Forestry Commission

GB PUBLIC OPINION OF FORESTRY 2005

Summary results of the 2005 GB Survey of Public Opinion of Forestry, carried out on behalf of the Forestry Commission

June 2005

Prepared by:
Economics & Statistics
Forestry Commission
Silvan House
231 Corstorphine Road
Edinburgh EH12 7AT
United Kingdom

Enquiries:
Harvey Snowling: +44 (0)131 314 6218
statistics@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Website:
http://www.forestry.gov.uk/statistics

Contents

Executive Summary

2005 survey

In 2005, four separate public opinion of forestry surveys were undertaken - in Great Britain (4,000 interviews), Scotland (1,000 interviews), Wales (1,000 interviews) and Northern Ireland (1,000 interviews).

This report summarises the results of the main GB survey and highlights any changes over time by comparing the 2005 results with previous surveys. Separate reports will give more detailed results for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The questions asked in the 2005 GB survey were mostly the same as those asked in 2003. The 2003 survey covered the United Kingdom and included some references to the Forest Service of Northern Ireland. These were removed for the 2005 survey. A question on the collection of woodland products was included and the options available in some questions were changed slightly. Available coded responses to the 2005 survey were generally the same as those in 2003.

Forests, woodlands and trees in the media

50% of respondents had seen or read about forests, woodlands or trees in the last twelve months on the television, radio or in the newspapers. As in previous years, the topics most widely seen were ‘birds or other animals in woodlands’, 'public rights of access to woodlands', ‘tree planting’, ‘protests about roads or other developments on woodlands’ and ‘forests and woodland as places to visit’.

Forest management

89% of respondents selected at least one public benefit as a good reason to support forestry with public money. As in previous years the four top reasons to support forestry were to provide places for wildlife to live, to provide places to visit and walk in, to help prevent the ‘greenhouse effect’ and global warming, and to improve the countryside landscape.

‘Providing opportunities for walking’ and ‘providing homes for birds and other animals’ were the functions of GB forestry rated most highly for performance in 2005.

Changes to woodland

Although the GB woodland area has steadily increased over the last twenty years, only 15% of those surveyed thought that it had increased, 60% thought the woodland area had decreased and 13% that it had stayed about the same.

66% of respondents would like to see more woodland in their part of the country. 29% would like neither more nor less.

6% of respondents had been consulted about plans for creating, managing or using woodlands. 42% would like to be consulted in future.

Awareness of ‘certified symbols’ on wood products

44% of respondents had been shopping for wood products in the last few years. Of these respondents, 38% recognised the FSC symbol and 8% recognised the PEFC symbol.

Forestry Commission and other organisations

61% of those surveyed had heard of the Forestry Commission. Only the National Trust received higher recognition (80% of GB adults).

60% of respondents who had heard of the Forestry Commission thought that it was a government department or agency. 79% of GB adults thought that the Forestry Commission operates in England, 61% Scotland, and 60% Wales.

Over 80% of respondents who had heard of the Forestry Commission were aware that it improves woodland habitats for wildlife, lets the public walk in its woods and forests and provides trails for cycling and horse-riding. Fewer were aware that it runs cabins and campsites for forest holidays (47%) or gives grants to private woodland owners (38%).

Woodland recreation

38% of respondents have woodland that they can get to easily without using a car or other transport.

65% of respondents have visited a woodland or forest in the last few years. 81% of these adults have visited woodlands in the countryside, and 52% have visited woodlands in and around towns.

60% of woodland visitors had been to a woodland or forest at least once a month in the summer of 2004. 28% visited at least once a month in the winter of 2004/05.

40% of woodland visitors thought they had visited a National Trust or National Trust for Scotland woodland, 36% Forestry Commission woodland, and 30% local authority woodland.

34% of respondents would use a Tourist Information Centre to find out about woodland they had not been to before. 28% would use a guide book or map, 27% would ask friends or relatives and 27% would use the internet. Use of the internet for information has increased steadily from 1997 to 2005.

64% of respondents interested in visiting woodland say that wildlife is an important factor in choosing to visit woodland. Peace and quiet (61%), attractive scenery (58%) and a safe environment (53%) were also important.

When visiting woodland for a day out, the facilities that those surveyed would most like to see are toilets (74%), a car park (59%), nature trails (53%) and picnic areas (52%).

27% of woodland visitors had collected forest products for their personal use.

1. Introduction

The Forestry Commission has conducted similar biennial surveys of public attitudes to forestry and forestry-related issues since 1995. In the initial surveys, a representative sample of 2,000 adults across Great Britain (GB) was surveyed. In 2001, with interest in country-level results (England, Scotland and Wales) within GB, restricted sets of questions were asked of representative samples of 1,000 adults across Scotland and 1,000 adults across Wales, to gather information on some important issues. In 2003, the main survey was extended to include Northern Ireland in the 4,120 adults interviewed and separate surveys of 1,000 adults in both Scotland and Wales were carried out.

In 2005, the need for separate surveys in each country was confirmed, with the increased interest in country-level and regional information. However, the requirement for continued high-quality coherent information for GB as a whole means that four separate surveys were undertaken.

- A representative sample of 4,000 adults across GB
- A representative sample of 1,000 adults across Scotland
- A representative sample of 1,000 adults across Wales
- A representative sample of 1,000 adults across Northern Ireland

Some questions were asked in all four surveys, but an increasing number are survey-specific.

This report summarises the results of the main GB survey, and highlights any changes over time by comparing the 2005 results with previous surveys[1].

Separate reports will be published for England, Scotland and Wales, giving more in-depth information on the specific questions asked in each country, including breakdowns by geographic regions and respondent profile (e.g. gender, age, ethnicity, health, social class).

The GB information presented in this report is taken from the RSGB General Omnibus survey carried out from 23rd February – 1st March 2005 by Taylor Nelson Sofres. The survey was based on a representative sample of 4,000 adults (aged 16 or over) across GB. They were selected from a minimum of 270 sampling points by a random location method. More details of the sample method are given in Appendix 1.

All results are subject to the effects of chance in sampling, so a range of uncertainty (confidence interval) should be associated with any result from the survey. The confidence intervals[2] take into account the effect of clustering, weighting and stratification in the survey design (see Appendix 1).

- For questions asked to the whole sample of 4,000, the range of uncertainty around any figure should be no more than +/-2.3%.

[1] This report compares GB results for 2005 with results from previous surveys. The 2003 survey covered UK rather than GB, but all GB results for 2003 (excluding Northern Ireland) are within 1 percentage point of the UK figures. So, using UK figures for 2003 provides a reasonable comparison.

[2] For surveys before 2003 we did not have an estimate of the survey design effects of clustering, weighting and stratification when calculating confidence intervals. Therefore confidence intervals shown in these earlier reports are smaller than those shown for 2005 or 2003.

- For questions asked of a sample of 2,000 in surveys before 2003, the range of uncertainty should be no more than +/- 3.3%.
- Therefore any differences of more than 3.3% between 2005 and 2003 are statistically significant. Differences of more than 4.0% between 2005 and surveys before 2003 are statistically significant and differences of more than 4.7 % between two years with sample sizes of 2,000 (1995-2001) are statistically significant.

Results are shown as percentages. These have been individually rounded so may not always total to exactly 100.

2. Forests, woodlands and trees in the media

2.1 Forests, woodlands and trees in the media

Respondents were asked whether they had seen or read about Britain's forests, woods or trees on the television, radio or in the newspapers in the last twelve months. As in 2003, the topics most heard about were 'birds and other animals in woodlands', 'public rights of access', 'tree planting' and 'protests about roads or other developments on woodlands' (Table 1).

Overall, half of respondents (50%) had not seen or read about any topics. This is down slightly from 2003 (52%) but significantly higher than 2001 and earlier years.

Table 1: Whether respondent has seen or read about forests, woods or trees in the last 12 months (%)

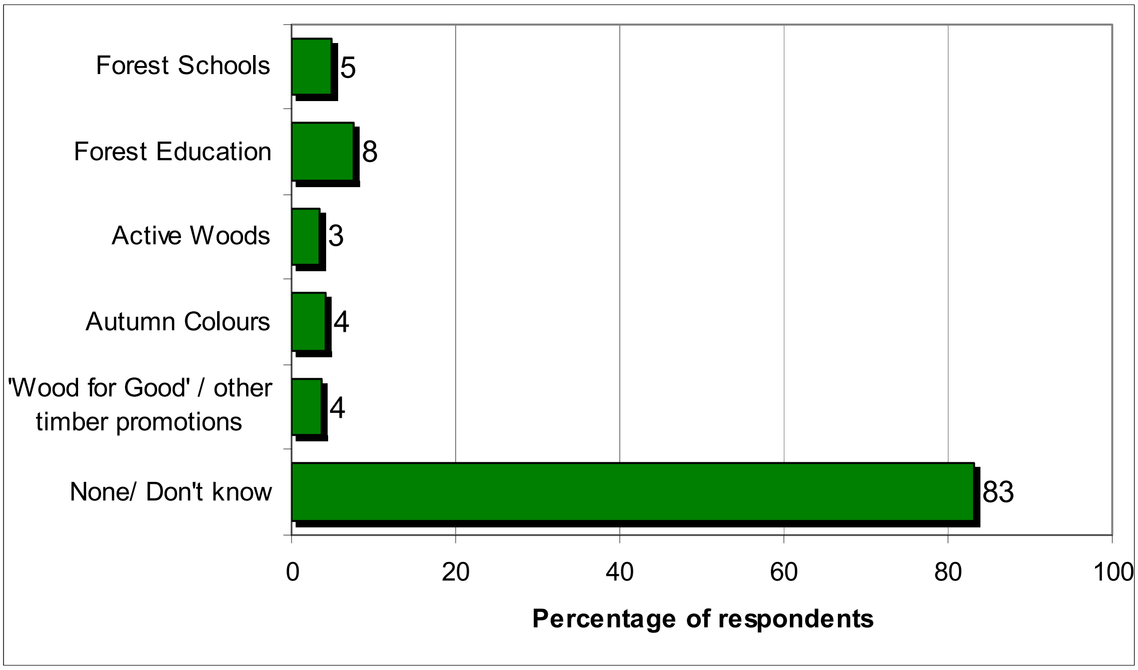
	2005	2003	2001	1999	1997	1995
Birds and other animals in woodlands	24	22	33*	33	44	45
Public rights of access to woodlands	23	19	27	32	31	33
Tree planting	21	22	28	31	28	38
Protests about roads or other developments on woodlands	18	21	33*	37	--	--
Forest and woodlands as places to visit	18	19	22*	20	25	19
Loss of ancient or native woodland	15	15	21	23	34	35
Flowers and other plants in woodland	15	15	20	--	--	--
Restoration of ancient or native woodland	12	12	16	17	--	--
Creation of new native woodlands	11	11	14	--	--	--
Community woodlands / new local woodlands	10	10	13	13	12	12
Tree pests and diseases	10	9	14	14	11	14
Selling public woodlands	9	9	11*	12	19	20
Wood for fuel / (short rotation coppice)	7	8	9	7	6	11
Labelling / certification of wood products	6	7	6	5	4	--
Timber transport	5	6	--	--	--	--
None seen / Don't know	50	52	38	36	29	27

Base: All respondents - 4000 in 2005 (GB), 4120 in 2003 (UK), 2000 in previous years (GB)
* The wording of these responses changed in the year indicated

2.2 Promotions of forests, woodlands, trees and wood products

A number of national promotions are aimed at enhancing public understanding and awareness of woodlands, wood products and related issues. A further media-related question asked respondents about their awareness of five such promotions. Figure 1 shows that the majority of respondents had heard of none of the promotions. 8% were aware of the Forest Education initiative and 5% had heard of the Forest Schools run by the Forestry Commission. 4% had heard of 'Wood for Good' or other promotions for timber uses and products, while the same number had heard of 'Autumn Colours'. A small number of respondents (3%) were aware of the recently launched 'Active Woods' promotion.

Figure 1: Whether respondent has heard of various promotions (%)



Base: All respondents – 4000

3. Forest management

3.1 Benefits of forestry

The UK government and the devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales provide public money to support forestry in many ways. Respondents were asked to select (from a list of possible public benefits) any that they thought were good reasons to support forestry with public money. 89% of respondents selected at least one benefit.

As in previous years, the top four good reasons to support forestry were to provide places for wildlife to live (67%), to provide places to visit and walk in (57%), to help prevent the 'greenhouse effect' and global warming (55%) and to improve the countryside landscape (53%).

Table 2: Whether respondent believes public benefits are good reasons to support forestry with public money (%)

	2005	2003	2001	1999	1997	1995
To provide good places for wildlife to live	67	72	70	66	75	72
To provide good places to visit and walk in	57	62	58*	49	47	47
To help prevent the 'greenhouse effect' and global warming	55	57	58	57	60	61
To improve the countryside landscape	53	58	55	55	48	48
To support the economy in rural areas	41	46	52*	52	48	52
To create pleasant settings for developments around towns	37	41	40	37	--	--
To help rural tourism	36	42	35	--	--	--
To make woods more accessible to all in the community	36	40	41	--	--	--
To provide places to cycle or ride horses	35	40	--	--	--	--
To restore former industrial land	30	35	37	34	--	--
So Britain can buy less wood products from abroad	30	33	33*	29	34	32
To provide wood as a renewable fuel	28	32	31*	20	--	--
To provide timber for sawmills and wood processing	23	28	29*	21	24	20
None / Don't know	11	10	8	11	4	4

Base: All respondents - 4000 in 2005 (GB), 4120 in 2003 (UK), 2000 in previous years (GB)
* The wording of these responses changed in the year indicated

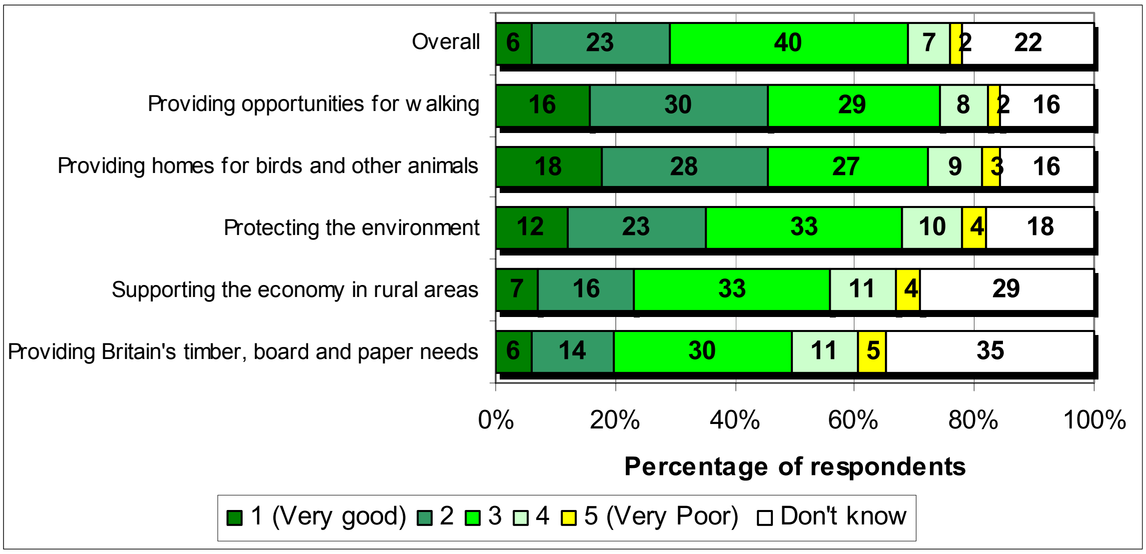
Comparison with previous surveys
In 2005, figures were down by between 2% and 6% compared with 2003, with most showing a drop of 4% - 5%.

3.2 Ratings of GB forestry

Respondents were asked to rate the performance of GB forestry on a number of aspects. Ratings were given on a scale of 1-5, 1 being 'very good' and 5 being 'very poor'. Those aspects rated most highly were 'Providing opportunities for walking' and 'providing homes for birds and other animals' (Figure 2). These two highest-rated aspects of GB forestry were also considered the best reasons to support forestry with public money (see Table 2).

It should be noted that in some cases a large proportion of respondents said that they could not give a rating as they didn't know enough about particular aspects of forestry. This was especially so when asking about 'forestry supporting the economy in rural areas', and 'forestry providing Britain's timber, board and paper needs' (29% and 35% respectively said that they did not know).

Figure 2: Performance rating of various functions of GB forestry



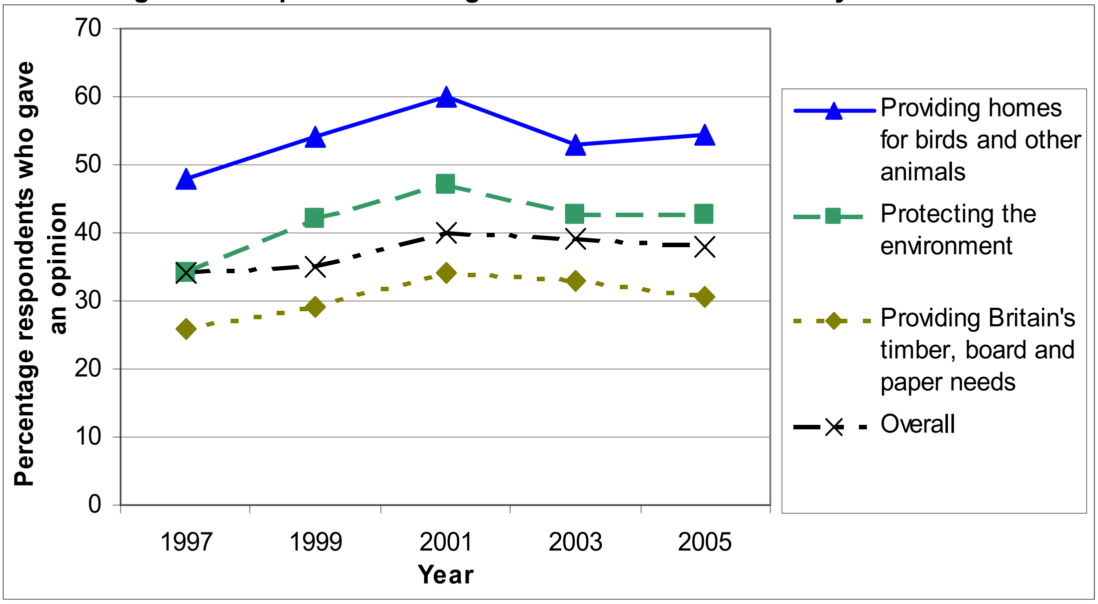
Base: All respondents - 4000

Comparison with previous surveys

Figure 3 shows the percentage of respondents rating particular aspects of forestry as '1 (very good)' or '2' from 1997 to 2005, expressed as a percentage of those who provided a rating.

The rating for 'providing homes for birds and other animals' rose steadily between 1997 and 2001 and then fell significanly in 2003. The 2005 figure is similar to that of 2003. The rating for the other apects of forestry shown in Figure 3 and the overall rating of GB forestry have shown a similar pattern in the period 1997 - 2005.

Figure 3: Respondents rating various functions of forestry as '1' or '2'[1]



Base for each: All respondents who expressed an opinion on that aspect

'Providing opportunities for walking' and 'supporting the economy in rural areas' have not been included in the chart above (Figure 3). Prior to 2003, the wording for these questions was different and it is not possible to obtain comparable figures from the earlier surveys. In 2005, 32% of respondents gave a rating of 1 (very good) or 2 to 'supporting the economy in rural areas' and 54% gave a rating of 1 or 2 for 'providing opportunities for walking'. In both cases, similar results were obtained in the 2003 survey.

[1] Excludes respondents who said they did not know

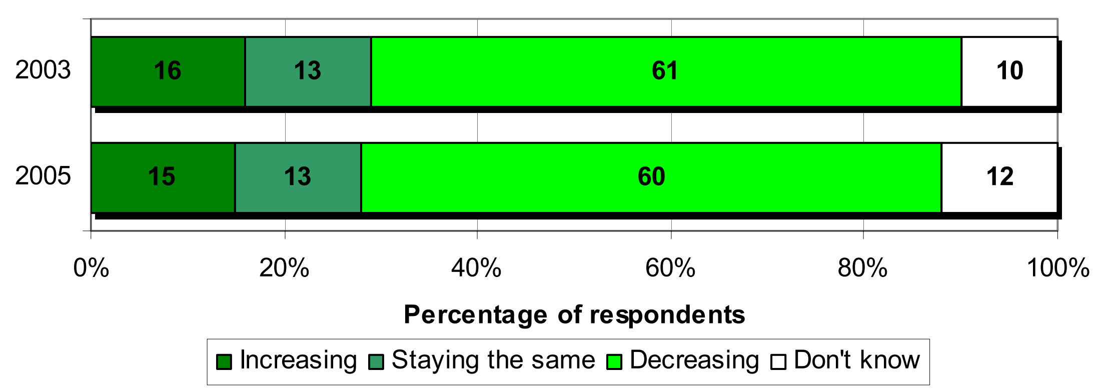
4. Changes to woodland

4.1 Perception of change in woodland area

Over the last few decades, the area of woodland in Britain has been steadily increasing, from 2.1 million hectares in 1980, to 2.7 million hectares in 2004[1].

Respondents were asked whether they thought the area of woodland in Britain had been increasing or decreasing over the last twenty years. In 2005, 15% of respondents correctly said that woodland area had increased. 13% thought that it had stayed about the same, and 60% thought that woodland area had decreased. The remaining 12% did not know.

Figure 4: Perception of change in woodland area over last 20 years (%)



Base: All respondents - 4000 in 2005 (GB), 4120 in 2003 (UK)

Comparison with previous surveys
There was no significant difference between the responses in 2003 and 2005. In surveys prior to 2003, respondents were asked separately whether they thought the area of broadleaved and conifer woodland was increasing or decreasing. Therefore results are not directly comparable with the 2003 and 2005 surveys. The pre-2003 surveys indicated that 35-40% of adults thought that the area of conifer woodland was increasing and 32-39% thought it was decreasing. Only 11-12% thought that the amount of broadleaved woodland was increasing, and 52-63% thought it was decreasing.

Respondents' views of the change in woodland area as a whole in the 2003 and 2005 surveys are similar to their views of the change in broadleaved area in previous surveys.

[1] FC(2004): *Forestry Statistics 2004*, Forestry Commission, Edinburgh

4.2 Desire for change in woodland area

Respondents were then asked whether or not they would like more woodland in their part of the country. Two-thirds of respondents would like more woodland, whereas 2% of respondents would like less.

The 66% of respondents who wanted more woodland in their part of the country were asked how much more they would like to see. In 2005, responses were similar to those in 2003. Slightly more than a third said that they would like a little more woodland, a similar number would like half as much again, and just less than a third would like more woodland than this.

Table 3: Desire for more woodland in respondent's part of the country (%)

	2005	2003	2001	1999	1997	1995
More than half as much again	18	20	24	--	--	--
About twice as much	--	--	--	28	34	--
About half as much again	24	24	30	25	--	--
Much more	--	--	--	--	--	49
A little more	23	22	21	30	48	29
More	*66*	*67*	*75*	*83*	*82*	*78*
Neither more nor less	29	29	20	12	15	16
Less	2	2	2	1	1	1
Don't know	4	3	3	4	2	4

Base: All respondents - 4000 in 2005 (GB), 4120 in 2003 (UK), 2000 in previous years (GB)
Note: The response options differed before 2001

Comparison with previous surveys

The 2005 figures are not significantly different from those in 2003. There was a significant decrease in the proportion of adults who would like more woodland in their part of the country between 2001 and 2003. Prior to 2001 the wording of the question was slightly different, so not directly comparable.

4.3 Public consultations over woodland change and use

The UK Forestry Standard[1] encourages woodland owners to involve local communities when making decisions about changing the look or use of woodlands. Respondents were asked if they had ever been consulted about plans for creating, managing or using woodlands in their area. 6% of respondents said they had.

Respondents were then asked if they would like to be consulted (or consulted again in some cases) about plans for creating, managing or using woodlands in their area. A total of 42% of respondents (77% of those who had previously been consulted and 40% of those who had not) would like to be consulted in the future.

---

[1] FC (2004): *The UK Forestry Standard (2nd edition); The government's approach to sustainable forestry*, Forestry Commission, Edinburgh

Comparison with previous surveys

The 2005 figures are not significantly different from those in 2003. In 2003, as in 2005, 6% of respondents had been consulted about plans for creating, managing or using woodlands in their area, while 43% (79% of those who had previously been consulted and 41% of those who had not) would like to be consulted in the future. This question was not asked in surveys prior to 2003.

5. Awareness of ‘certified symbols’ on wood products

About 40% of all woodland in GB is certified as being sustainably managed[1]. The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and Pan-European Forest Certification (PEFC) are global and European schemes respectively, which certify woodlands as well as wood and wood products originating from sustainably managed woodland. Each scheme has a logo, which is displayed on all certified products.

Respondents were first asked if they had been shopping for wood products in the last few years. Less than half (44%) said that this was the case (compared with 47% in 2003). These respondents were asked if they recognised either the FSC or the PEFC symbols. 38% of adults who had been shopping for wood products in the last few years said that they recognised the FSC symbol, and 8% said that they recognised the PEFC symbol. 56% did not recollect having seen either symbol (Table 4).

Between 2003 and 2005, recognition of the FSC logo increased from 31% to 38% while recognition of the PEFC remained at 8%. This question was not asked in surveys before 2003.

Table 4: Recognition of FSC and PEFC logos on wood products (%)

	2005	2003
FSC logo	38	31
PEFC logo	8	8
None	56	61
Don’t know	3	4

Base: Respondents who had been shopping for wood products: 1752 in 2005 (GB), 1930 in 2003 (UK)

[1] FC(2004): *Forestry Statistics 2004*, Forestry Commission, Edinburgh

6. Forestry Commission and other organisations

6.1 Awareness of organisations

Over three in five respondents (61%) had heard of the Forestry Commission. Only the National Trust achieved a higher recognition (80%). 61% had heard of the Environment Agency, and over half (51%) recognised the name Woodland Trust (Table 5).

Forest Enterprise, which manages state woodlands, and Forest Research, which conducts forest and tree-related research, officially became agencies of the Forestry Commission in 1996 and 1997 respectively, although the names had been used before these dates. After devolution in 1999, Forest Enterprise was split into three country agencies, and the title is no longer used for Assembly woodland in Wales. Forest Enterprise and Forest Research were each recognised by 10% of respondents.

Table 5: Recognition of various organisations[1] (%)

	2005	2003	2001	1999	1997	1995
National Trust	80	82	88	88	93	92
Forestry Commission	61	63	72	72	77	76
Environment Agency	61	60	--	--	--	--
Woodland Trust	51	49	50	54	56	48
National Forest	33	32	41*	20	20	--
Countryside Agency	33	30	23*	41	40	40
English Nature	31	30	28	31	28	22
Community Forests	12	10	11	--	--	--
Forest Enterprise	10	10	9	9	8	10
Forest Research	10	9	--	--	--	--
None/ Don't know	8	7	6	4	3	2

Base: All respondents - 4000 in 2005 (GB), 4120 in 2003 (UK), 2000 in previous years (GB)
* The wording of these responses changed in the year indicated

The responses in the 2005 survey were not significantly different from those in 2003. Since 1995, recognition of both the Forestry Commission and the National Trust has decreased significantly.

1 It should be noted that the level of awareness may be overstated, as some respondents may think they recognised a similar name (e.g. National Forest is similar to 'National Trust' or 'national forest estate')

6.2 Forestry Commission

The Forestry Commission is the government department responsible for forestry in Great Britain. Since devolution in 1999, most policy and operational responsibility has been devolved to national offices in England, Scotland and Wales.

60% of respondents correctly identified the Forestry Commission as a government department or agency (Table 6). Around a quarter (24%) thought that it was an independent body, and 11% said that they did not know of its status.

There has been little change in the perception of the Forestry Commission between 1997 and 2005. The question was worded slightly differently in 1995.

Table 6: Perception of status of Forestry Commission (%)

	2005	2003	2001	1999	1997	1995
Government department or agency	60	60	62	62	61*	47
Independent body	24	23	23	21	20	34
Body representing woodland owners	3	2	2	3	7	7
Private company	2	3	3	3	--	--
Don't know	11	12	10	11	12	12

Base: Respondents who had heard of the Forestry Commission – 2455 in 2005
* The wording of the question changed in the year indicated

Respondents who had heard of the Forestry Commission were asked where they thought it operated. Table 7 shows the perception of where the Forestry Commission operates. 79% of respondents stated that the Forestry Commission operates in England, 61% Scotland and 60% Wales.

The proportion of those interviewed who thought the Forestry Commission operates in Scotland is significantly lower in 2005, compared to 2003. However, between 1999 and 2005 the perception of where the FC operates has not changed significantly.

Table 7: Perception of where Forestry Commission operates (%)

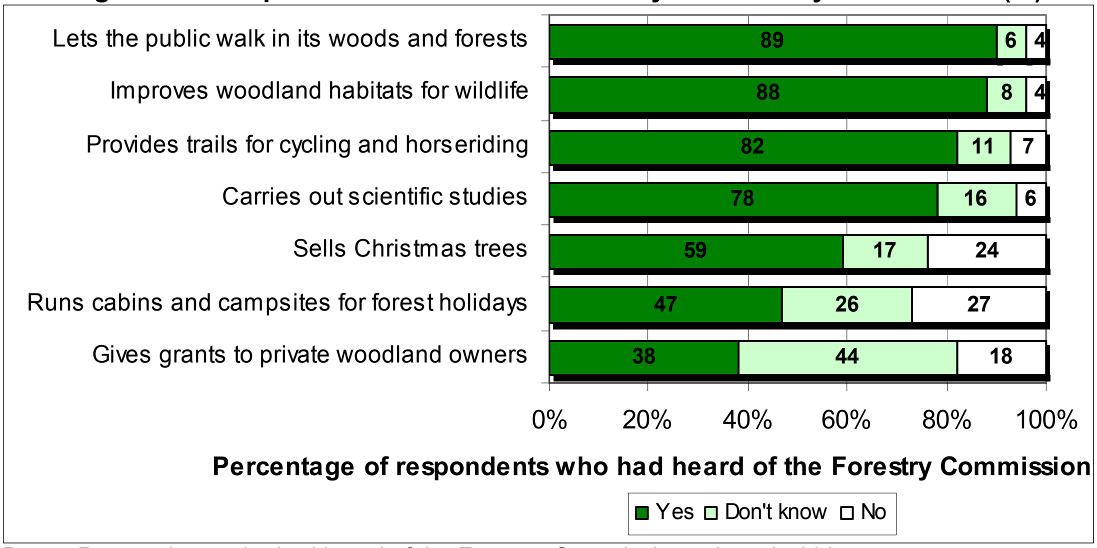
	2005	2003	2001	1999
England	79	83	85	83
Scotland	61	69	67	61
Wales	60	64	62	59
Don’t know	9	9	6	10

Base: Respondents who had heard of the Forestry Commission – 2455 in 2005

6.3 Forestry Commission activities

Most respondents showed a fairly good awareness of the range of Forestry Commission activities[1]. The vast majority were aware that the Forestry Commission lets the public walk in its woodlands (89%) and improves woodland habitats for wildlife (88%). Fewer respondents were aware that the Forestry Commission gives grants to private woodland owners (18% said 'No' and 44% did not know) and run cabins and campsites for forest holidays (27% said 'No' and 26% did not know).

Figure 5: Perception of activities carried out by the Forestry Commission (%)



Base: Respondents who had heard of the Forestry Commission – 2455 in 2005

Comparison with previous surveys

Table 8 compares those who were aware that the Forestry Commission carried out each activity in 2005 with previous surveys. Note that not all of the activities were included in surveys prior to 2003.

Table 8: Awareness of FC activities (%)

	2005	2003	2001	1999	1997	1995
Lets the public walk in its woods and forests	89	88	87	85	87	86
Improves woodland habitats for wildlife	88	89	88	83	-	-
Provides trails for cycling and horseriding	82	82	80	80	-	-
Carries out scientific studies	78	80	-	-	-	-
Sells Christmas trees	59	58	55	60	59	62
Runs cabins and campsites for forest holidays	47	49	41	50	48	49
Gives grants to private woodland owners	38	38	-	-	-	-

Base: Respondents who had heard of the Forestry Commission – 2455 in 2005

[1] It should be noted that the level of awareness may be overstated, as some respondents may have guessed that the 'correct' response to every activity listed was "yes".

There was little or no change between the 2003 and 2005 responses. Where the activities were included in surveys before 2003, similar proportions of respondents were aware that they were carried out by the Forestry Commission.

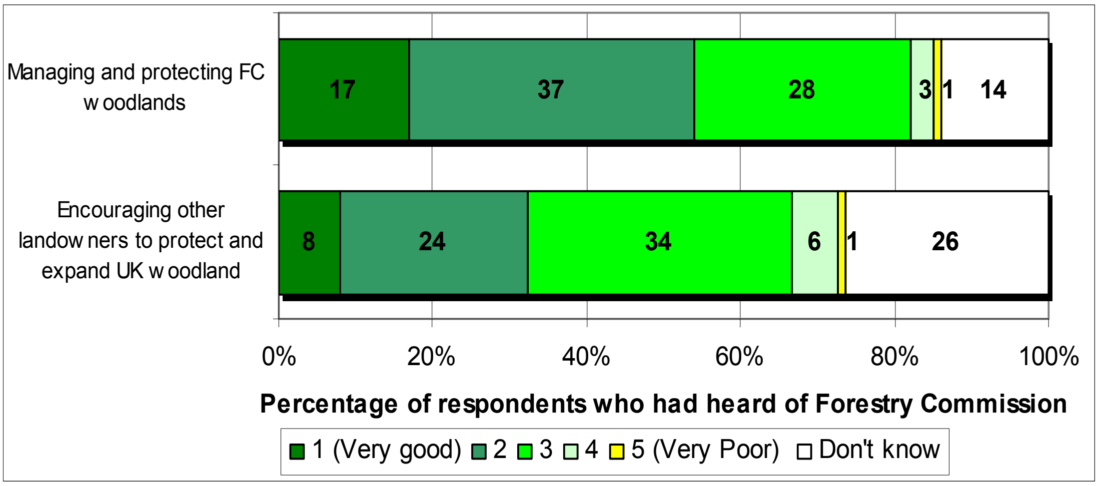
6.4 Performance of the Forestry Commission

Respondents were also asked to rate the performance of the Forestry Commission in pursuing its two main aims - in managing and protecting Forestry Commission woodland and in encouraging other landowners to protect and expand the UK's woodlands. Ratings were given on a scale of 1-5, 1 being 'very good' and 5 being 'very poor'.

More than half of respondents (54%) who were aware of the Forestry Commission gave their performance in managing and protecting their own woodlands a rating of 1 (very good) or 2.

However, less than a third (32%) gave ratings of 1 or 2 for the Forestry Commission's work with other landowners. Over a quarter of respondents (26%) said that they could not rate the Forestry Commission on this activity which may imply that fewer people were aware of this role.

Figure 6: Rating of the Forestry Commission for core activities (%)



Base: Respondents who had heard of the Forestry Commission – 2455 in 2005

Comparison with previous surveys

There were no significant changes over time in the ratings given for the Forestry Commission performing these activities. In 2003, managing and protecting FC woodlands was rated 1 (very good) and 2 by 17% and 35% respectively. Encouraging other landowners to protect and expand UK woodland was rated 1 and 2 by 8% and 25% respectively. Ratings in previous surveys are similar to 2003 and 2005.

7. Woodland recreation

The UK Forestry Standard[1] encourages the creation and improvement of public access to woodland for recreation.

7.1 Access to woodland

Respondents were asked if there was woodland that they could get to easily without using a car or other transport. 38% said that they had accessible woodland, 58% said that they did not, and 4% did not know.

These figures are not significantly different from those in the 2003 survey (41% said they did have access, 56% did not and 4% did not know).

7.2 Visits to woodland

Around two-thirds of respondents (65%) said that they had visited woodland for walks, picnics or other recreation in the last few years (Table 9). Although there are significant changes from survey to survey, there is no trend over time in the proportion of respondents who have visited woodland.

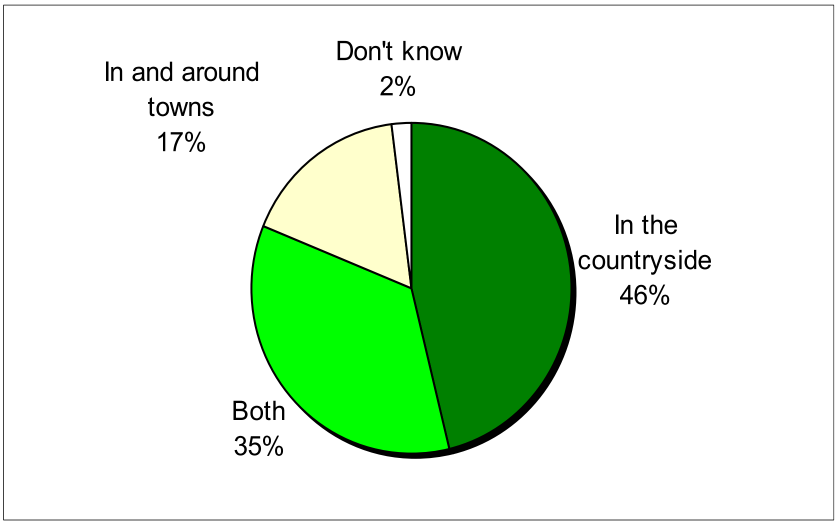
Table 9: Visited woodland in last few years (%)

	2005	2003	2001	1999	1997	1995
Visited woodland in last few years	65	67	72	67	75	71

Base: All respondents - 4000 in 2005 (GB), 4120 in 2003 (UK), 2000 in previous years (GB)

A large proportion of woodland visitors said that they had visited woodland in the countryside (81% in total) and half said that they had visited woodland in and around towns (51% in total). Figure 7 shows that just under half of woodland visitors (46%) have only visited woodland in the countryside, and 17% have only visited woodland in and around towns. Around a third (35%) have visited both rural and urban woodland.

Figure 7: Type of woodland visited (urban/rural)

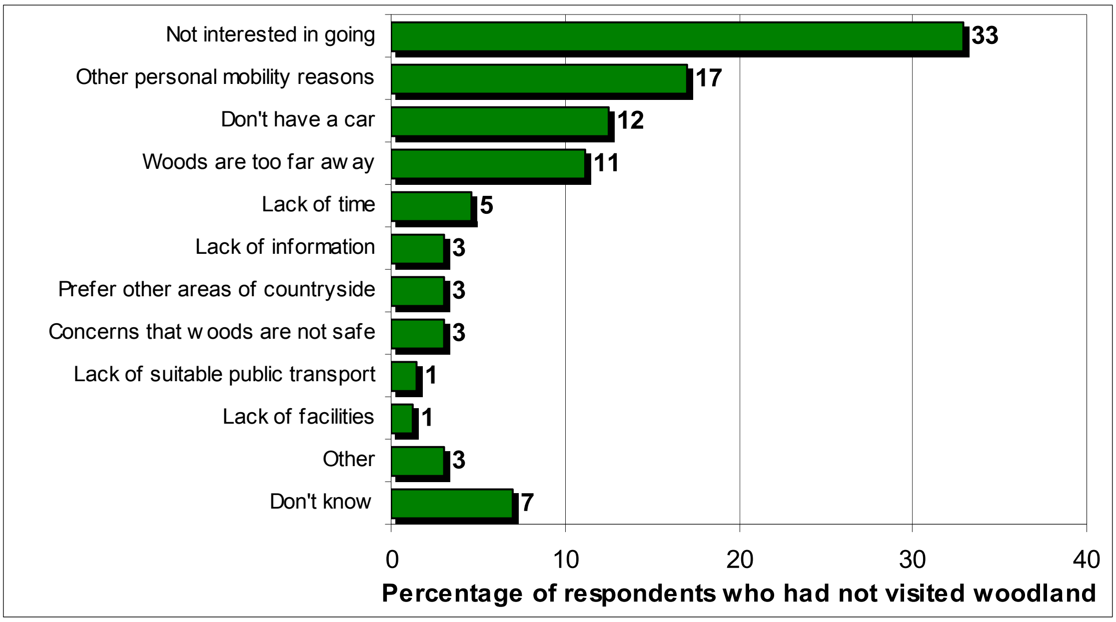


Base: All respondents except those who had not visited woodland in the last few years - 2672

[1] FC (2004): *The UK Forestry Standard (2nd edition)*, Forestry Commission, Edinburgh

Respondents who had not visited woodland in the last few years were asked about the main reason for not visiting (Figure 8). As in previous years, the main reasons for not visiting a forest or woodland were that the respondent was 'not interested in going' (33% of those who had not visited), personal mobility reasons (17%), the lack of a car (12%) or that the woods were too far away (11%).

Figure 8: Main reason for not visiting forest/woodland (%)



Base: Respondents who had not visited woodland in last few years - 1328

Comparison with previous surveys

Table 10 shows these results as percentages of all respondents (35% of respondents had not visited woodland in the last few years). In 2005, 11% of respondents said they weren't interested in going to woodland, 6% had other personal mobility issues or illness, 4% thought that woods were too far from their home and 4% didn't have a car. There has been a significant increase in the proportion of GB adults who say they are not interested in going to woodland (6% in 1995 to 11% in 2005).

Table 10: Main reason for not visiting forest/woodland (%)

	2005	2003	2001	1999	1997	1995
Not interested in going	11	10	7	6	--	6
Other personal mobility/illness	6	4	4	6	--	4
Woods are too far away	4	5	4	3	--	6
Don't have a car	4	4	4	4	--	5
Other	9	11	7	10	--	8
Total	**35**	**33**	**27**	**31**	**--**	**29**

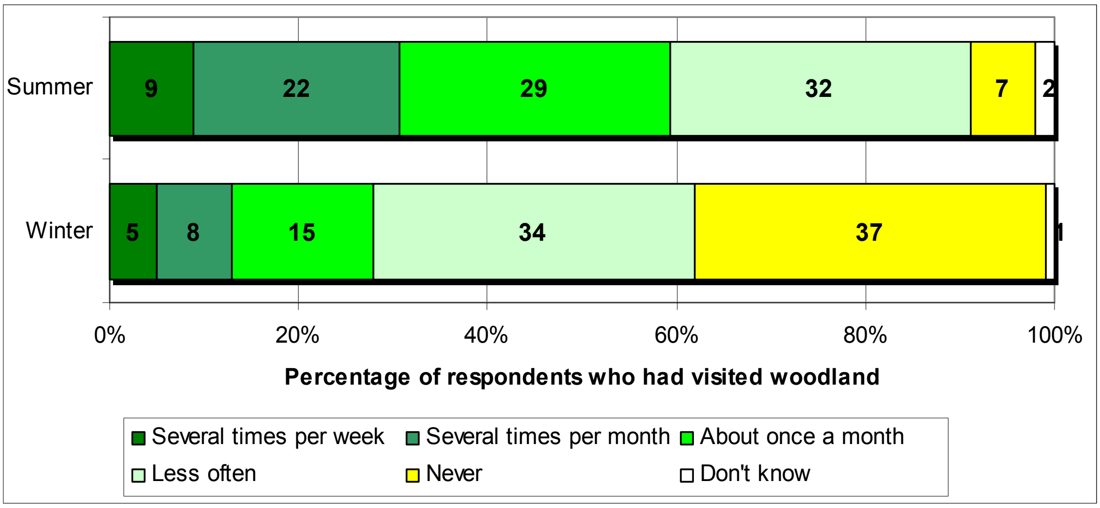
Base: All respondents - 4000 in 2005 (GB), 4120 in 2003 (UK), 2000 in previous years (GB)
Note: This question was not asked in the 1997 survey

7.3 Frequency of woodland visits

Of the respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years, 60% of visitors said that they visited at least once a month in the summer of 2004 (Figure 9). Around half as many (28%) said that they visited at least once a month in the winter of 2004/5.

Over a third (37%) of those who had visited woodland in the last few years said that they did not visit during the most recent winter. Only 7% said that they did not visit during the most recent summer.

Figure 9: Frequency of visit in summer 2004 and winter 2004/5 (%)



Base: All respondents except those who had not visited woodland in the last few years - 2672

By combining the information about those who had visited forests with the frequency of visit information for the last year, it is possible to estimate the proportion of adults who have visited woodland in the last year. 62% of adults say they visited woodland in the last year, 61% in the summer of 2004, and 41% in the winter of 2004/2005.

Comparison with previous surveys

Table 11 shows the frequency of visits in the most recent summer and winter in the 2005 and previous surveys. Overall there is little change in pattern of visit frequency from 1995 to 2005.

Table 11: Frequency of visits in summer and winter - change over time

		2005	2003	2001	1999	1997	1995
Summer	Several times a week	9	9	9	7	8	8
	Several times a month	22	24	23	22	24	28
	About once a month	29	29	27	30	28	29
	Less often	32	30	33	34	35	31
	Never	7	7	7	6	6	4
Winter	Several times a week	5	5	5	3	3	4
	Several times a month	8	9	9	8	7	9
	About once a month	15	15	13	15	17	14
	Less often	34	32	33	34	33	36
	Never	37	38	39	39	40	36

Base: All respondents except those who had not visited woodland in the last few years - 2672 in 2005

7.4 Total number of woodland visits

Using the results from section 7.3 we can get a very rough estimate of the annual number of visits to GB forests. Taking “several times” to mean an average of 2.5 times, and ‘less often’ to mean 2.5 times per year on average and an adult population of 46.5 million[1], the responses would suggest a total of around 332 million visits in the summer and around 118 million in the winter, a total of 450 million visits to woodland by GB adults aged 16 or over in 2004/2005.

These totals are rather higher than the estimates from the latest Day Visits Surveys. The 1996 and 1998 Day Visits Surveys[2] reported around 350 million leisure day trips a year from home by GB adults aged 16 or over, while the 2002/3 survey[3] reported around 252 million leisure day trips. Note that the Day Visits Survey excludes trips from holiday bases.

7.5 Owners of woodlands visited

Woods and forests managed by the National Trust/ National Trust for Scotland and the Forestry Commission/Forest Enterprise have been visited by the largest proportions of respondents (40% and 36% respectively of respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years). Local authority woodland has been visited by 30% of the woodland visitors.

Table 12: Ownership of woodland visited in last few years (%)

	2005	2003	2001	1999	1997
Forestry Commission / Forest Enterprise	36	40	41	46	51
National Trust/National Trust for Scotland	*40*	*42*	--	--	--
Woodland Trust	*17*	*16*	--	--	--
Other voluntary body	*3*	*4*	--	--	--
Total any voluntary bodies*	49	50	41	39	45
Local authorities	30	33	37	36	34
Private owners	18	18	20	18	17
None / Don't know	17	17	11	11	9

Base: All respondents except those who had not visited woodland in the last few years - 2672 in 2005
*Prior to 2003 only one category existed for voluntary bodies; ‘Voluntary bodies (e.g. National Trust, Woodland Trust)’

Between 1997 and 2005 there has been a decrease in the proportion of woodland visitors who say they have been to a Forestry Commission/Forest Enterprise site (51% in 1997 to 36% in 2005). There is no clear trend in the proportion of woodland visitors who say they have been to a voluntary body site or a local authority site. The proportion saying that they have visited privately–owned sites has remained relatively

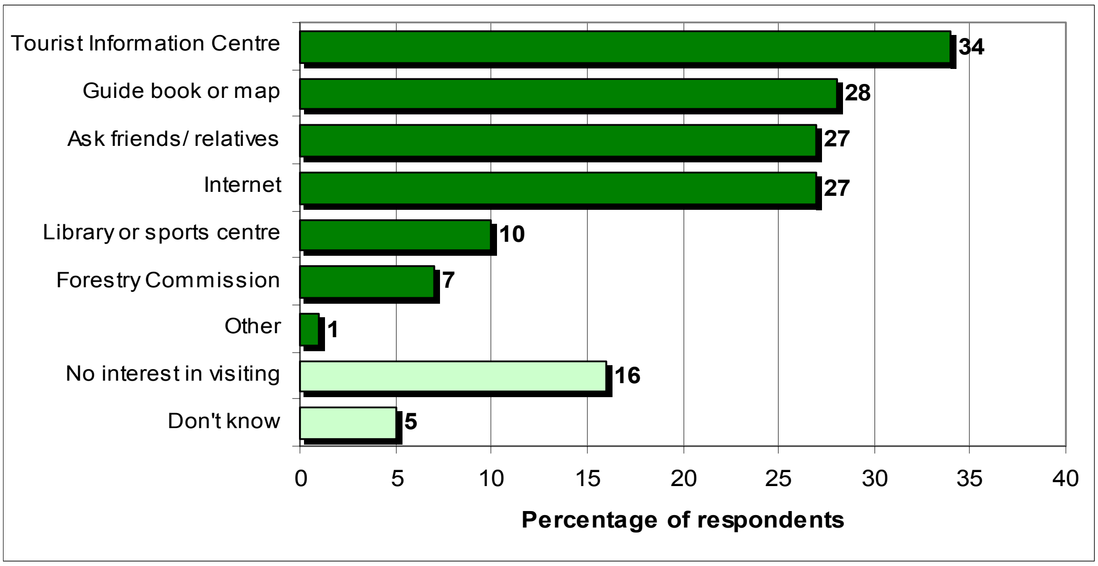
[1] Mid-2003 adults population of England & Wales (ONS) and Scotland (GROS)
[2] NCSR (1999), *Leisure day visits, report of the 1998 UK day visits survey*, National Centre for Social Research, London
[3] TNS (2004), *GB Leisure Day Visits: Report of the 2002-03 GB Day Visits Survey,* TNS Travel & Tourism, Edinburgh

constant. However, the proportion of missing or 'don't know' responses has increased from 9% in 1997 to 17% in 2005.

7.6 Information about woodlands to visit

Tourist Information Centres (34%), guidebooks or maps (28%), asking friends or relatives (27%) or the internet (27%) are the sources of information most likely to be used to find out about woodland not previously visited (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Sources of information used for woodland not previously visited (%)



Base: All respondents - 4000

Table 13: Sources of information used to find out about new woodland (%)

	2005	2003	2001	1999	1997
	Normal sources		Main source + other sources		
Tourist Information Centre	34	39	50	54	60
Guide book or map	28	30	41	45	51
Ask friends / relatives	27	31	36	39	45
Internet	27	22	17	8	3
Library or sports centre	10	10	17	18	21
Forestry Commission	7	10	14	17	18
Other	1	2	3	3	2
No interest in visiting	16	15	12	13	2
None / Don't know	5	5	3	4	4

Base: All respondents - 4000 in 2005 (GB), 4120 in 2003 (UK), 2000 in previous years (GB).
In 1997, this question was only asked to those who had visited woodlands in the last few years

Comparison with previous surveys

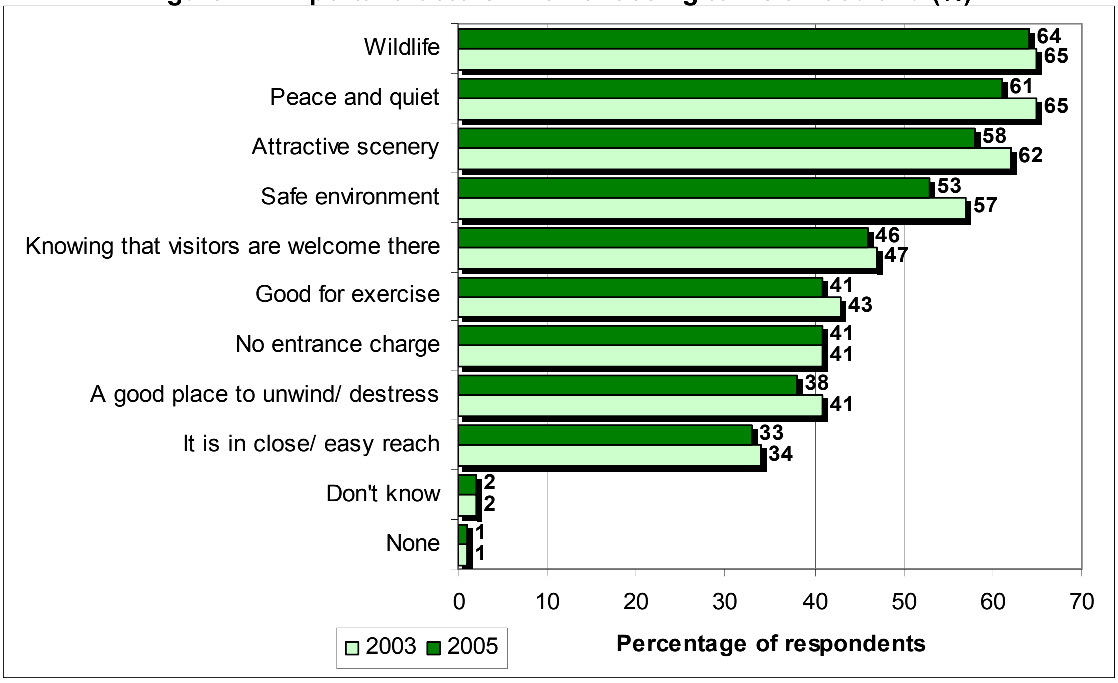
In surveys prior to 2003 respondents were asked about one main source of information they would use and then about any other sources that they might use. Therefore results from the 2003 and 2005 surveys are not directly comparable with previous surveys (Table 13).

However, Table 13 shows that the use of the internet has increased in popularity from 3% in 1997 to 27% in 2005, and is now being used to a similar extent as the top three sources of information about woodland.

7.7 Reasons for choosing to visit woodland

Respondents were asked to identify (from a list) the factors that were important to them when choosing to visit woodland. Wildlife (64%), peace and quiet (61%), attractive scenery (58%) and a safe environment (53%) were the most frequently stated reasons (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Important factors when choosing to visit woodland (%)



Base: Respondents interested in visiting woodland - 3363 in 2005

Comparison with previous surveys

Figure 11 also shows the figures from the 2003 survey. The proportion of respondents who thought that 'peace and quiet', 'attractive scenery' and 'safe environment' were important factors was significantly lower in the 2005 survey. For the other factors, there was no significant difference between the 2003 and 2005 surveys. This question was not asked in surveys before 2003.

7.8 *Woodland recreation facilities*

When visiting woodland for a day out, the facilities that respondents would most like to see are toilets (74%), car park (59%), nature trails (53%) and picnic areas (52%).

In general, responses in the 2005 survey were similar to those in 2003. Between 1999 and 2005 there has been a significant increase in the proportion of respondents who would like to see long walks (from 21% in 1999 to 30% in 2003 and 2005). In this period, there have been significant decreases in the proportion of respondents who would like to see signposted walks for all abilities (63% in 1999 to 50% in 2005) and information about the woodland (51% in 1999 to 41% in 2005). Responses have remained relatively steady for the other facilities.

Table 14: Facilities respondents would most like to see when visiting woodland (%)

	2005	2003	2001	1999
Toilets	74	70	76	73
Car park	59	57	59	62
Nature trails	53	54	57	56
Picnic areas	52	53	54	58
Signposted walks suitable for all abilities	50	51	62	63
Information about the woodland	41	42	45	51
Café / restaurant / kiosk	38	35	39	37
Children's play area	35	37	39	38
Long walks (min. 2 miles)	30	30	31	21
Cycle trails	27	29	28	--
Minimum facilities to ensure peace and quiet	24	28	27	28
Accessible local staff	23	19	20	21
Organised events/education activities/guided walks	22	--	--	--
Shop with gifts and souvenirs	16	14	16	15
None / Don't know	6	8	2	4

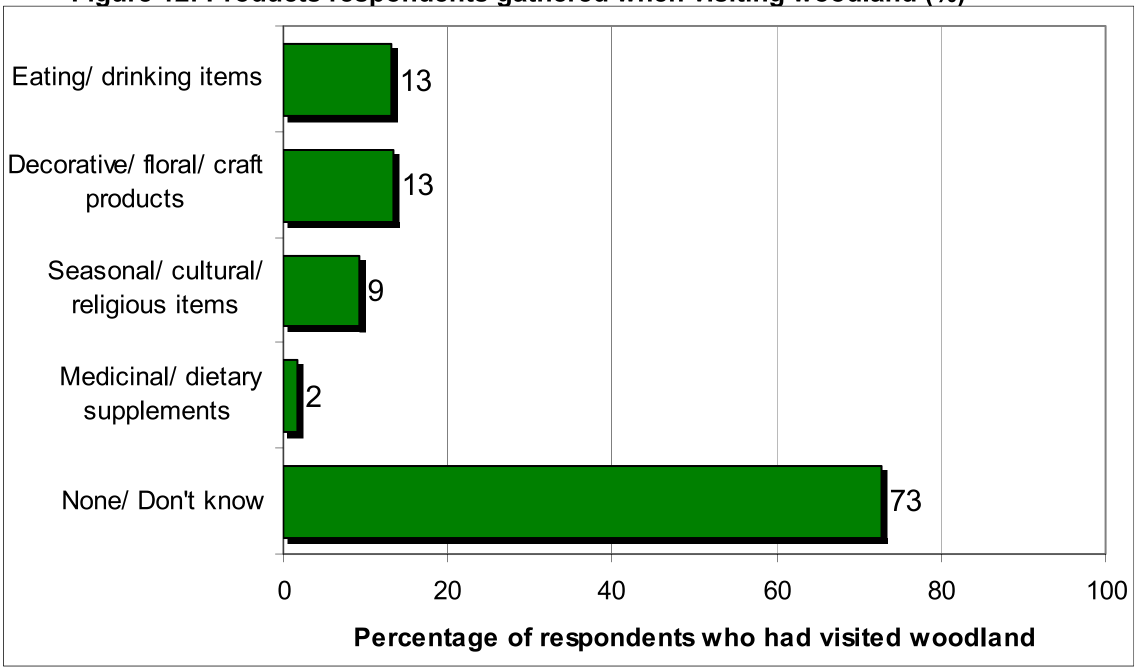
Base: All respondents except those not interested in visiting woodland – 3563 in 2005

7.9 Woodland products

In the 2005 survey, respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years were asked whether they had gathered any forest products from forests or woodland. This question was not asked in surveys before 2005.

In total, 27% of woodland visitors had gathered some sort of woodland product. 13% of visitors had gathered items for eating or drinking, such as berries, fungi, nuts, flowers and sap. A similar number (13%) had gathered decorative, floral and craft products, such as foliage, branches, stems, moss, lichen and weld. 9% had gathered items for seasonal, cultural or religious use, such as holly, ivy and hazel wands. A small number (2%) gathered medicinal and dietary supplements, such as St. John's wort, meadowsweet and hawthorn.

Figure 12: Products respondents gathered when visiting woodland (%)



Base: All respondents except those who had not visited woodland in the last few years - 2672

Appendix 1: RSGB Random location sampling method

A unique sampling system has been developed by Taylor Nelson Sofres for its own use. Utilising 1991 UK Census small area statistics and the post code address file, GB south of the Caledonian Canal has been divided into 600 areas of equal population. From these 600 areas a master sampling frame of 300 points has been selected to reflect the country's geographical and socio-economic profile. The areas within each Standard Region were stratified into population density bands, and within band in descending order by percentage of population in socio-economic groups I and II.

To maximise the statistical accuracy of Omnibus sampling, sequential waves of fieldwork are allocated systematically across the sampling frame so as to ensure maximum geographical dispersion. The 300 primary sampling units are allocated to 12 sub-samples of 25 points each; with each sub-sample in itself being a representative drawing from the frame. For each wave of Omnibus fieldwork, a set of sub-samples is selected so as to provide the number of sample points required (typically c. 139 for 2,000 interviews). Across sequential waves of fieldwork all sub-samples are systematically worked, thereby reducing the clustering effects on questionnaires asked for two or more consecutive weeks.

Each primary sampling unit is divided into two geographically distinct segments, each containing, as far as possible, equal populations. The segments comprise aggregations of complete postcode sectors. Within each half (known as the A and B halves) postcode sectors have been sorted by the percentage of the population in socio-economic groups I and II. One postcode sector from each primary sampling unit is selected for each Omnibus, alternating on successive selections between the A and B halves of the primary sampling unit again to reduce clustering effects. For each wave of interviewing each interviewer is supplied with two blocks of 70 addresses drawn from different parts of the sector. Addresses are contacted systematically with three doors being left after each successful interview.

To ensure a balanced sample of adults within effective contacted addresses a quota is set by sex (male, female housewife, female non-housewife); within female housewife, by presence of children and working status; and within men, by working status.

As with all multi-stage sample designs, there are effects on the magnitude of the standard error of estimates that arise from a number of sources. The greatest contributors are caused negatively by the effects of clustering and weighting and positively by the effects of stratification. These are collectively known as 'design effects'. The 'design factor' is used to estimated the ratio of the standard error of these complex sample estimates to that of a simple random sample of the same size. Design factors vary from one variable to another depending on the inter-correlations that exist between that variable and the causes of variation in the size of the standard error. For example social grade tends to be correlated between households in small geographical areas and thus variables that are correlated with social grade (e.g. visits to woodland) will have larger design factors. Such design factors need to be individually calculated from actual data to obtain accurate estimates for any given variable. Common practice is the use of a 'modal' value for application to estimates. For the Omnibus TNS recommend a design factor of 1.5 be applied to the calculation of confidence limits and when testing for significance.

Appendix 2: GB Questionnaire 2005

Q1.	**You may have seen or read about British forests, woods or trees on the television, radio or in the newspapers. From this list, can you please tell me which of these topics you have seen or read anything about in the last 12 months?** (Multi choice) • Birds and other animals in woodlands • Flowers and other plants in woodlands • Forests and woodlands as places to visit • Community woodlands / new local woodlands • Tree planting • Tree pests and diseases • Wood for fuel / (short rotation coppice) • Loss of ancient or native woodland • Restoration of ancient or native woodland • Creation of new native woodlands • Selling public woodlands • Public rights of access to woodlands • Protests about roads or other developments on woodlands • Labelling/certification of wood products • Timber transport • None of these
Q2.	**Which of these promotions have you heard of?** (Multi choice) • 'Wood for Good' or other promotions for timber uses and products • Autumn Colours • Active Woods 'Naturally good for you' • Forest Education Initiative • Forest Schools • None
Q3.	**In Britain, public money is given to support forestry, the planting and management of all types and sizes of forests and woods, because it is believed to be of public benefit. From this list, please tell me which of the following reasons are good reasons to support forestry in this way?** (Multi choice) • To support the economy in rural areas • To help rural tourism • To provide timber for sawmills and wood processing • To provide wood as a renewable fuel • So that Britain can buy less wood products from abroad • To make woods more accessible to all in the community • To help prevent the "greenhouse effect" and global warming • To provide places for wildlife to live • To provide places to walk in • To provide places to cycle or ride horses • To provide healthy places for physical activity, relaxation and stress relief • To improve the countryside landscape • To create pleasant settings for developments around towns • To restore former industrial land • None

Q4.	**On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is very good and 5 is very poor, how good do you think British forestry is at ...** • Providing opportunities for walking • Protecting the environment • Providing Britain's timber, board and paper needs • Providing homes for birds and other animals • Supporting the economy in rural areas **… and on the same scale, how would you rate the overall performance of British forestry?**
Q5.	**In the last 20 years, do you think the amount of woodland in Britain has been increasing or decreasing?** • Increasing • Decreasing • Staying about the same • Don't know
Q6.	**a. Have you ever been consulted about plans for creating, managing or using woodlands in your area?** • Yes • No **b. Would you like to be consulted (again) about plans for creating, managing or using woodlands in your area?** • Yes • No
Q7.	**a. Would you like to have more or less woodland in this part of the country?** • More • Neither more nor less *(skip to Q8)* • Less *(skip to Q8)* • Don't know *(skip to Q8)* **b. How much more woodland: a little more, half as much again or more than that?** • A little more • About half as much again • More than that • Don't know

Q8.	**a. Have you been shopping for wood products at all in the last few years?** • Yes • No (*skip to Q9)* **b. Have you ever seen either of these logos on wood products such as furniture?** [show symbols] • FSC Yes/No • PEFC Yes/No • None
Q9.	**Which of these have you heard of?** (Multi choice) • Countryside Agency • English Nature • Forestry Commission - *if not, then omit Q10 & Q11* • Forest Enterprise • Forest Research • National Trust • Woodland Trust • National Forest • Community Forests • Tree Wardens • Environment Agency • None
Q10.	**Thinking about the Forestry Commission,** **do you think that it is ...** • A government department or agency • An independent body • A body representing private woodland owners • A private company **… and which part or parts of Britain do you think that it works in?** (Multi choice) • England • Scotland • Wales

Q11.	**I am now going to read out a number of forestry activities and for each one I would like you to say whether you think it is something done by the Forestry Commission.** **So do you think the Forestry Commission ...** • Lets the public walk in its woods and forests • Provides trails for cycling and horse-riding • Improves woodland habitats for wildlife • Runs cabins and campsites for forest holidays • Sells Christmas trees • Gives grants for to private woodland owners • Carries out scientific studies **On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very good and 5 is very poor, how would you rate the Forestry Commission's overall performance in ...** • Managing and protecting Forestry Commission woodlands • Encouraging other landowners to protect and expand Britain's woodlands
Q12.	**Are there any forests or woodlands that you can get to easily, without using a car or other transport?** • Yes • No
Q13.	**a. In the last few years, have you visited forests or woodlands for walks, picnics or other recreation?** • Yes, *- then skip to Q13c* • No **b. What is the main reason why you have not visited forests or woodlands for walks, picnics or other recreation?** *(then skip to Q17)* • Not interested in going *(If this response, skip to Q21 instead of Q17)* • Don't have a car • Lack of suitable public transport • Other personal mobility reasons (difficulty in walking, unwell, etc.) • Woods are too far away • Lack of facilities (play areas, picnic areas, etc.) • Lack of information about woods to visit • Prefer other areas of countryside • Concerns that woods are not safe • Other (specify) **c. Did you visit woodlands in the countryside or woodlands in and around towns or both?** • Woodlands in the countryside • Woodlands in and around towns • Both

Q14.	**How frequently did you visit forests and woodlands last summer, i.e. between April and September 2004?** • Several times per week • Several times per month • About once a month • Less often • Never
Q15.	**And how often this winter, i.e. since October 2004?** • Several times per week • Several times per month • About once a month • Less often • Never
Q16.	**Which of these types of woodland owners do you think owns any of the forests or woodlands you have visited in the last few years?** (Multi choice) • Local authorities • National Trust/ National Trust for Scotland • Woodland Trust • Other voluntary bodies • Forestry Commission/Forest Enterprise • Private owners • None
Q17.	**If you were thinking about visiting forests or woodlands that you had not visited before, which of the following sources of information would you normally use?** (Multi choice) • Ask friends/relatives • Guide book or map • Forestry Commission • Tourist Information Centre • Internet • Library or sports centre • Other (specify) • No interest in visiting - *Skip to Q20*

Q18.	**In choosing to visit a woodland, which of these are important to you?** (Multi choice) • It is in close/ easy reach • Knowing that visitors are welcome there • Attractive scenery • Wildlife • Peace and quiet • A good place to unwind / de-stress • Good for exercise • Safe environment • No entrance charge • None
Q19.	**If you were going to a woodland for a day out, which of these facilities would you like to see there?** (Multi choice) • Signposted walks suitable for all abilities • Long walks (minimum 2 miles) • Car park • Information about the woodland • Minimum facilities to ensure peace and quiet • Nature trails • Cycle trails • Picnic areas • Children's play area • Toilets • Cafe or restaurant or kiosk • Shop with gifts and souvenirs • Accessible forest rangers • Organised events, education activities or guided walks • None
Q20.	**In the last few years, have you gathered any of the following products from forests or woodlands?** (Multi choice) • Items for eating or drinking (such as berries, fungi, nuts, flowers and sap) • Medicinal and dietary supplements (such as St. John's wort, meadowsweet and hawthorn) • Decorative, floral and craft products (such as foliage, branches, stems, moss, lichen and weld) • Items for seasonal, cultural or religious use (such as holly, ivy and hazel wands) • Others (specify) • None
Q21.	**Do you own or have the use of a car at all?** • Yes • No

Q22.	**Do you have any long-term illness, health problems or disability which limits your daily activities or the work you can do?** • Yes • No
Q23.	**And which of these best describes your ethnic origin?** • White • Chinese • Indian • Pakistani • Bangladeshi • Caribbean • African • Other (please specify)