Woodland area, planting and restocking

11 June 2009

This publication contains provisional statistics for the year to March 2009 on:

- UK woodland area;
- certified woodland area; and
- areas of new planting and restocking.

Estimates for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are included in addition to UK totals.

The main findings are:

- The area of woodland in the UK at 31 March 2009 is estimated to be 2.84 million hectares. This represents 12% of the total land area in the UK, 9% in England, 17% in Scotland, 14% in Wales and 6% in Northern Ireland.
- Of the total UK woodland area, 0.81 million hectares is owned or managed by the Forestry Commission (in Great Britain) or the Forest Service (in Northern Ireland).
- The total certified woodland area in the UK is 1.28 million hectares, including all Forestry Commission/ Forest Service woodland. Overall, 45 per cent of the UK woodland area is certified.
- Six thousand hectares of new woodland were created in the UK in 2008-09, mostly with broadleaved species.
- Sixteen thousand hectares of woodland were restocked in the UK in 2008-09, mostly with conifers.

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Area of Woodland

Table 1 shows the total area of woodland. Most public sector woodland is owned and managed by the Forestry Commission (FC) in Great Britain and the Forest Service (FS) in Northern Ireland. Other public sector woodland (e.g. owned by local authorities) are included with privately owned woodland as 'non-FC/ FS'.

The area of woodland at 31 March 2009 is estimated to be 2.84 million hectares. This represents 12% of the total land area in the UK, 9% in England, 17% in Scotland, 14% in Wales and 6% in Northern Ireland.

0.81 million hectares of woodland in the UK (29%) is owned or managed by the Forestry Commission (in Great Britain) or the Forest Service (in Northern Ireland).

Table 1: Area of woodland, 2009

thousands of hectares

	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	UK
FC/ FS					
Conifers	146	91	418	56	710
Broadleaves	55	14	29	6	104
Total	201	105	447	61	814
Non-FC/ FS					
Conifers	219	65	624	10	918
Broadleaves	709	114	271	16	1,110
Total	928	179	894	26	2,027
Total Woodland					
Conifers	365	156	1,042	66	1,628
Broadleaves	764	128	300	22	1,213
Total	**1,128**	**284**	**1,341**	**88**	**2,841**

Source: Forestry Commission, Forest Service, 1995-99 National Inventory of Woodland and Trees.

Note:
(1) Areas as at 31 March 2009. Figures are provisional.
(2) Non-FC woodland figures for England, Scotland and Wales are based on data obtained from the 1995-1999 National Inventory of Woodland and Trees and adjusted for new planting and sales of Forestry Commission woodland, but at present no adjustment is made for woodland converted to another land use, nor for changes in woodland composition at restocking. They include non-FC publicly owned woodland.
(3) Broadleaves include coppice and coppice with standards.

Area of Certified Woodland

Table 2 shows the area of certified woodland. The certification of a woodland area requires that forest management practices in that area are assessed regularly against an agreed standard – the UK Woodland Assurance Standard. If timber from certified woodland follows a Chain of Custody from forest to retail outlet that is also certified, then it can be marketed with a label showing it to be certified.

The total area of certified woodland in the UK at 31 March 2009 is 1.28 million hectares. This represents 45% of the total UK woodland area, 31% of the woodland area in England, 44% in Wales, 56% in Scotland and 74% in Northern Ireland.

Table 2: Area of certified woodland, 2009

thousands of hectares

	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	UK
FC/ FS	201	105	447	61	814
Non-FC/ FS	146	19	300	4	469
Total	**347**	**124**	**746**	**65**	**1,283**

Source: Forest Stewardship Council, Forestry Commission, Forest Service.

Note:
(1) Areas as at 31 March 2009.
(2) All certified woodland is under the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) scheme.
(3) The estimates are based on UK data published by FSC, supplemented by data from individual certificates and other sources. Where possible, figures are for the woodland area certified, rather than the land area certified.
(4) The Forestry Commission areas are the latest areas, as shown in Table 1, rather than the areas shown on certificates.

New Planting

New planting is the creation of new areas of woodland. Table 3 shows the area of new woodland that was created in the year to 31 March 2009.

The total area of new planting in the UK in 2008-09 was 5.9 thousand hectares. Broadleaves accounted for 80% of the total area of new planting. Most new planting (84%) took place on non-FC/ FS land. Over one half of all new planting (58%) took place in Scotland, around one third (35%) in England, 5% in Northern Ireland and the remaining 2% in Wales.

Table 3: Area of new planting, 2008-09

thousands of hectares

	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	UK
New planting by forest type					
Conifers	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.0	1.2
Broadleaves	2.1	0.1	2.3	0.3	4.7
All new planting	**2.1**	**0.1**	**3.4**	**0.3**	**5.9**
New planting by ownership					
FC/ FS	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.9
Non-FC/ FS	2.1	0.1	2.5	0.3	5.0
All new planting	**2.1**	**0.1**	**3.4**	**0.3**	**5.9**

Source: Forestry Commission, Forest Service, grant schemes.

Note:
(1) Non-FC/ FS figures are based on areas for which grants were paid during the year, together with an estimate of areas planted without grant aid.
(2) The planting season lies both sides of 31 March, and the weather can cause planting to be advanced or delayed.
(3) Includes woodland formed by natural colonisation.
(4) Figures are provisional.

Restocking

Restocking is the replanting of existing areas of woodland that have been harvested. Table 4 shows the area of restocking that took place in the year to 31 March 2009.

The total area of restocking in the UK in 2008-09 was 15.9 thousand hectares. Conifers accounted for around three quarters (76%) of the total area of restocking. Most restocking (58%) took place on FC/ FS land. Over one half of all restocking (60%) took place in Scotland, one fifth (20%) in England, 14% in Wales and the remaining 5% in Northern Ireland.

Table 4: Area of restocking, 2009

thousands of hectares

	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	UK
Restocking by forest type					
Conifers	1.7	1.4	8.2	0.8	12.1
Broadleaves	1.5	0.8	1.4	0.1	3.8
All restocking	**3.2**	**2.2**	**9.6**	**0.8**	**15.9**
Restocking by ownership					
FC/ FS	1.8	1.6	5.2	0.6	9.2
Non-FC/ FS	1.4	0.6	4.4	0.3	6.7
All restocking	**3.2**	**2.2**	**9.6**	**0.8**	**15.9**

Source: Forestry Commission, Forest Service, grant schemes.

Note:
(1) Non-FC/ FS figures are based on areas for which grants were paid during the year, together with an estimate of areas planted without grant aid.
(2) The planting season lies both sides of 31 March, and the weather can cause planting to be advanced or delayed.
(3) Includes woodland restocked by natural regeneration
(4) Figures are provisional.
(5) Restocking by natural regeneration in non-clearfell areas may be under-represented in the above table.

Background

Figures in the tables are individually rounded, so the constituent items may not sum to the totals given.

Area of woodland:

The area of Forestry Commission woodland is obtained from the FC's administrative systems.

The estimates for non-FC woodlands in Great Britain are based on results from the 1995-1999 National Inventory of Woodland and Trees and adjusted for new planting and sales of Forestry Commission woodland. At present, no adjustment is made for woodland converted to another land use nor for changes between conifers and broadleaves resulting from harvesting and restocking.

Figures for Northern Ireland (Forest Service and non-Forest Service woodland) are provided by the Northern Ireland Forest Service.

Certified area:

The data on certified woodland areas are obtained from the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), FC's administrative systems and contact with individual land owners and managers.

New planting and restocking:

New planting is the creation of new areas of woodland. Restocking is the replanting of existing areas of woodland that have been harvested. Both new planting and restocking can use planting/ seeding or natural colonisation/ regeneration. The figures here are for all types of woodland.

Information about Forestry Commission new planting and restocking comes from administrative systems. Non-FC information comes principally from grant schemes: the Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS), English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS), Rural Development Contracts in Scotland, Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme (SFGS) and Better Woodlands for Wales (BWW). For natural colonisation/ regeneration, the areas are generally those for which the second instalment of grant has been paid during the year – the second instalment is approved when woodland reaches a certain stage and density of growth, so this information corresponds approximately to the amount of new and restocked woodland created.

Local estimates for areas of planting and restocking which are not FC and which are not grant-aided are included for England, Scotland and Wales. These estimates are relatively small (around 400 hectares in total in the year to 31 March 2009), and it has been assumed that all of this area is broadleaves.

The use of natural regeneration in non-clearfell systems is increasing substantially - particularly with regard to broadleaves in England. These systems are not satisfactorily represented by measuring 'restocking area' within any given year, and so broadleaf planting is likely to be under-reported in this First Release and subsequent statistics.

Figures for Northern Ireland (Forest Service and non-Forest Service woodland) are provided by the Northern Ireland Forest Service.

Other publications:

Statistics for previous years are available in Forestry Statistics 2008 (September 2008) and Forestry Facts & Figures 2008 (September 2008). Forestry Statistics 2008 also contains additional information about the sources and methodology, which also applies to the statistics in this First Release.

Final results for the year to March 2009 will be published in September 2009 in Forestry Statistics 2009 and Forestry Facts & Figures 2009.

National Statistics:

This is a National Statistics publication. For more information about National Statistics and the UK Statistics Authority visit www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/.