

APPENDIX 1. Description of the New Forest.

The New Forest is situated on the south coast of England in the counties of Hampshire and Wiltshire, immediately north of the River Solent, and between the conurbations of Bournemouth and Southampton (Longitude from 1°17'59'' to 1°48'8'' W, Latitude from 50°42'19'' to 51°0'17'' N) (Figure A1.1, A1.2). As noted by Tubbs (2001), the New Forest as an ecological system has developed under the influence of large, free-ranging herbivores, including deer as well as livestock. The present character of the New Forest is therefore strongly dependent on its history as a medieval hunting forest, and the survival of a traditional commoning system, which became formalised in late medieval times.

The “perambulation” of the Forest, encompassing some 37,907 ha, refers to the area within which Forest bye-laws apply, relating to the rights to pasture livestock on common land. Almost a quarter of this area consists of farmland and settlements, whereas around three-quarters are referred to as the ‘Crown lands’, reflecting their status as Royal Forest. The Crown lands include the Silvicultural Inclosures, which are designated for growing timber; unenclosed land, over which common rights prevail; and a number of privately owned farm holdings. The unenclosed Forest is referred to by Tubbs (2001) as the largest area of semi-natural vegetation in lowland Britain, and includes large tracts of heathland, valley mire and ancient pasture woodland, three habitats that are now fragmented and rare throughout lowland western Europe. With a total area of almost 20,000 ha, the unenclosed Forest includes around 3700 ha of oak, beech and holly woodland, 12,500 ha of heathland and acid grassland, and 2900 ha of valley mires and wet heath.

The New Forest National Park was designated in 2005 and extends over 57,100 ha (Chatters 2006), a larger area than that included within the perambulation (Figure A1.3). The conservation importance of the National Park is reflected in a variety of designations, with some 20 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, six Natura 2000 sites and two Ramsar Convention sites included at least partly within the Park boundaries (Chatters 2006). The National Park also includes extensive areas of common land that border the Crown lands but lie outside the perambulation. In total, about 50% of the land area of the Park is covered by unenclosed vegetation, which is collectively referred to as the ‘Open Forest’ (Chatters 2006), and in which livestock roam freely. In recent years, some 6000–7400 ponies, cattle, donkeys, pigs and sheep have been depastured on the Open Forest, which are owned by about 550 local people (“commoners”) who possess commoning rights (Newton 2010).

LITERATURE CITED

- Chatters, C. 2006. The New Forest – National Park status for a medieval survivor. *British Wildlife* (December 2006):110-119.
- Newton, A. C. (editor). 2010. *Biodiversity in the New Forest*. Pisces Publications, Newbury, Hampshire.
- Tubbs, C. R. 2001. *The New Forest. History, ecology and conservation*. New Forest Ninth Centenary Trust, Lyndhurst.



Figure A1.1. Map of the UK showing the location of the New Forest National Park.

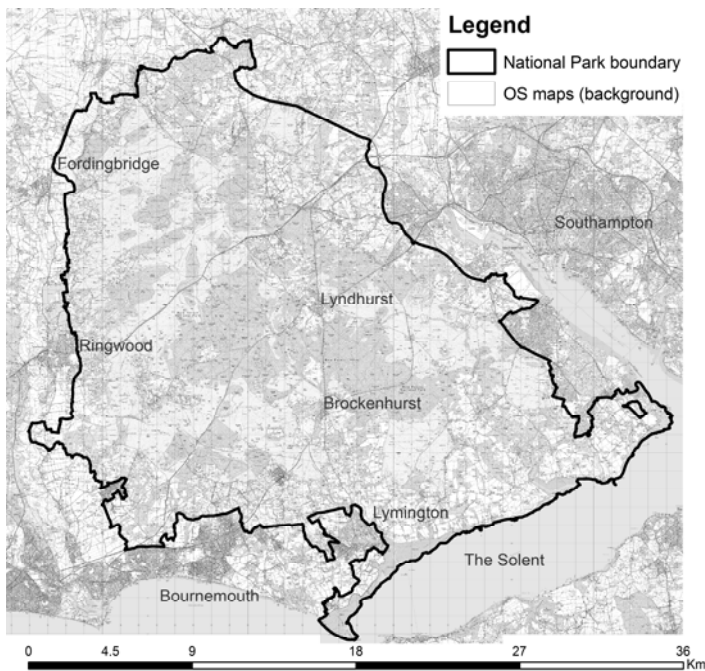


Figure A1.2. Map of the New Forest National Park, with the Park boundary overlaid on an Ordnance Survey (OS) map (©Crown Copyright/database right 2008. An Ordnance Survey/EDINA supplied service).

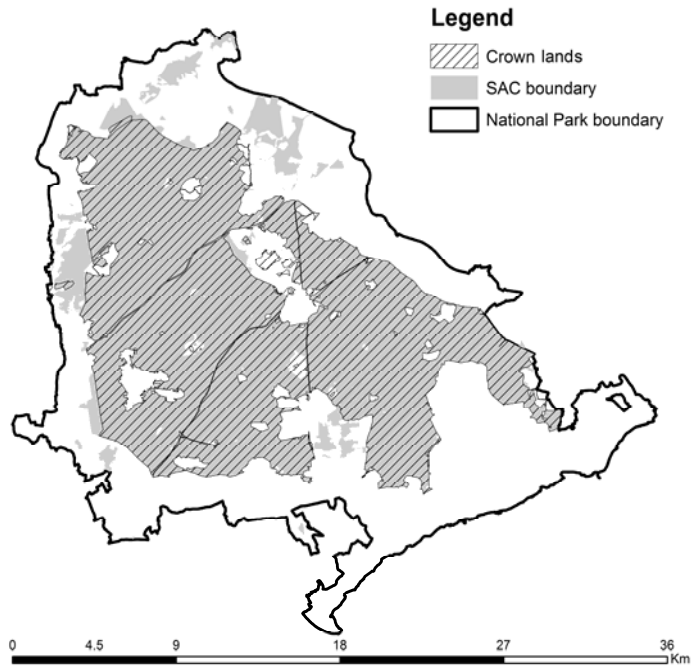


Figure A1.3. Crown lands, Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and National Park boundaries of the New Forest. The SAC is a Natura 2000 site, which essentially forms the core of the National Park.