



# New Forest Flagship Ponds

The New Forest is one of the most important sites for freshwater biodiversity in the UK. Glistening streams and meandering rivers are just part of the story. Hidden away, you will also find a multitude of wildlife rich ponds, with exceptional wetland plant and insect communities; unrivalled in terms of their quality and quantity.

This amazing landscape includes over 1,000 ponds within the woodlands, heaths, grasslands and floodplain meadows; and many thousand more transient trackway and bog pools. Together, they provide incredible freshwater habitats which are home to some of our most endangered plant and animals.

Ponds of this number and quality have been lost from almost every other landscape in the UK. But here they continue to thrive, maintained by the gentle disturbance associated with the grazing ponies and cattle; and fed by clean, unpolluted water, a scarce resource outside of traditionally managed landscapes like the New Forest.

Join us on a discovery of some of these remarkable freshwater gems and the pools and ponds where they are found.

Spring time in the New Forest wakes amphibians from their winter slumber. Larger ponds, especially those on the edge of woodlands, are home to **Great Crested Newts** and Common Toads; and smaller pools ring with the calls of Common Frogs. Palmate Newts love the heathland ponds, whilst Smooth Newts head to where the sandy soils give way to richer clays and gravels. In a few special sites around Brockenhurst, Beaulieu and Sway all five can be found together in the same pond - a spectacular after dark encounter.

Pond dragons



Sun Worshipers

On late summer walks over the heaths and New Forest lawns you'll often see bare areas of earth in the trackways; the dusty shadows of winter wet pools. At first glance these habitats look uninspiring, but take a closer look and you'll find a miniature world bursting with some of the rarest and most beautiful plants found in the UK - clusters of frothy white flowers along the reddish stems of **Coral Necklace**, vivid splashes of sun reflected from the flowers of Yellow Centaury, and droplets of dew tempting insects into the clutches of sundews. Pond habitats come in all shapes and sizes!



Pure perfection



**Stoneworts** are a fascinating group of plants which reproduce from small orange spores. They include species with huge cells that you can see with the naked eye - a sign of their very ancient past. Unfortunately many are now very rare in the UK, mainly due to water pollution and sediment build up. However, in perfect conditions within the New Forest, ponds can remain free from pollution and free from sediments for hundreds of years. Out of our 28 native species; 10 can be found in the New Forest. On the Beaulieu Heath, in some exceptional pond clusters, a single site can contain up to 8 species.

High quality unpolluted ponds are disappearing from many landscapes. This is worrying because the majority of our threatened species and communities are now restricted to a few biodiversity hotspots. Freshwater Habitats Trust is working in partnership to raise awareness of the importance of the New Forest's ponds and the species they support.

**IDENTIFY THE BEST**  
Even in biodiversity hotspots like the New Forest there are still gaps in our knowledge about where the best ponds are located. Survey and monitoring is essential to protect the most vulnerable sites and species, and prioritise action on the ground.

**UNDERTAKE MANAGEMENT**  
Very rare species, even in the best sites, may need additional management to sustain their populations. Some ponds may benefit from management which enhances elements of the pond suited to local biodiversity. But this must be done with the utmost caution to prevent inadvertent damage.

**EXPAND TO THE REST**  
With good information, we can work with other wildlife charities, statutory agencies, landowners and communities to identify sites to create new clean water ponds. In doing so, we will ensure a sustainable future for the current pond resource and expand the quality of the New Forest beyond its borders.



Freshwater Habitats Trust is one of the UK's principle research and conservation charities for the protection and recovery of our most endangered freshwater habitats and species. We work in partnership to develop and deliver practical advice to help people manage and create new clean water habitats for wildlife.



Covering 145 square miles the New Forest is a place of ancient history, fascinating wildlife and stunning beauty. Originally a royal hunting preserve, the thriving working forest that you see today has survived for nearly 1,000 years. The Forestry Commission manages the Crown lands in the New Forest, an area which includes many of the New Forest's Flagship Ponds.



**LOTTERY FUNDED**  
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