

Woodland Area, Planting and Restocking

9 June 2011

This publication contains provisional statistics for the year to March 2011 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 woodland area statistics in this release are based on the initial results from the new National Forest Inventory.

The main findings are:

- The area of woodland in the UK at 31 March 2011 is estimated to be 3.08 million hectares. This represents 13% of the total land area in the UK, 10% in England, 15% in Wales, 18% in Scotland and 6% in Northern Ireland.
- Of the total UK woodland area, 0.87 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 at 31 March 2011 is 1.33 million hectares, including all Forestry Commission/ Forest Service woodland. Overall, 43 per cent of the UK woodland area is certified.
- Nine thousand hectares of new woodland were created in the UK in 2010-11, mostly with broadleaved species.
- Fourteen thousand hectares of woodland were restocked in the UK in 2010-11, 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 2011 is estimated to be 3.08 million hectares. This represents 13% of the total land area in the UK, 10% in England, 15% in Wales, 18% in Scotland and 6% in Northern Ireland.

0.87 million hectares of woodland in the UK (28%) is owned or managed by the Forestry Commission (in Great Britain) or the Forest Service (in Northern Ireland).

Table 1: Area of woodland, 2011

	thousands of hectares				
	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	UK
FC/ FS					
Conifers	155	98	447	55	755
Broadleaves	59	16	33	6	114
Total	214	114	481	61	870
Non-FC/ FS					
Conifers	256	69	633	10	969
Broadleaves	827	121	276	17	1,241
Total	1,083	190	909	27	2,209
Total Woodland					
Conifers	411	167	1,081	66	1,724
Broadleaves	886	138	309	22	1,355
Total	1,294	304	1,385	88	3,079

Source: Forestry Commission, Forest Service, National Forest Inventory.

Note:

- (1) Areas as at 31 March 2011. Figures are provisional.
- (2) Figures for England, Wales and Scotland are based on 2010 data obtained from the National Forest Inventory and adjusted for new planting, but at present no adjustment is made for woodland recently converted to another land use.
- (3) Forestry Commission woodland area is estimated from GIS data for Forestry Commission land and the National Forest Inventory map, to give figures that are consistent with the definition of woodland used in the NFI. This differs from the previous methodology for estimating Forestry Commission woodland area, that excluded integral open space and excluded land recently converted to other land uses. For further details, see Background.
- (4) Conifer/ broadleaf breakdowns for England, Wales and Scotland are estimated, based on the breakdowns produced for woodland areas using previous data sources. For further information, see Background.
- (5) 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 2011 is 1.33 million hectares. This represents 43% of the total UK woodland area, 26% of the woodland area in England, 44% in Wales, 57% in Scotland and 72% in Northern Ireland.

Table 2: Area of certified woodland, 2011

	thousands of hectares				
	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	UK
FC/ FS	214	114	481	61	870
Non-FC/ FS	122	19	313	2	456
Total	335	133	793	63	1,325
% of woodland area	26%	44%	57%	72%	43%

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

Note:

- (1) Areas as at 31 March 2011.
- (2) All certified woodland in 2011 is certified under the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) scheme. Some of these woodlands are also certified under the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) 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/ Forest Service areas are the latest areas, as shown in Table 1, rather than the areas shown on certificates. As the Forestry Commission woodland areas in table 1 are now based on data from the National Forest Inventory together with GIS data for Forestry Commission land, this gives a higher estimate for FC woodland area than shown in previous forestry statistics publications. For further information, see Background.

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 2011.

The total area of new planting in the UK in 2010-11 was 8.6 thousand hectares. Broadleaves accounted for 82% of the total area of new planting. Most new planting (90%) took place on non-FC/ FS land. Over one half of all new planting (59%) took place in Scotland, 29% in England, 9% in Wales and the remaining 3% in Northern Ireland.

Table 3: Area of new planting, 2010-11

	thousands of hectares				
	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	UK
New planting by forest type					
Conifers	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.0	1.6
Broadleaves	2.5	0.7	3.6	0.2	7.1
All new planting	2.5	0.7	5.1	0.3	8.6
New planting by ownership					
FC/ FS	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.8
Non-FC/ FS	2.5	0.7	4.3	0.3	7.8
All new planting	2.5	0.7	5.1	0.3	8.6

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. Figures for grant-aided planting under Rural Development Contracts in Scotland relates to calendar years.
- (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 2011.

The total area of restocking in the UK in 2010-11 was 14.1 thousand hectares. Conifers accounted for around three quarters (73%) of the total area of restocking. Most restocking (71%) took place on FC/ FS land. Around one half of all restocking (49%) took place in Scotland, around one quarter (28%) in England, 15% in Wales and the remaining 7% in Northern Ireland.

Table 4: Area of restocking, 2010-11

	thousands of hectares				
	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	UK
Restocking by forest type					
Conifers	2.3	1.3	5.6	1.0	10.3
Broadleaves	1.7	0.8	1.3	0.0	3.8
All restocking	4.0	2.1	6.9	1.0	14.1
Restocking by ownership					
FC/ FS	2.5	1.4	5.3	0.9	10.0
Non-FC/ FS	1.5	0.8	1.7	0.2	4.1
All restocking	4.0	2.1	6.9	1.0	14.1

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. Figures for grant-aided planting under Rural Development Contracts in Scotland relates to calendar years.
- (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 tables have been independently rounded, so may not add to the totals shown.

Area of woodland:

Initial provisional woodland area statistics from the National Forest Inventory (NFI) were published in Spring 2011. These provided estimates of woodland area at March 2010 for Great Britain, England, Wales and Scotland.

The provisional woodland areas for March 2011 provided in this release have been estimated from the NFI results by adding new planting areas for 2010-11.

The area of Forestry Commission woodland at March 2011 has been estimated by overlaying geographic boundaries for Forestry Commission land onto the National Forest Inventory map. This aims to provide estimated Forestry Commission woodland areas that are consistent with the definition of woodland used in the National Forest Inventory. These estimates differ from previously published estimates of Forestry Commission woodland that were obtained from the FC's administrative systems and excluded small areas of integral open space that are classified as part of the woodland under NFI. In addition, areas in the process of being converted to other land uses (e.g. restoration of open habitats) may be recorded as non-woodland in the sub-compartment database, but will remain as woodland in the NFI until an obvious and permanent land use change is detected.

Information on type of woodland (conifer/ broadleaf) is not yet available from the National Forest Inventory. The conifer/ broadleaf breakdown for each country and ownership type in table 1 is currently estimated by applying the breakdowns obtained using the previous data sources.

The table below shows the estimated woodland areas for 2011 based on the previous data sources. At a UK level, the main differences from the previous to the revised data sources are an upward revision of 72 thousand hectares in the estimated FC/ FS woodland area and an upward revision of 155 thousand hectares in the estimated non-FC/ FS woodland area.

Woodland Area, Planting and Restocking

Area of woodland, 2011 (previous data sources)

	thousands of hectares				
	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	UK
FC/ FS					
Conifers	140	89	406	55	690
Broadleaves	55	16	31	6	107
Total	195	105	437	61	798
Non-FC/ FS					
Conifers	221	65	634	10	931
Broadleaves	715	115	276	17	1,123
Total	936	180	910	27	2,054
Total Woodland					
Conifers	361	154	1,040	66	1,622
Broadleaves	770	131	307	22	1,230
Total	1,131	285	1,347	88	2,852

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

Note:

- (1) Areas as at 31 March 2011. 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.

Further information on the methodology used by the National Forest Inventory and comparisons of results from the NFI and previous woodland area estimates is available at www.forestry.gov.uk/inventory.

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. Some of the certified woodland has dual certification, i.e. it is certified under both the FSC scheme and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) scheme.

The change to the data sources used to estimate Forestry Commission woodland areas (described above) has also resulted in a change to the Forestry Commission certified woodland area in table 2, giving an upward revision of 72 thousand hectares. The accompanying time series tables for certified woodland area provide estimates for 2011 on both bases, to enable comparisons over time.

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 (less than one thousand hectares per year in total), 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 for 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 other statistics.

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

Woodland Area, Planting and Restocking

Quality:

Information on the Forestry Commission's Revisions Policy is available on our website at www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-7zhk85.

A quality report on woodland area, planting and restocking is available from our quality webpage at www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-7zhk85.

Further information:

Accompanying tables to this release, available at <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-7aqknx>, provide longer time series data for new planting and restocking and for certified woodland.

Further information on the National Forest Inventory is available at www.forestry.gov.uk/inventory.

Statistics for previous years are available in Forestry Statistics 2010 (September 2010) and Forestry Facts & Figures 2010 (September 2010).

Final results for the year to March 2011 will be published in September 2011 in Forestry Statistics 2011 and Forestry Facts & Figures 2011.

National Statistics:

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