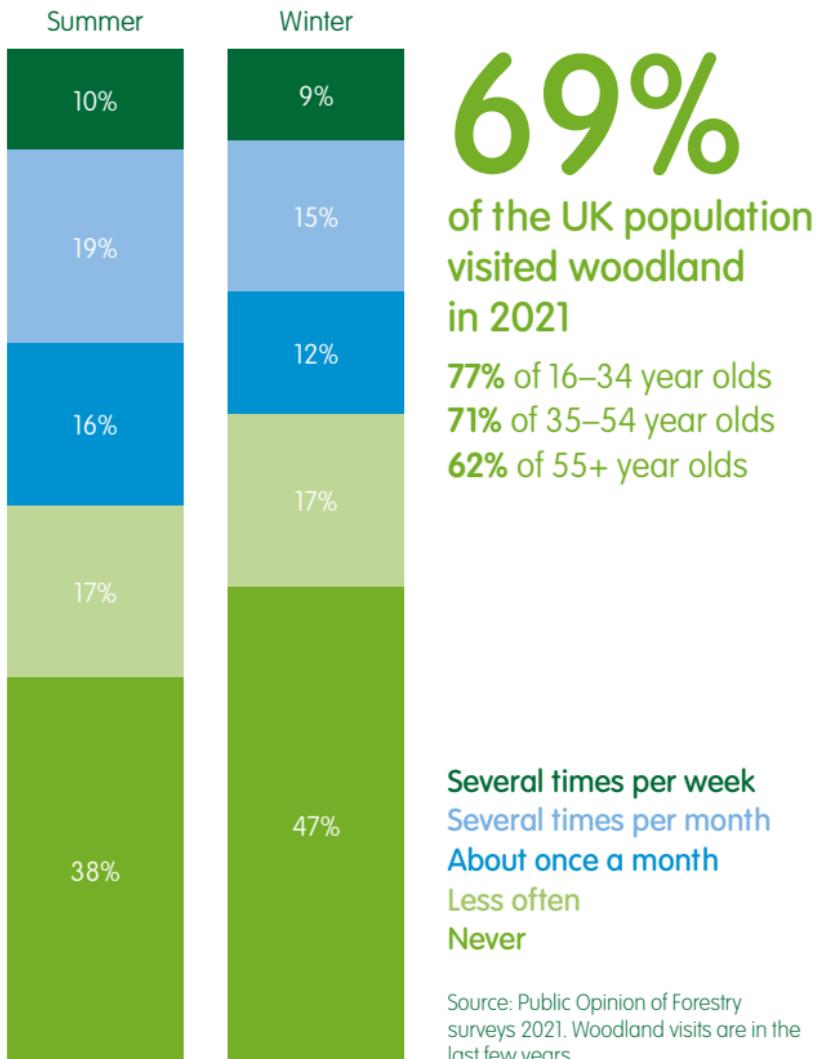
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Forestry	17 000	17 000	..	16 000	18 000
Sawmilling	8 000	9 000	9 000	10 000	7 000
Panels	5 000	5 000	5 000	6 000	5 000

Excludes pulp and paper processing, secondary wood processing and other wood-using industries. Source: Annual Business Survey (Office for National Statistics).

.. Denotes data not available

# Woodland visits

## Frequency of visitors to UK woodland



Source: Public Opinion of Forestry surveys 2021. Woodland visits are in the last few years.

51% of the UK public experienced an **increase in their level of happiness** when in woodlands and 43% an **increased connection** to woodlands in the 12 months since March 2020



# International comparisons

## International forest area

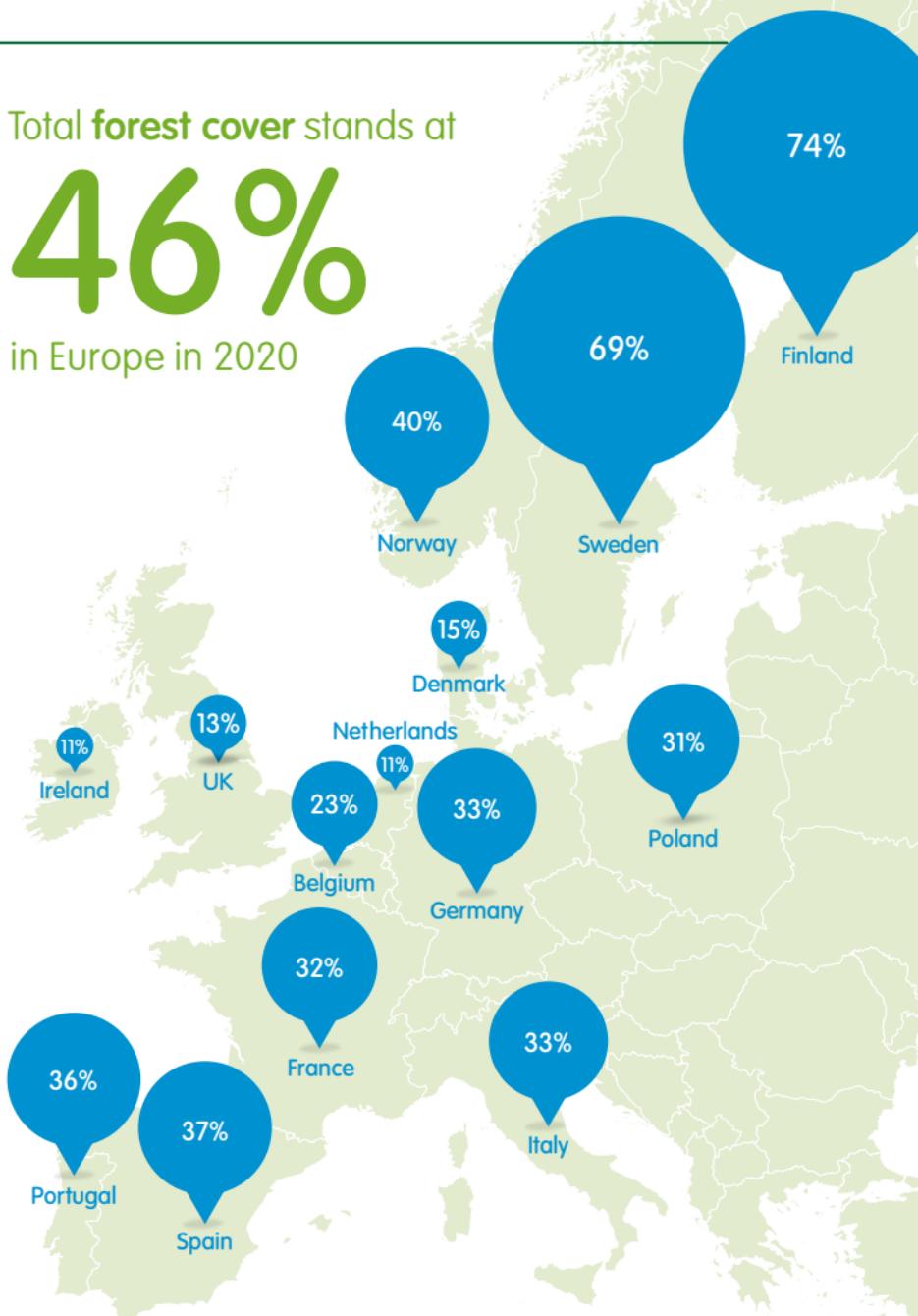
	Forest area (million ha)	Total land area (million ha)	Forest as % of land area
Europe	1017	2 213	46
UK	3	24	13
Finland	22	30	74
France	17	55	32
Germany	11	35	33
Italy	10	29	33
Spain	19	50	37
Sweden	28	41	69
Other EU	52	159	33
Total EU	159	400	40
Russian Federation	815	1638	50
Africa	637	2 989	21
Asia	623	3 109	20
North & Central America	753	2 133	35
Oceania	185	849	22
South America	844	1 746	48
World	4 059	13 039	31

Source: FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020. EU excludes the UK. Cyprus is included in EU total but is part of FAO's Asia region. These figures are outside the scope of National Statistics.

Total forest cover stands at

# 46%

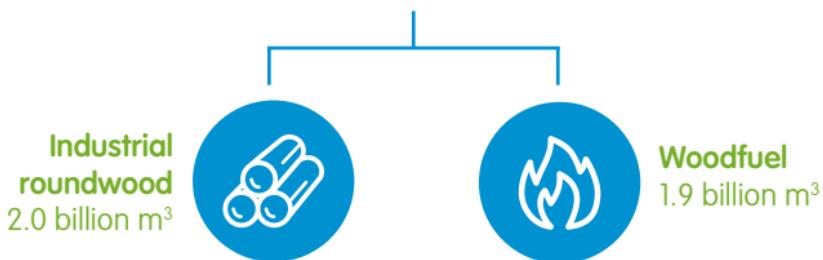
in Europe in 2020



## International wood removals

# 4 billion m<sup>3</sup>

of wood was removed from forests in the world in 2019



(million m <sup>3</sup> )	Industrial roundwood	Woodfuel	Total roundwood
Europe	639	175	814
EU	384	122	506
UK	8	2	11
Africa	78	706	784
Asia	453	713	1165
North & Central America	539	161	701
Oceania	77	10	87
South America	232	180	413
World	2020	1944	3964

Source: FAO. Data relates to calendar year 2019. EU excludes the UK. Cyprus is included in EU total but is part of FAO's Asia region. These figures are outside the scope of National Statistics.

## International production of wood products

Sawnwood  
489 million m<sup>3</sup>



Wood-based panel  
373 million m<sup>3</sup>



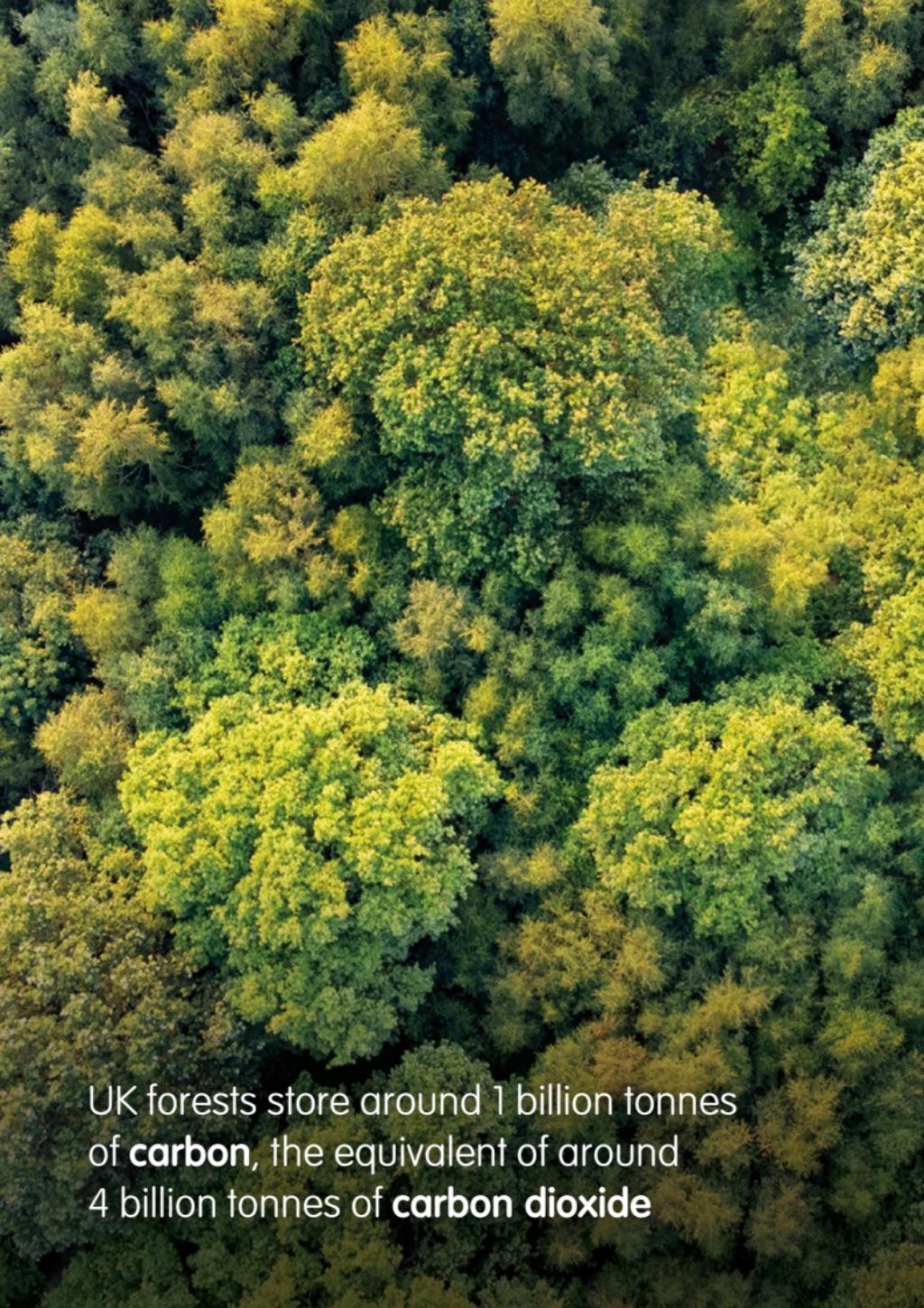
Paper &  
paperboard  
405 million tonnes



● Production  
○ Apparent consumption

	Sawnwood (million m <sup>3</sup> )		Wood-based panels (million m <sup>3</sup> )		Paper & paperboard (million t)	
Europe	172	116	90	85	104	90
EU	109	86	60	58	86	70
UK	3	10	3	7	4	8
Africa	12	17	3	6	3	8
Asia	139	197	210	207	195	201
North & Central America	129	125	49	56	84	83
Oceania	9	8	3	3	4	4
South America	27	19	18	14	16	17
World	489	482	373	371	405	403

Source: FAO. Data relates to calendar year 2019. EU excludes the UK. Cyprus is included in EU total but is part of FAO's Asia region. These figures are outside the scope of National Statistics.



UK forests store around 1 billion tonnes of **carbon**, the equivalent of around 4 billion tonnes of **carbon dioxide**

# Environment

## Woodland type

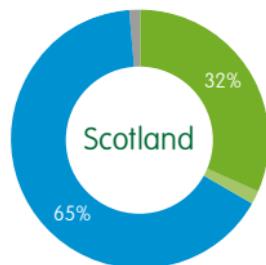
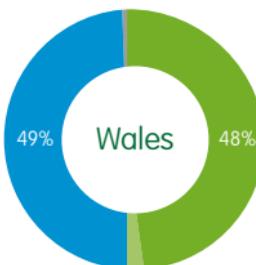
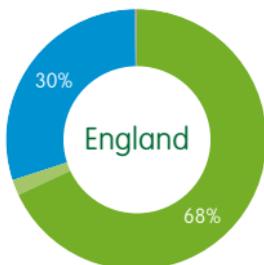
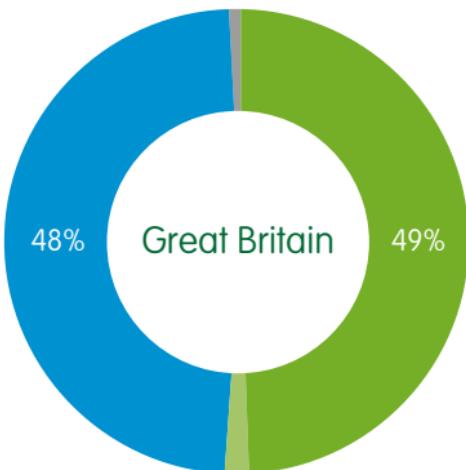
Native trees account for around **one half** of total woodland area in Great Britain, but this varies in each country.

Native

Near native & fragments

Non-native

Not determinable



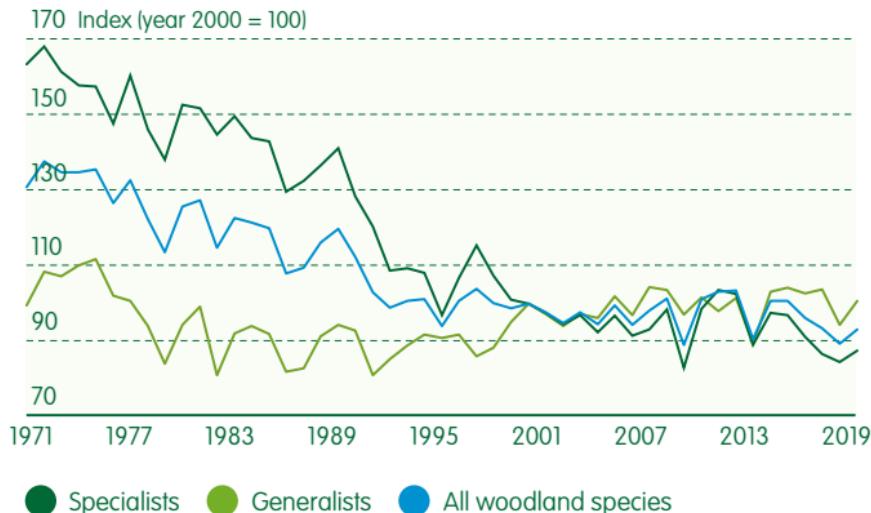
The total area of native woodland in Great Britain is estimated to be around

**1.5 million hectares**

Source: National Forest Inventory.

## Woodland bird populations

Since 2015 the population of woodland specialist species has **fallen** by 10%



## Carbon

The carbon stored in UK forest **soils** accounts for almost 70% of the carbon stock.

Soil  
Living trees  
Deadwood & litter



Carbon stock in UK forests is estimated to have increased, from around **3.2 billion tonnes** of carbon dioxide equivalent in 1990 to **4 billion tonnes** of carbon dioxide equivalent in 2020.

**Woodland Carbon Code projects\***  
are estimated to sequester  
5.7 million tonnes of carbon  
dioxide over their lifetime  
[woodlandcarboncode.org.uk](http://woodlandcarboncode.org.uk)



\*Validated projects only

Forestry Facts & Figures is an annual summary of forestry statistics compiled by Forest Research on behalf of the forestry authorities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The full 2021 publication, including details of the sources used and downloadable spreadsheets of data, can be found online at [www.forestryresearch.gov.uk/statistics](http://www.forestryresearch.gov.uk/statistics)

The UK Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics. For more information visit [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk)

Statistician: Sheila Ward. Enquiries relating to this publication should be addressed to: [statistics@forestryresearch.gov.uk](mailto:statistics@forestryresearch.gov.uk)

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