



# FLORA AND FAUNA OF EPPING FOREST

## Forest Management

Epping Forest is highly valued for its mosaic of rich habitats and density of rare species. For this reason, the forest has been identified as an 'Important Plant Area' and around two thirds of the forest is designated as a 'Site of Special Scientific Interest' and a 'Special Area of Conservation'. These give it legal protection and place special responsibilities on the City of London to manage it for wildlife.

Epping Forest's diversity is partly due to historic practices of grazing cattle, cutting grass for hay and removing tree branches (pollarding) for animal food and fuel. Pits dug for gravel also accidentally created many ponds. These practices used to be undertaken by 'commoners' (local people). However as they stopped using the forest in this way, plants grew taller creating more woodlands and fewer areas of grassland and heath. The forest is now managed by the City of London, who ensure wildlife is protected but allowing access for members of the public.



### Pond clearance

When ponds get overgrown, instead of allowing them to dry up, some plants are cleared to keep the pond healthy.



### Pollarding

Branches are cut 2m from the ground; prolonging the life of the tree and allowing much more light to reach the woodland floor, encouraging plants to grow at ground level. Epping Forest has more veteran pollarded trees than anywhere else in Britain and they need looking after.

You may see areas that have been newly pollarded. If you revisit them in a year or so you will see new growth.



### Grazing

Epping Forest has been grazed for over 1000 years and this continues today. Longhorn cattle act as natural lawn mowers helping to keep the "sward" at different heights maintaining a greater diversity of plants. They are an important tool for managing the wood pasture habitat (scattered trees surrounded by grass).

Bringing nature nearer