

Bluebells

Plants only found in very old woodland, such as dog's mercury and herb paris, provide splashes of colour in early spring. During April, swathes of bluebells carpet the woodland floor as far as the eye can see.



Bluebell



Primrose

Elsewhere yellow primroses line the ditch banks and violets grow in the newly coppiced areas.

Many of the rides are dominated by the drooping orange-pink flowers of water avens which gently bob and sway in the breeze amongst clumps of sedge.

Trees

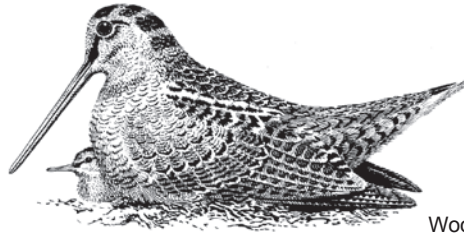
Amongst the trees found in NWT Foxley Wood are holly, Midland hawthorn and the uncommon wild service tree. Bracket fungi grow on decaying trees, and old stumps become riddled with honey fungus - named after its golden colour.



Bracket fungus

Birds

Sparrowhawks and tawny owls breed in the wood and you may well see great spotted and green woodpecker. In areas of young coppice look for birds such as garden warbler, blackcap and whitethroat as they flit through the bushes in search of insects. In late winter, woodcock can be seen 'roding' at dusk. This ritual flight is to mark out territory and is accompanied by a delightful whirr and croak.



Woodcock

Visiting the Nature Reserve

NWT Foxley Wood is open all year round from 10.00am to 5.00pm. Closed Thursday. Admission is free. It takes approximately one hour to walk the longest trail. Please keep to the paths. No dogs. Woodchip mulch and other woodland products are available. Please call NWT for details.

Norfolk Wildlife Trust
Bewick House
22 Thorpe Road
Norwich
NR1 1RY

Tel: 01603 625540

Email: info@norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk

www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk

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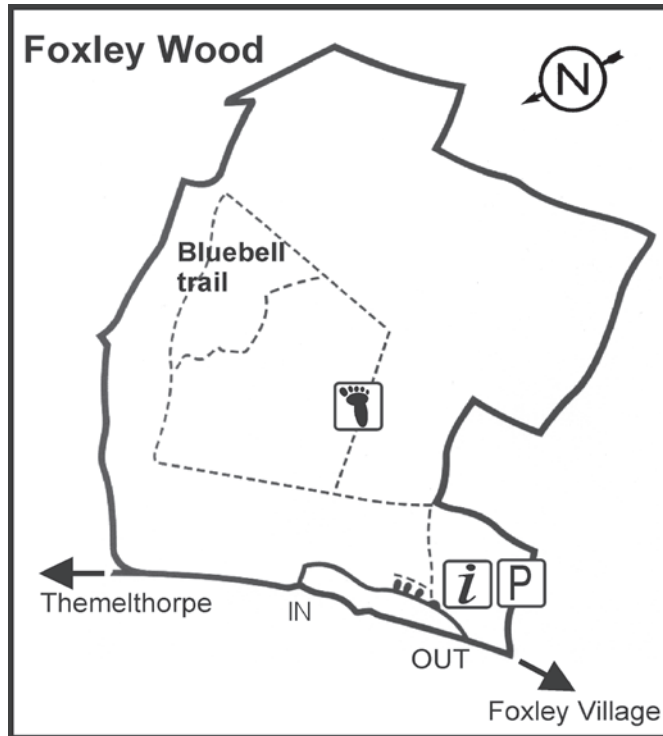


NWT Foxley Wood



Introduction

At over 300 acres, NWT Foxley Wood is the largest remaining block of ancient woodland in Norfolk. The wood has a long and interesting history and is thought to be about 6,000 years old.



The Domesday Book

NWT Foxley Wood is mentioned in the Domesday Book as being an area able to provide "pannage for 300 swine". This translates into a woodland of a size little different to that which we see today. Over the centuries the wood was cut by local people to provide a continuous source of poles, fuel and timber. In the 20th century the demand for these products fell and the wood became neglected. In the 1960's large areas were planted with conifers. Norfolk Wildlife Trust purchased Foxley Wood in 1988.

Coppice with Standards

Since acquiring Foxley Wood, NWT has started to restore the woodland and has removed most of the conifer trees and re-established the traditional practice of coppicing. This involves cutting trees close to the ground in order to encourage new shoots to spring up around the edge of the stump. The resulting long straight stems are harvested every 7 to 10 years. The coppice at NWT Foxley Wood is mainly hazel and ash with some field maple, willow and small-leaved lime.



Ash

In the past the coppice was used to supply poles and rods for hurdle fences, thatching broaches and laths as well as wood for fuel and timber for building. Today 12ft lengths are bundled and tied together as 'faggots' and used for river and sea defences. Material unsuitable for faggots is sold as firewood or chipped for use as mulch.

Amongst the coppice are larger trees known as 'standards'. These trees are mainly oak and ash and were left to grow to maturity to produce timber for building and bark for tanning leather.



Comma

Woodland Rides

A major feature of NWT Foxley Wood are the wide tracks or 'rides' that criss-cross the wood. Initially created to allow the easy removal of timber, these rides now support a great variety of woodland grasses and flowers including St John's wort, stitchwort, bugle and several species of orchid.



Bugle

These and other plants provide food for a wealth of woodland insects and on hot summer days the rides are alive with butterflies. Ringlet butterflies with their prominent 'false eye' spots rest in grassy places. Elsewhere meadow browns and commas dance in the sunlight. Speckled wood butterflies prefer more shady places - the speckles on their wings provide good camouflage in the dappled light.



Speckled Wood

Moths are also found in large numbers and include the bee hawk moth and the unusual aspen underwing - a day-flying moth. In the late afternoon the 'chirring' sound of dark bush crickets can be heard along the woodland edges.