Managing woodlands for game can boost additional income through game shoots and game meat. The same woodlands usually have a long history of timber management.

The most important part of a wood for pheasants is the edge. Its design and structure will largely determine its ability to produce a wild crop of birds in the summer and to hold birds during the winter, wild or reared. Pheasants require regular access to open areas for sunning and feeding during the winter. In spring, male pheasants will hold territories in open habitats along woodland edges.

Pheasants also like shelter. A natural woodland edge should have a graded profile of mature trees, scrub and young trees, through to a mixture of these and the habitat outside. Such natural edges can be rare in our modern countryside but can be created through active woodland management along field edges, roads and ridesides, or felling coupes and open spaces within existing woods.

Woodland management will help you to take advantage of the natural products grown in your woodland (both wood and game). You can boost your income through sales of timber and woodfuel, commercial shoots, deer stalking and make the most of tax benefits for commercial forestry.

Wild animals benefit from diverse and well-managed habitats, so consider moving release pens on a regular basis to avoid long-term disturbance to the woodland understorey.
Breeding cover is low ground vegetation, which is sheltered from the wind and not too dense. Felling and thinning coupes will allow light to reach the forest floor and encourage shrubs and regeneration of a new crop. Rhododendron is bad for woodlands and wildlife, as it is invasive, chokes woodland and stops regeneration of new plants. Holly, however, is ideal for game shelter, as it provides warm, ground level cover for pheasants.

Between late March and August, pheasants do not live in dense cover but require it for food from the seeds and fruit of plants that grow there, both to protect their nests and a refuge if disturbed.

Felling coupes and rides support the extraction of timber, and they also provide:
- A diverse and well-managed woodland habitat to create the ideal location for game shoots
- Additional territorial and nesting edge for pheasants, as well as many other bird species
- A sunning area for broods of chicks or as part of a release pen
- A harbour for insects
- Access, winter feeding and predator control
- Help with active deer management and control
- Benefits to priority species such as some butterfly species and declining bird specialists.

Top tips for wildlife
A diverse woodland structure creates the greatest benefits for the maximum number of species. Thin intensively on southern aspects to create more opportunities for wildlife. Intervention will help guard against damage caused by pests, diseases, storms and fire.
Managing woodlands

Woodland management is the long-term maintenance of your woodland that delivers your business and woodland management plan objectives. It can also unlock extra income. Your woodland is a valuable resource, so make it work for your business by:

- Boosting income from sale of timber and woodfuel, game shoots or tourism.
- Enhancing the capital value of your estate
- Accessing grants and expertise to help improve or create new woodland.

Our woodland experts can help you manage your woodland, in your own way. Our support ranges from showing you how to access various grants to helping you produce an effective UK Forestry Standard compliant woodland management plan.

Felling also improves timber value and creates the diverse edge habitats for our rare and declining woodland species. Your local woodland officer can also help you to apply for felling licences.

Biosecurity measures: Keep it clean

- **Think kit** – scrape, brush or knock mud and debris from your footwear, clothing and equipment
- **Think transport** – remove any build-up of mud and debris from vehicles and machinery before leaving any site
- **Think trees** – source plants responsibly, monitor for signs of ill health and report suspect plants to FC Tree Alert.

forestry.gov.uk/England-keepitclean

Useful links

**United Kingdom Forest Standard:** forestry.gov.uk/ukfs
**European Protected Species:** forestry.gov.uk/england-protectedspecies
**FC Felling Licence Application guidance:** forestry.gov.uk/england-fellinglicences
**Managing deadwood in forests and woodlands:** forestry.gov.uk//England-managingdeadwood
**Information on pests and diseases:** forestry.gov.uk/pestsanddiseases
**Report ill health in trees:** forestry.gov.uk/treealert
**Climate change:** forestry.gov.uk/climatechangeengland

How can I get involved?
The Forestry Commission and its partners are working hard to bring more woodland into active management and provide on-the-ground support and expert advice. Visit forestry.gov.uk/makingwoodlandswork, call 0300 067 4000 or email fe.england@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

The Forestry Commission will consider all requests to make publication content available in alternative formats. Call 0300 067 5046 or email diversity@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

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