*This survey form (see page 5) has been left in Word format to allow you to download it and make additions in the field should you wish.*

**SURVEYING WOODLANDS**

Woodlands have long been an important habitat for wildlife – providing food and shelter for a range of different species – from birds such as Tawny owls, woodpeckers and songbirds, mammals such as badgers, or woodmice, and a host of invertebrate species from Purple Emperor or white admiral butterflies in the canopy, to pseudo scorpions in the leaf litter. They have always been a valuable source of wood and timber for construction and other products such as oak bark for tanning and charcoal for cooking. They can also be a source of mushrooms, berries and nuts.

Woodland is home to more threatened species of wildlife than any other habitat, and areas of woodland can be the most biodiverse of all habitats. For a list of species that are threatened visit the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership (BAP) website:[Home | Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership](https://www.norfolkbiodiversity.org/)

**Getting Started:**

Understanding what is currently present in a woodland and its condition is an important first step and will form the basis of a plan for a wood’s management.

Surveys can identify which woodlands in an area are best for wildlife – often these will be the oldest woodlands, usually referred to as ancient woodlands. However, even more recent and newly planted woodlands can also be brilliant for wildlife.

**Top tips:**

* You must have permission from the landowner to survey a woodland if the survey involves walking off a public footpath or road;
* Be alert to safety – do not survey woodlands in strong winds and be aware that wet woodlands, such as alder and willow carrs, can be too wet to access safely.
* Knowing where you are in a wood is important so you don’t get lost. Take time to familiarise yourself with the woodland prior to surveying it.
* Survey at the correct time of year – it is easier to find ancient trees in winter; ground flora in woods is most obvious between April and June (you will need several visits during this period to get a record of all the flowering plant species); breeding birds are best surveyed between March and June and fungi from September to November.
* Use a camera to record how the woodland looks throughout the different seasons.

**What wildlife is found in our wood?**

The structure of a woodland and the types of trees present will be important influencing factors as to what other wildlife may be present. ‘Structure’ refers to the mix of shrubs and tall trees, dead trees and areas of glades or rides etc. A well-structured woodland would contain a range of different species, of different ages, forming different layers – with a good mix of tall trees, shrubs, dead trees, glades and rides. Once you have carried out a general woodland survey you may wish to undertake a specific survey of one of these other wildlife groups – birds, plants, mammals or butterflies.

If you do not wish to survey a whole group of animals you can select some key species to focus on instead such as badger, tawny owls, white admiral buttery, or a selected plant or reptile species.

Identification of fungi, lichens, mosses, ferns, and woodland invertebrates might be difficult and you may wish to consult with Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT), who may be able to assist you. Alternatively, you may wish to consult iSpot for online identification support - [Home | iSpot (ispotnature.org)](https://www.ispotnature.org/).

**How do we find out if our woodland is an ancient woodland?**

Knowing the history of a woodland, whether ancient or not is not only interesting but it will also give clues to its wildlife and might help to inform current management. See the Landscape History toolkit on the NWT website for more information. In England, an ancient woodland is classed as woodland that has had continuous tree cover since 1600. Ancient woods are very rich in wildlife and are an extremely important habitat. Knowing the history of a woodland, whether ancient or not, can give clues as to its wildlife.

Maps can help you to find out if a woodland is ancient.

Use the historic maps website [Historical Maps of Norfolk](http://www.historic-maps.norfolk.gov.uk/) to view your woodland over time.When looking at your map does it contain any of these distinguishing features:

* The boundaries of the wood are irregular in shape;
* The site is on a steep slope;
* The wood runs along a stream valley;
* The wood is along or near the parish boundary;
* The wood does not fit exactly with existing field enclosures;
* The wood is adjacent to common land or heathland.

Visit [www.magic.gov.uk](http://www.magic.gov.uk/) to view ancient woodland records on a map.

The name of your woodland might give you a clue as

to whether it might be ancient.

Does the name of it incorporate any of the old names for a wood – Grove, hanger or lea? Or does the name suggest an old industry – tanner, kiln or brick kiln?

Ancient woodland plant indicator species

If you find five or more of the following plant species in your woodland, it is quite possibly an ancient woodland:

* Bluebell
* Wood anemone
* Wood sorrel
* Yellow archangel
* Wild garlic
* Early purple orchid
* Primrose

A full species list for plants indicative of ancient woodland can be found here: <http://www.nbis.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Species_selection_criteria.pdf>

If your wood contains some indicator species it does not necessarily mean that it is ancient – unless it also has any of the following ancient woodland characteristics:

* Glades
* Ponds
* Old coppice stools
* Boundary ditches
* Ancient wood banks
* Irregular shaped boundaries
* Pollards
* A high proportion of dead wood
* Runs along a stream valley

**RAPID WOODLAND ASSESSMENT**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Site Name** |  |
| **Date (include year)** |  |
| **Surveyor** |  |
| **Grid reference** |  |
| **Slope & Aspect**(flat/gentle/steep) |  |
| **Public access** |  |
| **Size (ha)** |  |

**Overall impressions**

|  |
| --- |
| Enter a brief summary of impressions of the site. This may include comments on site condition, habitats and any notable features. |
|  |

**1 Woodland composition and structure:**

Use the DAFOR scale to indicate how abundant a species is. Write next to the species or use the text box if completed electronically.DAFOR is an estimate of percentage plant cover.

D = Dominant (76-100%), A = Abundant (51-75%), F = Frequent (26-50%), O = Occasional (11-25%), R = Rare (0-10%). If absent leave blank.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Canopy**  | **DAFOR** | **Sub-canopy** | **DAFOR** |
| Alder |  | Ash |  |
| Ash |  | Beech |  |
| Beech |  | Birch |  |
| Birch |  | Bird cherry |  |
| Hornbeam |  | Blackthorn |  |
| Oak |  | Elm |  |
| Poplar |  | Hawthorn |  |
| Sycamore |  | Hazel |  |
| Willow |  | Holly |  |
| Field maple |  | Oak |  |
| Conifer |  | Rowan |  |
| Other... |  | Sycamore |  |
|  |  | Other... |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

**Check all boxes that apply**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Woodland profile** | Young even-aged wood (i.e. recently established trees) |   |
| Mature, even-aged wood (most trees are the same size) |   |
| Mixed age wood, with mature/old trees and younger trees |   |
| Standards with coppice |   |
| Plantation woodland |   |
| Wood pasture |   |
| Parkland |   |
| **Tree density** | Young trees, closely packed, few gaps between tree canopies |   |
| Mature trees, closely packed, few gaps between tree canopies |   |
| Mature trees, with some gaps between tree canopies |   |
| Mature/veteran trees, with larger gaps between tree canopies |   |
| **Ground cover of bramble and ivy** | Abundant cover throughout |   |
| Frequent areas of dense cover |   |
| Occasional: some dense patches but scattered |   |
| Rare: sparse cover/isolated patches |   |
| Absent |   |
| **Nettle cover** | Abundant cover throughout |   |
| Frequent areas of dense cover |   |
| Occasional: some dense patches but scattered |   |
| Rare: sparse cover/isolated patches |   |
| Absent |   |
| **Bracken cover** | Abundant areas of cover |   |
| Frequent areas of dense cover |   |
| Occasional: some dense patches but scattered |   |
| Rare: sparse cover/isolated patches |   |
| Absent |   |
| **Ground vegetation coverage and bare ground** | Abundant areas of bare ground |   |
| Frequent areas of bare ground |  |
| Occasional: some larger bare patches but scattered |  |
| Rare: sparse/isolated patches |  |
| Absent |  |

**2 Habitat features:**

Check all boxes that apply. Please mark the key features on a map if possible.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Rides** | Rides at least 2m wide, open & sunny |  |
| Rides at least 2m wide in shade |  |
| **Glades** | A glade/clearing in the wood |  |
| **Veteran tree features** | Presence of very wide trees (>2.5m girth) |  |
| Presence of old pollards |  |
| Presence of old coppice stools |  |
| Old trees with dead wood in canopy/dead limbs |  |
| Old trees with large decay holes/hollows |  |
| **Dead Wood** | Sparse-lying dead wood, small diameter (<20cm) |  |
| Frequent lying dead wood, small diameter (<20cm) |  |
| Lying dead wood, large diameter (>20cm) |  |
| Rotting tree stumps |  |
| Standing dead wood (diameter >20cm) |  |
| **Historic Features** | Earth banks |  |
| Veteran/pollarded trees on boundaries |  |
| **Wet features** | Boggy areas |  |
| Streams/rivers |  |
| Ditches |  |
| Ponds |  |
| Pingos |  |
| Wet carr, alder /willow |  |
| **Herb layer vegetation (other than typical woodland flora)** | Areas of fen/swamp vegetation  |  |
| Areas of acid grassland  |  |
| Areas of heather  |  |

**3 Bryophytes:**

Record here the abundance of bryophytes (mosses, hornworts and liverworts):

Please check one box.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **What is the bryophyte cover like on the woodland floor, including on logs and rocks?** | Very little/no bryophyte cover visible |  |
| Patchy bryophyte cover visible |  |
| Larger areas of bryophyte cover visible |  |
| Woodland floor is carpeted with bryophytes  |  |

**4 Ancient woodland plant indicators:**

Record here the presence of ancient woodland indicator plants.

Use the DAFOR scale to indicate how abundant a species is in the column below:

D = Dominant (76-100%), A = Abundant (51-75%), F = Frequent (26-50%), O = Occasional (11-25%), R = Rare (0-10%). If absent leave blank.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ground flora** | **DAFOR** | **Sedges/rushes/grasses** | **DAFOR** |
| Bluebell |  | Tall sedges  |  |
| Common dog violet  |  | Short sedges |  |
| Early dog violet  |  | Remote sedge  |  |
| Early purple orchid  |  | Rushes |  |
| Goldilocks buttercup  |  | Hard rush |  |
| Herb Paris  |  | Soft rush |  |
| Lords and Ladies  |  | Greater wood rush  |  |
| Moschatel  |  | Hairy brome |  |
| Ramsons  |  | Wood false brome  |  |
| Three-nerved sandwort  |  | Wood mellick  |  |
| Sanicle  |  | Wood sedge  |  |
| Water avens  |  | Other…… |  |
| Wood anemone  |  |  |  |
| Wood sorrel  |  |  |  |
| Woodruff |  |  |  |
| Yellow Archangel |  |  |  |
| Other……. |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
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Indicate presence or absence of ferns and underscrub by checking the box, checking individual species if identification is possible.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ferns** |  | **Underscrub/Climbers** |  |
| Broad-buckler fern |  | Blackcurrant  |  |
| Hard fern |  | Redcurrant  |  |
| Male fern  |  | Honeysuckle  |  |
| Polypody  |  | Black bryony  |  |
| Other….  |  | Ivy |  |
|   |  | Climbing corydalis |  |
|   |  |  Other……  |  |

**5 Threats assessment:**

Record threats in the table below checking each relevant box.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Threat type** | **Threat absent** | **Threat minor and isolated** | **Threat extensive in one/several area** | **Threat covers large area(s)** |
| Ash dieback |  |  |  |  |
| Dense or abundant holly growth |  |  |  |  |
| Rhododendron/ laurel |  |  |  |  |
| Himalayan balsam |  |  |  |  |
| Variegated yellow archangel |  |  |  |  |
| Conifers (excluding yew) |  |  |  |  |
| Dense regeneration of sycamore saplings at expense of other species (specify) |  |  |  |  |
| Damage/disturbance from footpaths/recreational use |  |  |  |  |
| Lack of other species regeneration (i.e. young trees, saplings or seedlings) |  |  |  |  |
| Browsing pressure from deer |  |  |  |  |
| Physical damage from inappropriate management eg clearfell/scrub clearance |  |  |  |  |

|  |
| --- |
| Use the comments section below to give **any additional information** (e.g. where threats are located near important habitat features, or severity of the threat on the site.) If you have a map, indicate where the threat is located. |
|  |

**6 Management assessment:**

Tell us about any evidence of management you can see by checking the boxes below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Evidence of grazing/browsing** | **Yes** | **No** |
| Is there any evidence of grazing/browsing (e.g. nibbled stems, hoof prints, dung, or you can see grazing animals)? |  |  |
| If you can tell what animal(s) are grazing the site (wild or domestic) let us know here: |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Evidence of other management (if absent leave blank)** | **Yes** | **Does management appear recent?** |
| Evidence of shooting (cartridges, deer seats etc) |  |  |
| Coppice (area where trees have been cut back to ground level) |  |  |
| Pollarding of boundary trees |  |  |
| Thinning (some young or mature trees have been cut down) |  |  |
| Scrub clearance (including the clearance of saplings e.g. beech and sycamore regeneration) |  |  |
| Non-native invasive species management (e.g. removal of laurel/rhododendron, Himalayan balsam) |  |  |
| Ivy stems cut at the base of trees |  |  |
| Maintenance/management of rides or glades  |  |  |
| Clear fell (of Ash for example) |  |  |
| Re-stocking of felled areas |  |  |

**7 Additional comments:**

|  |
| --- |
| **Here you can report anything else you think is relevant.** If you met with the landowner and asked about site management, make a note of your discussion here. |
|  |

**8 Habitat & boundary map:**

Draw a map of your woodland site, showing key features such as glades, rides, wet areas, coppice areas, ancient woodland areas, plantation etc.

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**9. Other notable species**:

Please add any notable species seen during the survey. Eg breeding birds, woodland butterflies, amphibians, reptiles.

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**10. Site Condition Monitoring:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Favourable |  |
| Favourable, some issues |  |
| Recovering |  |
| Unfavourable no change |  |
| Unfavourable declining |  |
| Neglected |  |
| Part destroyed |  |
| Destroyed |  |

**11. Protected species records:**

Add any records available from landowners/Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service (NBIS). Note that some of these records may be sensitive and involve protected species e.g. bats so records may need to be confidential in some instances.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Species** | **Date of record** |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

**12. Plant list:**

If you record other plant species please add here.

D = Dominant (76-100%), A = Abundant (51-75%), F = Frequent (26-50%), O = Occasional (11-25%), R = Rare (0-10%).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Scientific name** | **Common name** | **DAFOR** |
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