

Wild New Forest

Guided Tours

Wild New Forest Guided Tours is a not-for-profit Community Interest Company managed by Marcus Ward and Emily-Louise. We are deeply passionate about the New Forest—its incredible biodiversity, rich history, and heritage—and about inspiring the next generation of naturalists.

Established in 2016, Wild New Forest began as a meeting of like-minded individuals sharing data and best practices. Today, our mission is to support the conservation of threatened and poorly understood species in the New Forest. We achieve this by conducting surveys and research, then sharing our findings with key stakeholders.

As a not-for-profit organization, the funds generated from our guided tours are reinvested into research and monitoring efforts for some of the Forest's rarest and most sensitive wildlife.

The New Forest is a small area with a big impact. Its diverse mix of habitats supports an extraordinary range of nationally and internationally significant wildlife, from birds and mammals to fungi, flora, and even dung beetles. This living, breathing ecosystem depends on intricate interactions: iconic megafauna like ponies and cattle play essential roles that support life all the way down to tiny, fascinating organisms like slime moulds, which clean the forest floor by consuming micro detritus.

We are passionate about raising awareness of this natural treasure. As Sir David Attenborough said, "People won't care about what they don't know." On our guided walks and boat trips, we celebrate the New Forest's incredible wildlife while exploring the unique interplay of history, tradition, and conservation that has shaped the landscape we see today. Traditional practices remain integral to preserving the Forest's biodiversity, and we are proud to share how past generations' stewardship has laid the foundation for the conservation efforts we continue today.

Our commitment extends to nurturing the next generation of wildlife enthusiasts. Through our Wildlife Explorers Club, supported by generous funding from Naturetrek, we offer free events designed to inspire young naturalists. Additionally, we collaborate with the Cameron Bespolka Trust and Naturetrek to run subsidized wildlife camps, giving teenagers hands-on experiences like moth trapping, camera trapping, bird ringing, and talks from leading conservationists.

Our research encompasses a wide range of species. Currently, we lead studies into the distribution and genetic diversity of the Pine Marten and the ecology of specialist woodland birds such as the Hawfinch. By combining cutting-edge techniques like GPS tracking with traditional fieldwork—monitoring nests, feeding, and roosting behaviour—we explore how these species interact with modern forestry practices.

Beyond the woodlands, the New Forest's coastline hosts rare saline habitats that support nationally important numbers of seabirds and other species. We participate in studies such as colour-ringing and tracking terns and gulls, alongside monthly counts and bird ringing projects involving both resident and migratory birds.