

Dear Sir / Madam

I am writing to ask for your help. We've devised a survey to assess the condition of wood pasture and parkland, which we are asking landowners and volunteers alike to take part in.

Wood pasture is an important habitat, teeming with life and vital to preserve. The splendid trees they often contain are some of the oldest living things in our country. They are home to many rare and threatened species and provide a direct link with bygone landscapes.

If you can't picture what this habitat looks like, you are not alone. This is an understudied, historically overlooked habitat and awareness of its existence is low. Despite its value wildlife, we know little about how much wood pasture is left or what condition it is in. Your garden may be a fragment of old wood pasture without you even knowing it.

We know areas of wood pasture and parkland are still present, but there are no reliable statistics on its extent or condition. A provisional record of wood pasture and parkland was collated by Natural England using mainly historical maps and aerial photography. But we don't know whether all these wood pasture sites remain intact and what condition are they in. The inventory indicates that your land might contain ancient wood pasture or parkland, or remaining fragments of it.

We would be very grateful if you could help support our survey by either surveying the site yourself, or granting access to your land so that a volunteer can survey it.

The survey is very simple to conduct, is not intrusive and does not require samples to be taken; it is a simple structured walk in which various features are counted, estimated or noted.

We have over a decade of experience using a very similar process to the one proposed here. We produced a habitat inventory of approximately 43,000 traditional orchards and recruited volunteers to ground truth and assess 20% of these sites. The success of our traditional orchard project demonstrates the practical conservation value of carrying out large-scale landscape surveys using volunteer effort.

Please go to www.ptes.org/wpp-owner and let us know if:

1. You would like to carry out this survey yourself, or
2. If you are happy to let a volunteer survey your land.

If you have any further queries about the survey, please contact me on the telephone number or email address below.

Yours faithfully,

Megan Gimber

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