

# The New Forest: Ark For Wildlife [C1]

La New Forest celebra il suo 20° anniversario come parco nazionale d'Inghilterra. È uno dei più grandi pascoli non recintati del paese, casa dei New Forest Commoners e meta amata dagli amanti della natura.

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The New Forest is a national **park** like no other in Britain. Located in the south of England, it **boasts** 140,000 acres [566.5 sq km] of ancient woodlands, **heathland**, **bogs** and **mires**, reaching down towards the **rugged** Hampshire coastline. Wild ponies **roam** free, while local farmers take their animals there to **graze**, thanks to the **park's** rights of common pasture. Its natural beauty and varied fauna have attracted countless visitors and inspired some of the greatest British literature, such as Alice in Wonderland and the works of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

## ROYAL HUNTING GROUND

The New Forest's history goes back to the time of the Norman conquest. Originally called Ytene — Land of the Jutes — it was established by William the Conqueror as Nova Foresta in 1079. He declared it the 'new' royal hunting ground, **ousting** the local residents to preserve the "beasts of the **chase**." In 1217, King Henry III's regent restored access rights to the common people with the **Charter** of the Forest. The principles of these rights exist to this day. To find out more, Speak Up contacted Erika Dovey, a New Forest commoner who has a **herd** of ponies. Her children are also young commoners, but as she explains, commoning is not always passed down through families. **Erika Dovey (English accent):** To be a commoner, you have to have the rights which are attached to your house or the land that you occupy. There's an Atlas of Rights with the New Forest Verderers in Lyndhurst at the King's House. So if you did move into the forest, you can check to see if you have these rights attached to the property and you can become a commoner. So you don't have to be born into it, although I was luckily born into commoning life. And that means I have the right to pasture, to **turn out** my grazing **livestock**, so that's ponies, **cattle**, **donkeys**... You can **turn out** pigs in the

autumn, so the right of pannage. In the olden days, people would have their house cow, they'd have their pig, they'd have their riding ponies, so they'd have a smaller herd. I'm a small commoner, so I have a small herd of ponies. I only have ponies out at the moment. I run stallions out in the forest, and we have mares and foals. There's also the right of fuelwood, which is to cut wood in the forest. There is the common pasture of sheep, but this is held on land that is private, not Crown land. And then there was the right of common of marl, which was to dig clay in the forest, but we no longer dig clay, 'cause that's very harmful obviously to the environment, to the habitats. And there's the [common of] pasture, mast, fuel wood, sheep, marl and the right of turbary — and that's to cut turf for fuel, but we no longer do that either.

## WANDERING WILDLIFE

Besides livestock, the New Forest is home to many wild animals. With half of the park on Crown land, owned by the nation and open to the public, and half privately owned, it requires careful management to ensure they can move around freely. Hilary Makin, communications manager at the New Forest National Park Authority, tells us more. **Hilary Makin (English accent):** We all work very closely together because obviously wildlife doesn't adhere to our boundaries. And so, it's about creating these wildlife corridors that these rare species can move around and colonise different areas. But, I mean, it's a spectacular place. We estimate we have around twenty thousand different species in the forest and some real rarities that you'll only find here or in one other place in the UK. So it's kind of an ark for wildlife, we call it, as well, because, as I say, we're surrounded by big cities like Southampton, Bournemouth and Salisbury, and there's about sixteen million people who live within a ninety-minute drive. So, it's an interesting balance between how both people and nature can thrive.

## FOREST CONSERVATION

Humans have been living in and managing the forest since the Bronze Age and continue to do so today. In fact, it is the practice of commoning which contributes to the conservation and maintenance of the forest in a uniquely

sustainable way. **Erika Dovey:** Cattle graze differently to ponies. They curl their tongue and rip things up. Ponies graze quite close. And it's this different way of grazing and browsing and reaching out that shaped the landscape and also provides this browse line under the trees, which helps with the flights of the birds, which helps let the light in, which helps with the hunting. This is kind of why it was a royal hunting ground, because they could see through the beautiful trees to actually shoot their arrows to the wild boar and the deer. Cattle are very heavy and they poach, which means to tread around the water's edges, around wherever they go. And that helps create little pockets of different micro habitats, if you like, for things like fairy shrimp, that people haven't really heard of. These are little, tiny creatures that live in our water and hatch. Things like that people can't see, so it's the unknown, special things, I suppose, in the forest, along with the big herbivores.

## NEW FOREST FAUNA

This mix of large and small animals is one of the things that makes the New Forest so special. So, what kind of animals can you expect to see when you visit? **Erika Dovey:** We have a lot of lovely deer in the forest. We have our biggest native deer, which is our red deer. And they are absolutely glorious, you know, they're huge, great big mammals. And in the autumn, they've grown their antlers and they are like the kings of the forest. And then it goes down to things like our dragonflies, which we have 75 per cent of all species in the forest. Things like the amphibians and our snakes. We have the adder in the New Forest, and we have many thousands of insects and beetles and stag beetles that live in the deadwood... Our fungi... The list is endless, really. But it's not just the big animals that you can see. People need to always look down or, if you're sat down and you're having your picnic, there's so much around you that's smaller; the flora, the flowers... And just listening and the tranquillity and the sound of the birds — it's a really magical place.

## PARK LIFE

Around 34,000 people live within the New Forest itself. Hilary Makin describes how the residents also get involved in the enormous effort that goes into looking after the park. **Hilary Makin:** It's a massive community effort to care for the place as well as the landowners and the kind of organisations that have responsibility for the area. We've got a huge volunteering presence, with people out **litter picking**, repairing paths and doing wildlife **surveys** and just, really, kind of helping visitors to understand how they can help care for the forest as well, while they're here.

## VISIT SAFELY!

Erika Dovey also works in the park as a **ranger**. She helps look after the forest and gives guidance to visitors on enjoying the area in a safe and sustainable way. Her main advice is to follow the nine points of the New Forest code. **Erika Dovey:** It's just how to behave when you're out visiting, so that you don't affect the wildlife, **livestock**, the habitats that are out there. You know, **parking** in designated car **parks** and do not approach or touch any of the **livestock**. They are **semi-feral** ponies. They're not domesticated. So, the kind of issues we have can be people touching and wanting to feed them and it's an absolute 'no': please do not do that, because it can **draw** them to the roads, where they could be **run over**. They can bite; they can kick. They are free-roaming wild animals that need to be left alone, so although it's lovely to come and see them, just keep your distance and don't approach.

## RIGHTS OF COMMON

Commoners are owners of property with 'common rights' situated in or around the New Forest. Inspired by the 1217 **Charter** of the Forest, these rights were updated with the introduction of The Wild Creatures and Forest Laws **Act** of 1971.

## **NEW FOREST CODE: BE FOREST FRIENDLY!**

Each season has something new for visitors to the New Forest. August is particularly special, when the heather blooms purple on the heathland, while autumn is the time to admire the changing colours of the trees.

Whenever you visit, it is important to follow the nine rules of the New Forest Code. \*Failure to comply may result in a fixed penalty of £100 or being taken to court and a fine of up to £1,000. [www.thenewforest.co.uk](http://www.thenewforest.co.uk)

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# Glossary

- **bogs** = paludi
- **poach** = sconfinare
- **Act** = atto, decreto
- **rugged** = frastagliata
- **fuelwood** = legna da ardere
- **boundaries** = confini, limiti
- **wild boar** = cinghiale
- **graze** = pascolare
- **browsing** = brucare
- **tread** = calpestare
- **ousting** = espellere
- **chase** = caccia
- **cattle** = bestiame bovino
- **pannage** = pastura dei maiali
- **harmful** = dannoso
- **antlers** = corna
- **surveys** = indagini, studi
- **turn out** = mandare fuori
- **beetles** = coleotteri
- **semi-feral** = semi-selvatici
- **draw** = attirare
- **run over** = investire
- **dog waste** = feci di cane
- **donkeys** = asini
- **clay** = argilla
- **adder** = vipera
- **blooms** = fiorire
- **turbary** = torbiera
- **ark** = arca
- **rip things up** = strappare
- **litter picking** = raccolta dei rifiuti
- **boasts** = vantare
- **mires** = pantani

- **livestock** = bestiame
- **mares** = giumente
- **dig** = scavare
- **thrive** = prosperare
- **beech mast** = fagioli, frutti del faggio
- **Failure to comply** = mancato rispetto delle regole
- **mast** = ghiande
- **curl** = arricciare
- **peat turf** = zolle di torba
- **heather** = erica
- **heathland** = brughiera
- **pockets** = buche, zone
- **dragonflies** = libellule
- **stag beetles** = cervi volanti
- **acorns** = ghiande
- **roam** = vagare
- **reaching out** = raggiungere
- **edges** = margini
- **herd** = mandria
- **fairy shrimp** = gamberetti fatati, anostraci
- **ranger** = guardaboschi
- **forage** = andare alla ricerca di cibo
- **marl pits** = cave di marna
- **deer** = cervo
- **hatch** = schiudere
- **Estovers** = legnatico, diritto a utilizzare il legname
- **marl** = marna
- **turf** = torba
- **Charter** = statuto
- **stallions** = stalloni
- **foals** = puledri
- **sheep** = pecore
- **fine** = multa