



The New Forest supports a large number of rare pond species but also rich and varied pond communities. It is recognised as an Important Stonewort Area, Important Area for Ponds, Important Freshwater Area and an important site for dragonflies – it is the UK's No.1 Flagship Pond site.

Dazzling dragonflies



In the hazy days of summer, ponds and streams come alive with dragonflies and damselflies. The New Forest is home to more than 50 different species (about two thirds of all the species recorded in the UK). Look out for the vibrant metallic colours of Emerald Damselflies on rushes around pond margins, the impressive Emperor Dragonflies constantly patrolling the water surface, or the striking Golden Ringed Dragonfly hunting out over the heaths. If you're really lucky you may also catch a glimpse of the illusive **Southern Damselfly**, one of the UK's rarest species.

Fragile ferns



Pillwort is a delicate aquatic fern confined to places where low nutrients, fluctuating water levels and grazing livestock limit competition from larger plants. It has declined both in Britain and the rest of Western Europe due to the decline of traditional pastoral landscapes, agricultural intensification, and pollution. Pillwort has been lost from nearly half its known sites in the UK, but in the New Forest it is still widespread and often abundant – making it one of the most important populations in Europe.

Swimming serpents



Ponds aren't just important to their permanent residents. All of the New Forest's mammals, including the grazing animals, make use of the ponds as an important source of water and many take advantage of the lush vegetation available in these oases during the dry summer months. The ponds also provide an important source of insect food, especially for bats and wetland birds, and top predators like **Grass Snakes** on the lookout for frogs and newts to have for dinner.

Why are the New Forest Flagship Ponds the UK's No. 1?

CLEAN WATER
The most important factor influencing the wildlife value of a pond is whether or not it is fed by clean, unpolluted, water. The New Forest ponds are naturally very low in nutrients, and free from the pollution seen elsewhere in the UK.

POND VARIETY
It's the variety of ponds at a landscape scale across the New Forest which sustains the biodiversity - from small acid pools to base-rich ponds; heathland pools to large woodland ponds; natural floodplain features to historic marl pits. It's a beautiful pond mosaic.

TEMPORARY PONDS
Over half of the ponds in the New Forest are temporary; a special type of pond habitat which has been lost from the wider countryside. Far from being a problem for wildlife, the plant and invertebrate communities of these ponds are specifically adapted to life in an ephemeral home.

TRADITIONAL GRAZING
The gentle disturbance associated with low density grazing animals in the New Forest is highly beneficial and a vital pond management technique. Grazing can prevent single plant species from dominating and create patches of bare ground where a wider range of non-competitive plant species can germinate.