

Pine Marten

Wild New Forest
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First recorded in the New Forest in the mid-1990s after an absence of over 100 years, Pine Martens can again be found in New Forest woodlands. Sightings became more frequent through the early 2000s, and by 2010, they were being observed nearly every year. In 2016, a trail camera set up during our Hawfinch fieldwork unexpectedly captured footage of a Pine Marten. This exciting discovery sparked a deep fascination and commitment to studying the species and its status in the New Forest.

In 2021, Wild New Forest, in collaboration with Forestry England and The New Forest Badger Group, launched a new survey to better understand Pine Marten distribution and density across the Forest. Using trail cameras and thermal imaging, the survey focused on small, defined areas for intensive one-month monitoring sessions. Between 2021 and 2023, 12 different areas were surveyed, providing valuable insights into Pine Marten distribution across the Forest.

In 2024, the focus shifted to collecting hair samples for DNA analysis, aimed at investigating the genetic diversity of Pine Martens in the area. This ongoing work has presented significant challenges, particularly in securing sufficient samples.

Also in 2024, a new survey began in collaboration with Network Rail to monitor wildlife crossing points along the South-West Main Line, which traverses woodland east of Brockenhurst. This project involves using trail cameras to monitor potential crossing locations.

Between March and October, 2–3 days per week are dedicated to Pine Marten fieldwork, highlighting the extensive effort required to support the conservation and understanding of this elusive species.