

# Welcome to the 2026 New Forest Biodiversity Conference

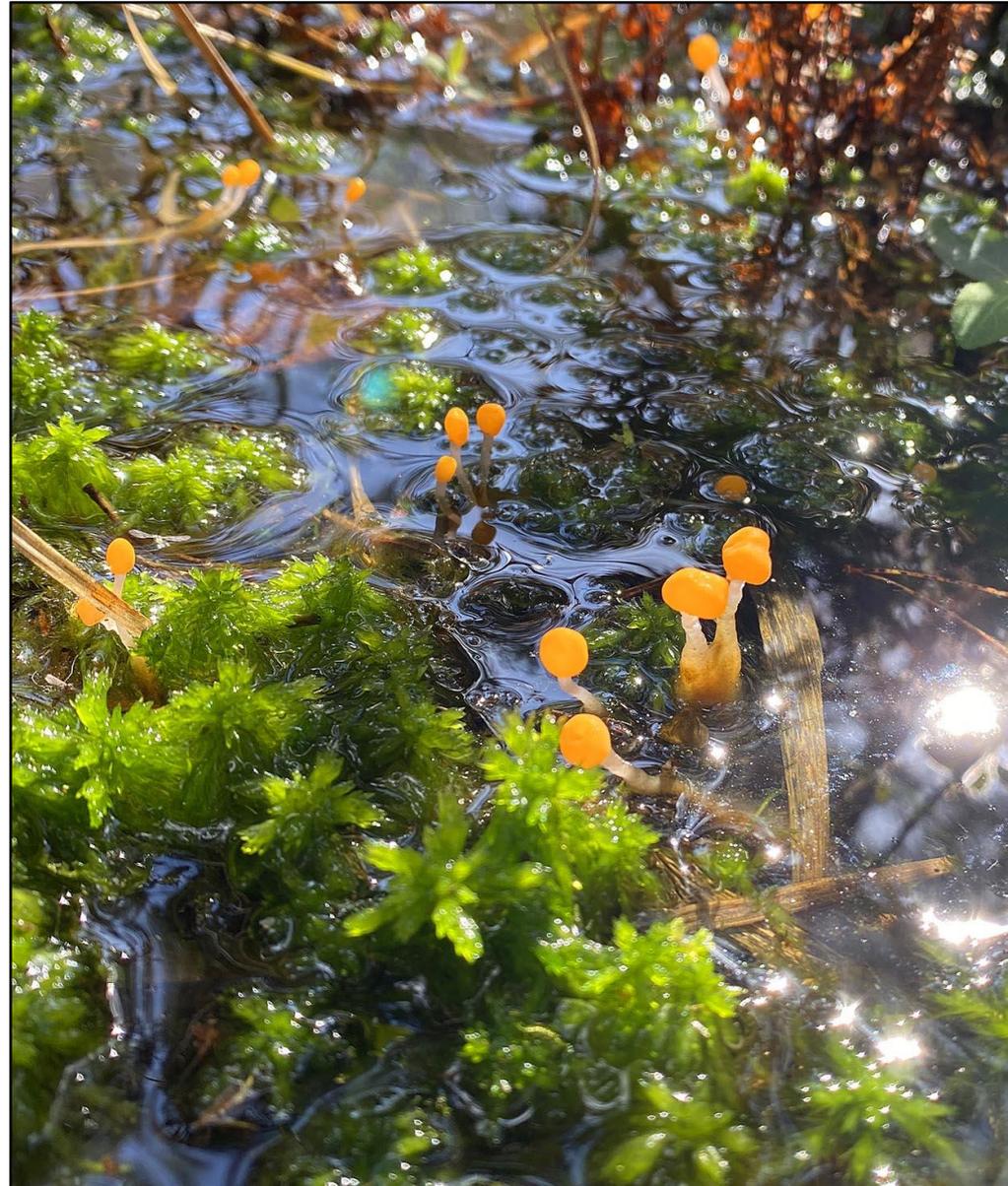
*New Forest Biodiversity Forum*



# *New Forest Biodiversity Forum*

## **Introduction**

- Facilities
- Fire exits
- Schedule
- Conference support
- Talks and Q&A
- Slides and abstracts
- Feedback
- Shortbread!
- Welcome from Kairos



# *New Forest Biodiversity Forum*

**Videography by Matt Roseveare (NFBF Associate)**

*Willow Bloomfield*



Dimitri Moore



*D Moore*

# *New Forest Biodiversity Forum*

1. **Community development**
2. **Knowledge exchange**
3. **Data and evidence**

Sponsored by Kairos Philanthropy with >£1M commitment in 2024-28  
Hosting partner is Wild New Forest CIC

Independent - Inclusive - Community-driven - Evidence-led - Long-term



# *New Forest Biodiversity Forum*

## **1. Community development**



# New Forest Biodiversity Forum

## NFBF Steering Group

- **Ian Barker** *Ecologist, New Forest National Park Authority*
- **Keith Betton** *Chair, Hampshire Ornithological Society*
- **Clive Chatters** *Author, Naturalist, and Nature Conservationist*
- **Tracé Cooper-Williams** *Landscape & Species Recovery Manager, HIWWT*
- **Nicky Court** *Manager, Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre*
- **John Durnell** *Senior Director of Operations, HIWWT*
- **Pete Durnell** *Team Manager, Hampshire County Council Countryside Service*
- **Dr Naomi Ewald** *Technical Director, Freshwater Habitats Trust*
- **Andy Page** *NFBF Associate, and New Forest Raptor Monitoring Programme*
- **Leanne Sargeant** *Senior Ecologist, Forestry England*
- **Lyndsey Stride** *Foundation for Common Land, and New Forest Commoner*
- **Jenny Thomas** *New Forest Nature Recovery Senior Adviser, Natural England*
- **Nick Tomalin** *New Forest and Purbeck Conservation Officer, RSPB*



# *New Forest Biodiversity Forum*

## **NFBF Associates**



**Matt Roseveare**

# *New Forest Biodiversity Forum*

## **NFBF Associates**



**Tommy Saunders and Andy Page (NFRMP)**

# *New Forest Biodiversity Forum*

## **New Forest Volunteer Ecological Surveyor Programme (VESPA)**



# *New Forest Biodiversity Forum*

## **New Forest Volunteer Ecological Surveyor Programme (VESPA)**



# New Forest Biodiversity Forum

## New Forest Volunteer Ecological Surveyor Programme (VESPA)

 **Steve Laycock**  
6 September · 🌍

A fantastic morning with VESPA training today. Slow worm, glow worm larvae, lesser stag beetle and numerous fungi



  You, Willow Bloomfield, David Brookes and 94 others

12 comments

*“As a Commoner walking out regularly to check my stock I felt that I could get involved in these surveys - admittedly it does slow up my pony searches somewhat, but I have certainly had my eyes opened to the nature we take for granted. The VESPA sessions are also great because there is always a lot of positivity regarding commoning and the importance of grazing stock. They are also perfect for us to explain commoning to others in the group and share our own knowledge.”*

**Suzanne Kemp**

**New Forest Commoner**

**October 2025**

# New Forest Biodiversity Forum

## New Forest Volunteer Ecological Surveyor Programme (VESPA)

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### NEWS

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## Rare ladybird recorded in the UK for the first time



RUSSELL WYNN / WILD NEW FOREST

The Little Arboreal Ladybirds are normally found in France and continental Europe

**Curtis Lancaster**  
South of England

14 September 2025

**A "new" ladybird species has been recorded in the UK for the first time following the hot weather over the summer.**

Prof Russell Wynn, director of Wild New Forest, said the Little Arboreal Ladybirds had been found in moth traps across the New Forest but "there were no confirmed British Records prior to this influx".

*Calvia decemguttata* in Britain 79

### *Calvia decemguttata* (Linnaeus, 1767) (Coccinellidae) in Britain

**Russell B. Wynn<sup>1</sup> & John Poland<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Wild New Forest CIC, 252 Woodlands Road, Woodlands (New Forest) SO40 7GH; russ@wildnewforest.org.uk  
<sup>2</sup> 13 Grasmere Close, West End, Southampton Hampshire SO18 3NP; Jpoland197@yahoo.co.uk

On the early morning of 14 June 2025, RBW was checking the moth trap in his garden in Woodlands in the eastern New Forest (VC 11 South Hampshire), when he noticed an orange-coloured ladybird on the trap exterior that didn't look quite right for Orange Ladybird *Halyzia sedecimguttata* (Linnaeus). A quick photograph was obtained before it flew off, which allowed the identification as *Calvia decemguttata* (Linnaeus) to be quickly secured using identification apps and online images. A further two individuals came to light there on 20 June (Fig. 1) and these were followed by regular records, of up to three, at light in the following weeks.



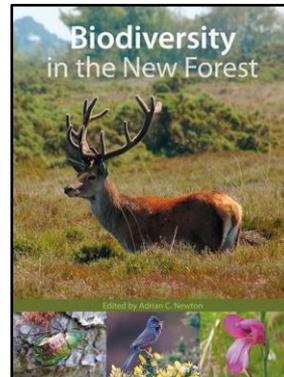
**Fig. 1** Two *Calvia decemguttata* at the trap on 20 June. Image: RBW.

[*The Coleopterist* 34(3): 79-83, November 2025]

# *New Forest Biodiversity Forum*

## 2. Knowledge exchange

Home About Funding Projects Resources Get Involved News



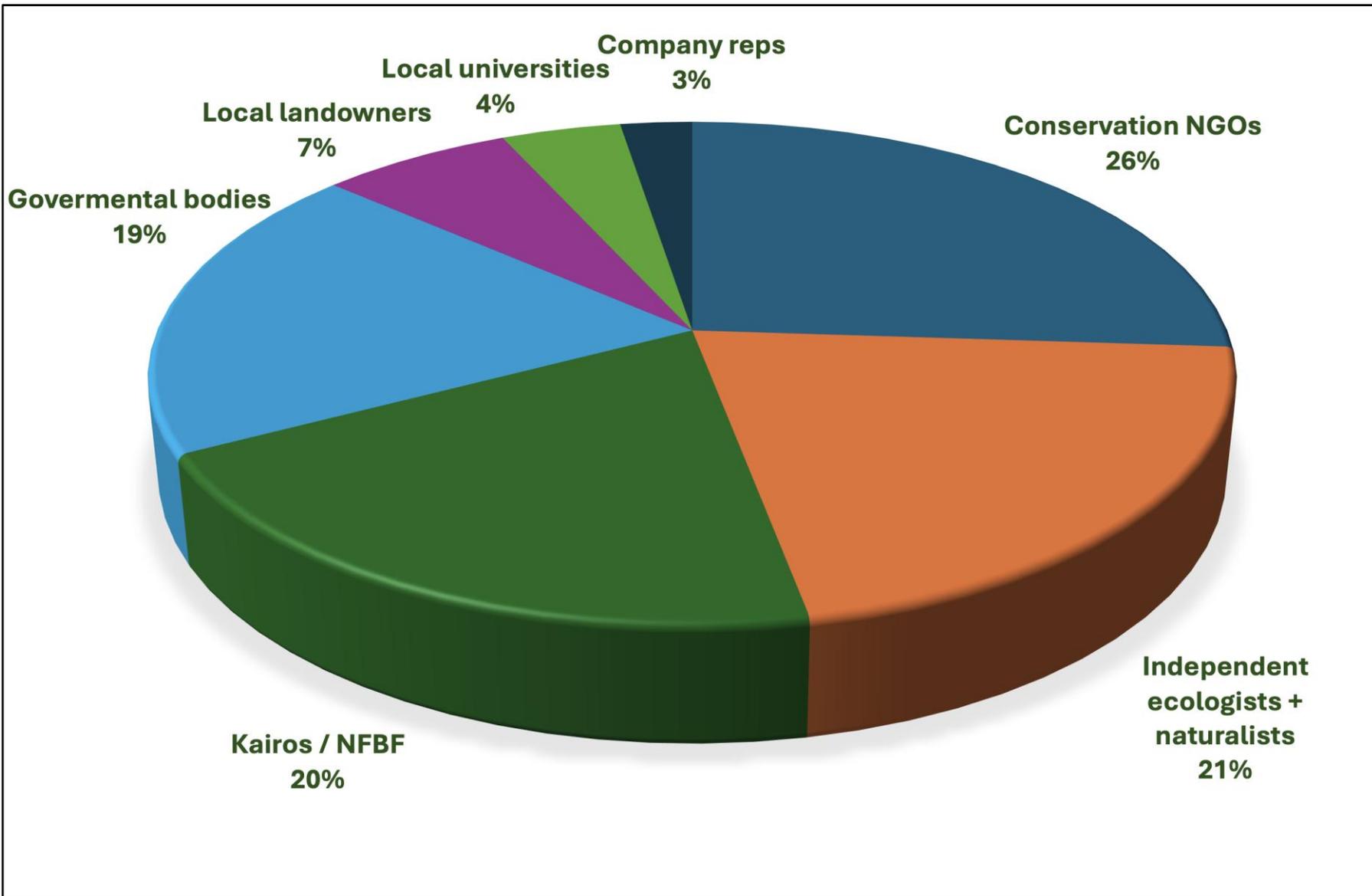
[www.newforestbiohub.org](http://www.newforestbiohub.org)

# *New Forest Biodiversity Forum*

## **New Forest Biodiversity Conference**



*New Forest Biodiversity Forum*  
**New Forest Biodiversity Conference**



# New Forest Biodiversity Forum

## Public engagement



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## How wildlife is returning to heathland



Nail fungus, *Poronia punctata*, is only found in Great Britain in the New Forest and is one of the species found in the newly restored lowland heathland

**Jon Cuthill**  
Environment correspondent, BBC South

16 September 2025

**A new study of recently restored heathland has found species are returning faster than expected.**

# The New Forest



## How New Forest heathland is coming alive again

We're delighted to share this exclusive behind-the-scenes look at the ambitious heathland restoration programme in the New Forest, delivered by the New Forest Biodiversity Forum in partnership with Forestry England.

If you've ever wondered what it takes to let nature bounce back – and how you can feel part of that journey when you visit – this video is for you.

[WATCH NOW](#)

# New Forest Biodiversity Forum

## Public engagement

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Friday 20 February 2026 11

# On the Wild Side

WITH PROFESSOR RUSSELL WYNN OF WILD NEW FOREST

## Wonder of poo, a cauliflower, frogspawn and grey geese

Welcome to the February edition of 'On the Wild Side', a monthly feature that aims to inform and inspire readers about the incredible wildlife in the New Forest National Park, and some of the associated conservation issues and successes.

### The wonder of poo

I suspect that very few A&T readers spend their time closely scrutinising pony dung, but if they did, they would discover a wealth of weird and wonderful wildlife. The 3,000 or so free-roaming ponies in the New Forest have a 'high-fibre low-nutrient' diet and are not routinely wormed with chemical treatments. Consequently, their dung supports hundreds of fungi and insect species that have evolved to exploit this natural substrate and food source.

The incessantly wet and mild weather of recent weeks has seen a proliferation of dung-loving (coprophilous) fungi emerge from weathered pony dung on the open forest. Most of these fungi are 'little brown jobs', a perplexing mix of conecaps, ink-caps, mottlegills, and round-heads, but there is one species that is easy to identify and is a national rarity to boot: the Nail Fungus. This unusual fungus looks like a white nail head peppered with tiny black dots, through which the spores are released. The extensive heaths and grasslands of the New Forest have long been recognised as a national and international stronghold for this species, but the increased use of free-roaming ponies for conservation grazing projects outside the New Forest is now enabling Nail Fungus to colonise other regions.

In addition to the fungi, I've also seen several minotaur beetles in recent days, so-called because the male beetles have distinctive forward-projecting horns. These industrious dung beetles are typically found on well-drained sunny heaths and are active in mild winter weather. During the spring and summer, they can be seen dragging pony dung into their burrows, where they provides food for their larvae. Dung beetles and other insects associated with pony



Female minotaur beetle. Below, frogspawn (photos: Russell Wynn)

dung in turn provides a welcome food source for hungry birds such as Jackdaws, Starlings, and the nocturnal Woodcock. I regularly hear comments about dog-walkers who, perhaps understandably, question the need to pick up after their pets when ponies and other free-roaming livestock deposit large volumes of dung across the forest.

One of the large volumes of dung that dog poo is a particularly unpleasant form of litter, capable of hosting pathogens and parasites that may be harmful to people and livestock. However, there is also growing awareness of the various negative impacts of dog faeces on the environment. Any readers carefully picking their way between the piles of dog poo surrounding most of the

poo, with potentially fatal consequences for invertebrates such as dung beetles. In addition, dog poo has a relatively high caloric content, making it attractive to scavengers such as Foxes, particularly in winter when natural food is relatively scarce. The consumption of dog faeces (coprophagy) may be one factor contributing to artificially high Fox populations in the New Forest, which has knock-on impacts for declining ground-nesting birds such as Curlew and Lapwing, whose eggs are frequently predated by Foxes. It's encouraging to see that New Forest Dog Owners Group have taken the lead on this issue with their 'Bag it - Bin it' campaign, supported by local partners. Pony dung is wonderful, but dog poo is not - so dog walkers please admire the former and take the latter home.

**Impacts of local flooding**  
Readers won't need reminding that the first few weeks of 2026 have been exceptionally wet, with many parts of the New Forest once again experiencing local flooding. The worst of it was probably on 27 Jan, with villages such as Brockenhurst being particularly badly hit. My intrepid New Forest Biodiversity Forum colleague, Matt Roseveare, was quickly on the scene that day to capture some fascinating aerial images of the floodwaters at Longwater Lawn, near Lyndhurst, with permission of Forestry England. Matt's pictures show how the restored meandering section of the upper Beaulieu River at this location is now connected to its floodplain.

Such was functioning as it should and was almost totally inundated. This 'natural flood management' helps to slow the overflow of water and can reduce the impact of downstream flooding. Unfortunately, this apparent good news story masks a potentially worrying issue. The increased volume and intensity of recent rainfall events means that local wastewater treatment works are frequently overwhelmed, leading to discharge of combined sewer overflows into our rivers. The discharge site emanating from the Lyndhurst works about a mile upstream of Longwater Lawn and was active



Wild New Forest



Aerial image of Longwater Lawn (photo: Matt Roseveare). Below, nail fungus on pony dung (photo: Russell Wynn)

on the day that Matt was filming, meaning that dilute untreated sewage and other pollutants emanating from the Lyndhurst catchment were spilling onto Longwater Lawn, a protected habitat that hosts a variety of specialist plants and fungi. When these floodwaters recede, shallow pools are left behind, potentially concentrating any pollutants including harmful faecal bacteria. These pools are a popular drinking spot for ponies and dogs, but as far as I'm aware none has ever collected any data to assess this threat.

Southern Water is now investing in much-needed improvements to local wastewater treatment works, as part of urgent national efforts to reduce combined sewer overflows. They are also supporting a PhD project that is being delivered in partnership with Bournemouth University, Harper Adams University, Freshwater Habitats Trust, and Wild New Forest, investigating how pollution from combined sewer overflows may be impacting freshwater wildlife in New Forest rivers and on their floodplains. The hope is that, in the coming years, the planned reductions in combined sewer overflows will lead to a decrease in aquatic pollution and an increase in biodiversity. More details of this research are available on the news pages of the Freshwater Habitats Trust website.

### Frogspawned

The earliest recorded frogspawn in our region was found in the New Forest on 8th January 2023, with the overall trend towards warmer wetter winters

potentially contributing to earlier appearances in recent years. The first frogspawn to be reported on the Wild New Forest Facebook page this year was on 17th January, with the first clumps appearing in our garden wildlife pond on 6th February. Many of the early frogspawn reports relate to 'high-risk' sites with shallow water, which warm up quickly in the early spring sunshine but are at risk of desiccation during dry springs (such as that experienced last year).

Please avoid the temptation to move apparently vulnerable frogspawn and tadpoles between sites, as this can risk spreading disease and non-native plant species. Instead, if you haven't already, consider installing a wildlife pond in your own garden, as this will increase the variety of available habitat for frogs and other amphibians and increases the climate resilience of the overall population. I can happily confirm that seeing your new garden pond adorned with glistening clumps of freshly deposited frogspawn is highly satisfying!

### Grey geese flee the cold

Wintering grey geese from continental Europe have become a rare sight in our region in recent years, likely due to a lack of hard winters negating the need for geese to head south and west in search of unfrozen grasslands. However, a spell of particularly cold weather in continental

Europe just before Christmas triggered an influx of white-fronted geese and tundra bean geese into our region, with up to 60 of the former and four of the latter seen at the New Forest coast and adjacent Avon Valley over the holiday period. The cold weather in early January, with temperatures dropping to -8C locally and extensive snow cover further north, also saw cold weather influxes of other grassland species such as Lapwing. Many of these cold-weather refugees were gone again by the end of the month as milder conditions returned, but it was a brief and tantalising reminder of colder winters past.

Prof Russell Wynn is director of Wild New Forest and chair of the New Forest Biodiversity Forum. He can be contacted at russ@wildnewforest.org.uk. Wild New Forest is an independent community interest company delivering ecological survey and research and is hosting partner of the New Forest Biodiversity Forum, which supports and promotes biodiversity survey and recording within the local community, including training for local citizen scientists. Both organisations generate data that informs conservation action across public and private land in the New Forest National Park. Further info at wildnewforest.org.uk and newforestbiohub.org



# *New Forest Biodiversity Forum*

## 3. Data and evidence



Forestry England



**Rare birds nesting  
HERE now!**

**Please consider another route**

If you do walk beyond this point  
please keep only to main tracks.

Dogs should be kept on the tracks  
too – if necessary use a lead.

Disturbance to the birds will leave eggs  
and chicks vulnerable to predators.

**Thank you**

Working in association with:  
the New Forest National Park Authority,  
National Trust, Hampshire County Council,  
New Forest Equine Forum, National  
and Hampshire Constabulary and  
Country Watch

[forestryengland.uk/new-forest](http://forestryengland.uk/new-forest)



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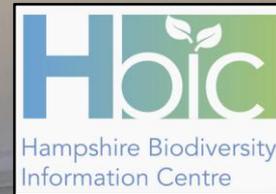
## Strategic Research Programme and Small Grants (£187k spent or committed)

- **Have UK heath species adapted their seeds to be stimulated to germinate by fire?**  
Prof Claire Belcher (University of Exeter)
- **Impact of dog swimming on macroinvertebrate communities in New Forest ponds**  
Dr Naomi Ewald (Freshwater Habitats Trust)
- **New Forest Living Lab**  
Dr Becks Spake (University of Southampton)
- **24 Small Grant awards supporting 16 projects**



# *New Forest Biodiversity Forum*

## **New Forest Biodiversity Audit**



# *New Forest Biodiversity Forum*

## **Beech deadwood surveys and videography**



# *New Forest Biodiversity Forum*

## Match-funding of partnership projects

**SPECIES  
SURVIVAL  
FUND**

Funded by  
UK Government

Heritage  
Fund

### **New Forest Species Survival Fund**

£1.3M project: NPA + 5 partners, 30 landowners, 250ha of habitat

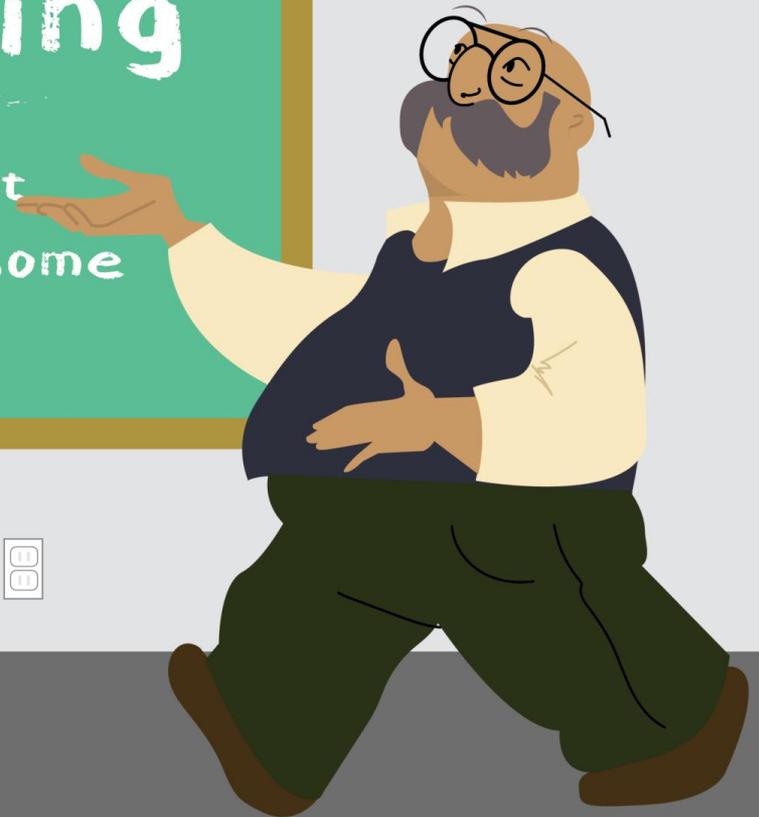
NFBF is match-funding three years of post-project monitoring (>£20k)



*New Forest Biodiversity Forum*  
Drivers of environmental change

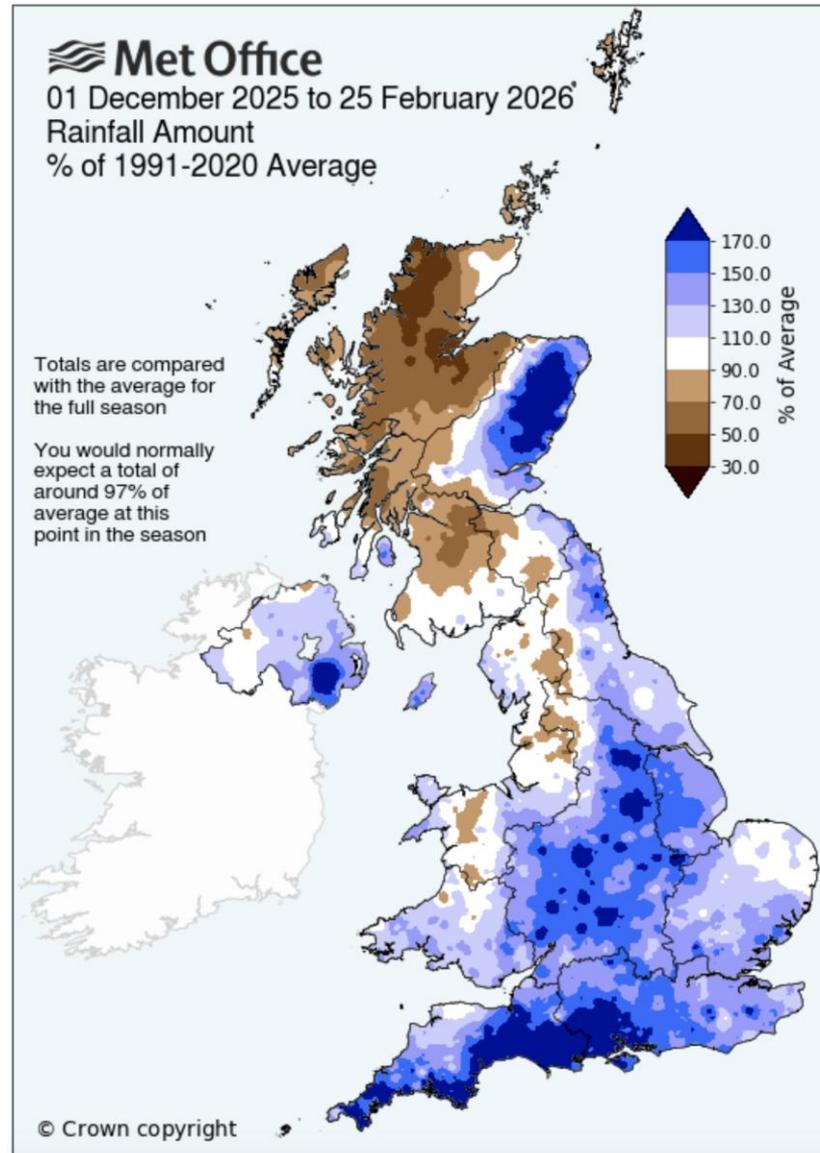
# Trigger Warning

This lecture contains content  
that may cause offence to some



# New Forest Biodiversity Forum

## Drivers of environmental change



*New Forest Biodiversity Forum*  
**Evidencing impacts of aquatic pollution**



**Lyndhurst WWTW CSO discharge site (27 Jan 2026)**

*New Forest Biodiversity Forum*  
**Evidencing impacts of aquatic pollution**



Longwater Lawn (27 Jan 2026)

*New Forest Biodiversity Forum*  
**Evidencing impacts of aquatic pollution**



**Longwater Lawn (27 Jan 2026)**

# *New Forest Biodiversity Forum*

## Evidencing impacts of aquatic pollution

18 Dec 2025



20 Dec 2025



Private site on Avon Water downstream of Flexford WWTW

# New Forest Biodiversity Forum

## Evidencing impacts of aquatic pollution

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## Lyndhurst sewage discharge 'lasting impact' for New Forest

© 21 August 2020

Wild New Forest Freshwater Habitats Trust



**WILD NEW FOREST**

Effluent was seen in streams feeding the Beaulieu River at Mallard Wood near Lyndhurst

**Discharge from a sewage treatment works could have a "lasting impact" on the New Forest, conservationists have warned.**

Effluent was seen in streams near Lyndhurst Sewage Treatment Plant after heavy rain on Wednesday.

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## New Forest warning over dog-flea chemicals in ponds

© 28 February 2020

Wild New Forest Freshwater Habitats Trust NEW FOREST ASSOCIATION FOUNDED 1867



**GETTY IMAGES**

There is concern that anti-flea and tick treatments are washing into watercourses

**Stephen Stafford**  
BBC News

**Anti-flea and tick treatments for dogs could be harming sensitive streams and ponds in the New Forest, conservationists have warned.**

A study by Wild New Forest and the Freshwater Habitats Trust showed high levels of imidacloprid, found in spot-on treatments, at four locations.

# *New Forest Biodiversity Forum*

## Evidencing impacts of aquatic pollution

- Regulatory failure has led to routine chemical pollution of NF ponds and floodplains
- Increasingly important monitoring role for conservationists, students, and citizen scientists
- Supported by NBBF/VESPA and novel partnerships, e.g. local Southern Water staff and NFDog



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### New Forest Friends of the Earth activist, biochemist and 'meddling amateur' Gill Hickman named Lymington's citizen of the year

Dan Goater

05:40, 07 January 2026

New Forest Friends of the Earth activist Gill Hickman receives the Lymington Citizen of the Year award from town mayor Clr Colm McCarthy

The image is a screenshot of a news article. At the top, it shows the newspaper's name and logo. Below that is a navigation menu. The main headline reads: "New Forest Friends of the Earth activist, biochemist and 'meddling amateur' Gill Hickman named Lymington's citizen of the year". Below the headline is the author's name, "Dan Goater", and the date and time, "05:40, 07 January 2026". The bottom part of the screenshot shows a photograph of Gill Hickman, a woman with blonde hair wearing an orange sweater, receiving a small award or plaque from Mayor Clr Colm McCarthy, who is wearing a blue suit and a gold chain of office. The caption below the photo reads: "New Forest Friends of the Earth activist Gill Hickman receives the Lymington Citizen of the Year award from town mayor Clr Colm McCarthy".

1. Be inspired
2. Be informed
3. Be involved

➤ **Action!**



# *New Forest Biodiversity Forum*

## **Session 1: Delivering nature recovery at landscape scale**

**Videography by Matt Roseveare (NFBF Associate)**