

## **POSSIBLE BIODIVERSITY IMPACTS OF INCREASED WOOD-FUEL HARVESTING IN ANCIENT WOODLAND IN ENGLAND**

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There is a long history of using wood as a fuel in England. Fuel, both domestic and industrial e.g. charcoal for iron smelting, is also a major use of the products from ancient woodland (particularly those managed as coppice). Use of wood for fuel declined during the 19<sup>th</sup> century as it was replaced by coal and coke and other coppice products similarly declined. Recent revived interest in woodfuel has led to suggestions that significant areas of ancient woodland might be brought back into management. Whilst this could be a positive move neither the woods nor their wildlife is as it was when the woods were still being actively coppiced. The methods of harvesting and extraction, and the surrounding environment have changed. There is a much greater appreciation of the value of dead wood which has tended to increase in woodland over the last 60 years. Whereas traditional wood-fuel management created conditions under which a wide variety of wildlife flourished, will there be similar benefits from a fuel revival?