

SECTION 1

Woodlands

Woodlands have been managed by people for hundreds of years and are an important feature of the British landscape. Over the centuries timber from Woodlands has been used for a variety of resources from building materials, furniture and tools, to the paper this is written on and as a fuel. Woodlands have also been used for grazing animals, particularly sheep, and have always been vital habitats for conservation due to the rich diversity of life they are home to.

Woodlands provide an abundance of places for animals that like to hide away, like roosting bats, nesting birds and dormice who will find woodpecker holes and deep crevices in trees in which to raise their young. Badgers will build their setts in woodland banks. It's not just Woodlands that are important! A single ancient tree can support hundreds of rare and unusual species of lichen, fungi, insects and plants. In the South West many of the Woodlands are ancient, meaning they have been in the landscape for more than 400 years.

There's no better habitat for observing seasonal changes. Woodlands provide an all year round attraction for the budding naturalist. A good starting point for exploring in Woodlands is to look under logs to see how many minibeasts live among the deadwood. Give it a go.



Top Woodland Outing Suggestions

- 1 Visit an RSPB Woodland Reserve, such as Nagshead, Garston Wood, Swell Wood or Arne, and learn which birds live in the woodland areas. See www.rspb.org.uk/reserves/habitat/woodland.aspx
- 2 Ask your local bat group to take you out on a bat hunt with a detector. See www.bats.org.uk
- 3 Visit a craftsperson who makes items from wood (this could be an artist or a wood turner, or other craftsperson)
- 4 Visit a hide in a woodland area to watch the wildlife (eg birds, badgers, foxes etc)



South West Spotlight On: Dormice

Dormice are small mammals that live in old Woodlands and hedgerows. Dormice have a reputation for being very sleepy because they can spend a lot of the year asleep! They hibernate over the winter time in tightly woven nests which they make amongst leaf litter on the ground where it is damp and cool. In the summer they spend most of the time above ground in the tree canopy and make breeding nests in woodland and scrub. They feed on flower seeds, nuts and insects. If food is scarce the dormouse can go into a torpor, which is like a very deep sleep, and means they can conserve energy.

