

Foxley Wood National Nature Reserve

Foxley Wood NNR was declared in 2002, and at 125 ha is the largest remaining block of ancient woodland in Norfolk. The reserve is owned and managed by Norfolk Wildlife Trust who purchased it in 1988.



Photo: Robin Chittenden

Visitors at the declaration of Foxley Wood, 2002

Foxley Wood is thought to be over 6000 years old, and the trees within it now are the direct descendants of the wildwood which first grew on the site as the climate became warmer following the ice age. It is situated in the centre of Norfolk, on a plateau of calcareous boulder clay, overlain in some parts by acid sandy soils. The variation in soil types and drainage have resulted in the development of a wide range of woodland 'stand types' - tree species and associated ground plants that grow together. The wood is exceptionally rich in plant species, with over 250 recorded,

and there is considerable diversity of insects too with several uncommon butterflies including the white admiral.

There are many mature or 'standard' pedunculate oak trees throughout much of the wood and several uncommon tree and shrub species are present, most notably the wild service tree, small-leaved lime and midland hawthorn. Hazel and ash along with field maple, sallow and small-leaved lime occur as coppice. Ground flora specialities include dog's mercury, herb paris, early purple orchid and meadowsweet.

There is a well developed system of wide, regularly mown rides - tracks - throughout the wood, mostly with damp grassland vegetation including an abundance of water avens and tufted hair-grass. Bracken glades and marshy areas also occur within the wood and add structural diversity.

Key

- Reserve Boundary
- A1067
- B1145, B1147
- Other Roads
- Woodland Trail
- Car Park
- River

Foxley Wood NNR
Scale 1cm = 0.5km



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Managed by



Fact File

LOCATION

TG056227 Landranger 133

HABITATS

Ancient woodland, ground flora, woodland rides

SPECIES

Pedunculate oak, small-leaved lime, wild service tree, midland hawthorn, alder, orchids, dog's mercury, herb paris, woodland insects, blackcap, tawny owl, woodcock.

ACCESS

The reserve is open all year from 10am to 5pm, but is closed on Thursdays. Admission is free. There are well-signed trails and an information point at the site. Please keep to the paths. No dogs are allowed. Woodchip mulch and other woodland products are available for sale - please call NWT Foxley Office for details on (01362) 688706.

CAR PARKING

There is a car park at the site.

Management

For much of the past 1000 years, Foxley was a working woodland, with much economic value attached to products such as coppice poles, fuel, and oak bark for tanning leather. This management created a rich and diverse habitat for many plants and animals, because the wood was always a mosaic of different heights of trees and shrubs. With declining demand for woodland products in the 1900s, the coppice cycle was neglected and areas were later replanted with conifers. Current management has focussed on the re-introduction of coppicing and the removal of the conifers - and woodland wildlife is in a good shape once more. Mowing of woodland rides is also necessary to maintain the rich flora.