

Who cuts the grass in the New Forest?



When you are going out for a picnic in the New Forest, do you ever wonder why the grass is so short and neat? Or, when you are walking in the woods, do you think how nice it is that the trees are trimmed over your head? If so, thank a New Forest pony or cow - and their owner, a New Forest commoner.

The New Forest is maintained, day and night, by the constant grazing and browsing of commoners' animals. They are not wild. Every single pony, donkey, cow and pig belongs to someone who lives locally and is

responsible for making sure it is healthy. In fact, you could look at the New Forest as one big farm where animals are free to roam.

But the animals don't just make the New Forest beautiful and easy to get around. They create the New Forest's landscape of heath, woodlands and streams that provide the habitats essential to the survival of a wide range of rare and precious species of plants and animals.



Look from a safe distance!

- Most ponies and donkeys are not used to being handled and are happier left alone. They can react very suddenly if they feel threatened.
- Ponies and donkeys live naturally in the New Forest. There is plenty of food for them.
- If they are attracted to car parks and roadsides by the offer of food they are at greater risk of being hit on the road.
- Every year a few people are hurt by ponies or donkeys that have learned to expect food, or are protecting their foals. Children are especially vulnerable.
- Feeding ponies or donkeys in the New Forest is against the local bylaws and you could be fined.

PLEASE DO NOT TRY TO FEED OR PET OUR ANIMALS

Some of the rare plants and animals that thrive in the New Forest because of grazing



The wild gladiolus is possibly the Forest's favourite plant. Grazing animals help it in its bracken home as they stop the bracken from becoming too dense, or building up a thatch of dead plant growth. The gladiolus needs bracken, but not too much - and not too vigorous.



The daisy like flower in this photograph is a wild chamomile lawn. These are spread throughout the New Forest, often on the edge

of villages where livestock congregate.

This was once a common plant across Britain, but now is a rarity, apart from in the New Forest.



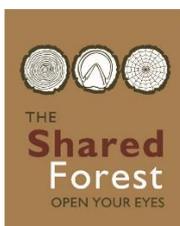
The Dartford Warbler is a true heathland specialist and the New Forest is one of its strongholds. In the rest of the UK it is only found in the southern counties and Suffolk.

In the New Forest, Dartford Warblers can be found on areas of open heathland with a scattering of gorse bushes – except in

winter when they may be seen in gorse scrub along the coast.



The Southern damselfly needs shallow flowing water with vegetation, but not too much of it. The shallow Forest streams with their grazed margins are one of its strongholds in Britain. The water filled footprints left by ponies and cows drinking in the streams are ideal for them to lay their eggs.

	<p>The Shared Forest Project is working to increase public awareness and understanding of depastured animals and commoning in the New Forest Email: shared.forest@btinternet.com</p> <p>Our Past, Our Future <i>Working together for the New Forest</i></p> <p>Supported by  The National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund</p> <p> heritage lottery fund</p> <p></p>
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