

# #RealNewForest

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## Are all the foals born in Spring?

No. Most of the foals born on the Forest will be sired by the previous year's stallions that were selected to run on the Forest. After the commoners demanded a system to control the quality and quantity of foals, leading to the Stallion Scheme, not only has the number of stallions been dramatically reduced, but also the time they spend out on the Forest. Now they are only out for a few weeks in late Spring. This means that most of the foals are born within a short time-frame almost a year later.

But, there is nothing to prevent commoners from choosing to put a mare with a stallion off the Forest. They may want to achieve a particular bloodline, for example, or to produce a cross-bred pony to suit their future needs. This means that foals can still be born at any time of year, although this is now quite rare. Of course, the timing of the stallion turnout is set to make things as positive as possible for the mare and foal; when there is good vegetation growth, the weather is at its most benign, and there are several months before the round-ups, known as "drifts". Foals born at other times will need the owners to keep a very close eye on their progress. They may turn them out for a short time just to build their experience of the Forest, learning to graze the variety of vegetation and build experience of life on the Forest. They may turn them out to take advantage of unseasonably good weather, allowing the mare and foal to benefit from a more natural environment than at home and resting their home grazing for a while.

Of course, if you spot a mare and foal in poor condition at any time of year then do contact the Verderers (there is a form on their website). But there is no need to panic especially because a mare and foal are out at an unusual time. It has simply become a modern rarity.

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