

# Stick to the Pitch

*The New Forest is world famous for its wetland wildlife – find out more about how you can help protect this unique landscape.*

The New Forest wetland landscape is bursting with rare, freshwater plants and animals, like sundews and southern damselflies. The range of habitats, from seasonal ponds to coastal mudflats, support a wide variety of species. Water is everywhere in the Forest, with over 1000 ponds and pools, this clean water network provides habitats which have been lost from much of lowland England. A huge assortment of wildlife and livestock depend on the fresh clean water the New Forest holds for feeding, drinking, and inhabiting, from the large cattle that graze the Forest to the tiny creatures that occupy the varying depths of a pond. Traditional grazing has been practiced in the New Forest for hundreds of years and aids the balance between species helping maintain the biodiversity. Together, clean water and traditional grazing mean that you can find some of the wetland wonders just a stone's throw away from the New Forest car parks and campsites. You don't need to go far to hear the call of a wading bird or spot a real gem of a plant. Even ditches and puddles can hold incredible rarities that have long disappeared from other areas of the British countryside.



*A water quality test conducted from a bridge crossing a stream in the New Forest, a short walk away from a car park. The clear tubes showing that there is no nutrient pollution.*



*New Forest ponies grazing in a boggy ditch at the side of a footpath. The traditional grazing aids the balance between species and maintaining the biodiversity.*

The beautiful landscape of the New Forest attracts visitors from all over the UK and beyond. With over 6000 camping pitch spaces the National Park offers an opportunity not only for us to reconnect with our family and friends but also to have a 'close up' experience with the landscape we 'pitch up' in. Each year, thousands of holiday makers choose to camp in the New Forest, giving the local economy a boost and providing some well-deserved down time from the busy lives we lead. A trip here, whether for the day or a holiday retreat, is worth planning well to ensure that your visit minimises impact. The Forest is a sensitive, fragile place that needs to be treated with care, so when booking your accommodation heed the advice from Forestry England, National Park Authority, Freshwater Habitats Trust, and other organisations. Organisations in the New Forest have a combined message and stand against wild camping. Within the New Forest wild camping and overnight parking are not permitted and is dealt with swiftly by a team of dedicated Rangers and Keepers to ensure the Forest is left undisturbed.

We ask visitors to follow the New Forest Water Code to keep the New Forest a special landscape with clean unpolluted water. We are working together with organisations and businesses to protect water quality across the diversity of wetland habitats present in the New Forest. Although it was written for the New Forest, the Water Code is something to follow wherever you go. Stopping pollution from entering waterbodies means wildlife can thrive and ecosystems can flourish. Pollution comes from a range of sources, like grey water released from campervans, and rainwater washing litter and dog waste into protected habitats.

Here are our top tips for managing different types of waste water when camping:



*New Forest Water Code*



*Dispose of foul waste at suitable disposal locations*

## **BLACK WATER / FOUL WASTE**

This is the most damaging type of wastewater and the most important to dispose of correctly at chemical disposal points found in campsites.

Find accommodation that is suitable for your needs. There are more than 100 campsites to choose from across the National Park, so there is something to suit everyone. Not all campsites have toilets so make sure to check before you book to ensure you can deal with your waste needs without impact on the environment.

Whilst staying at a campsite or accessing the New Forest, it is important to use a public convenience otherwise you are adding pollution into a sensitive environment.

## **GREYWATER / USED WATER**

Greywater is wastewater from washing up, showering and washing hands etc. Grey water contains high levels of pollutants, including nitrates and phosphates (nutrients), which can cause algae to build up and suffocating aquatic insects and fish.

In order to conserve the rare freshwater plants and animals of the New Forest, all used water needs to be disposed of at the campsite's disposal location. If you are in a motorhome, it is important to make sure grey water is not discharged directly to ground and instead is collected and disposed of at a nearby facility.



*Dispose of washing up water at suitable facilities and never directly to ground.*



*Dispose of tap water appropriately*

## TAP WATER / UNUSED WATER

Tap water is chemically different to rainwater and from the water that is found in New Forest wetlands. There are nutrients within tap water that would alter the plant communities from rare ancient species to ones that are common across the country. Although tap water is unharmed to us it can have a negative impact on plants as they have adapted over thousands of years to clean unpolluted water. In the fragile environment of the New Forest it is therefore important to dispose of tap and bottled water in the same way as used water.

The New Forest is an amazing place with an abundance of special wildlife. If you have plans to visit for a day or a couple of weeks, as well as following the New Forest Water Code there are also small steps you can action to protect water quality on holiday and at home:

- \* Only flush the 3Ps – pee, poo and paper.
- \* never pour fats and oils down the sink.
- \* never flush wet wipes and sanitary products down the loo.
- \* always take your rubbish away with you.
- \* always bag and bin your dog's poo - any bin will do!
- \* never pour waste liquids or throwing litter down surface water drains

## FURTHER ADVICE

The New Forest District Council provide over [20 public conveniences](#) across the Forest. The website [Pee Place locations](#) is a useful website for nearby toilet facilities. New Forest District Council also provide 1,300 bins for disposing of different types of litter including dog waste. This map will help you locate [Public waste bins](#) click on 'map features' to navigate to the 'waste and recycling' section. You can also use the map to find recycling centres dotted around the Forest.

Our project, Wilder for Water in partnership with the New Forest National Park Authority funding by the Green Recovery Challenge Fund and Environment Agency, is working with visitors, organisations and businesses to raise awareness of the special qualities of the New Forest waterscape and to champion a best practice 'clean water standard' for camping and recreation across the National Park and beyond.

To find out more click here: [Wilder for Water](#)