

## Land cover

These estimates made within the account are based on the Countryside Survey 2000 (CS2000), which was a stratified sample survey that used detailed field recording and mapping to provide information on the stock and condition of habitats and landscapes in Great Britain in 1998. The survey covered both terrestrial and freshwater habitats but did not cover areas more than 75 per cent built up. A similar Northern Ireland Countryside survey (NICS2000) was also completed, but since comparable estimates for 1990 are not readily available, our data only covers Great Britain.

Using the results of the 1990 survey and CS2000, it is possible to estimate changes in the stock of land cover types between 1990 and 1998. Our data set out a summary of the main changes in land cover over the period, broken down by the type of change in the stock of land. There are various land cover types:

Woodland is dominated by trees which are more than 5 metres high when mature and which provide a canopy with a cover of greater than 25 per cent. It is divided between broad-leaved and mixed woodland (including yew woodland) and coniferous woodland.

Intensive agricultural land is divided into arable and horticultural land and improved grassland. Arable and horticultural land includes orchards and more specialist operations such as market gardening and commercial flower growing.

Semi-natural land includes neutral, calcareous and acid grassland (the classification of which depends upon the type of soil and the resulting types of vegetation communities); bracken and dwarf shrub heath (which are lands dominated by bracken, dwarf gorse or heath family species); wetlands such as fen, marsh, swamp and bog; and montane and coastal habitats.

The remaining land covered by the survey is classified as developed land and water bodies. Developed land consists principally of built up areas and gardens, but also includes inland rock (such as quarries and excavations as well as cliffs, screes, etc) and boundary and linear features such as hedgerows, walls and ditches as well as roads, tracks and railways.

Unsurveyed urban land is shown separately, in addition to sea and a small unclassified category.