

OUR TEAMS IN THE FIELD

Every year, some 60 IGN field staff carry out an inventory of forest resources in mainland France and Corsica. This enables the state, development and potential of the forest to be assessed, and can also provide a rapid response to specific questions during major climatic events such as the 2009 Klaus storm.

Access to properties

IGN field staff are authorized to access any property (forest, agricultural or other), given the mandatory nature of the 'national forest inventory' survey (visa no. 2017A084AG).

However, if the property is closed or not accessible, the field staff will contact the owner or manager. The owner or manager has an obligation to facilitate access to the inventory site.

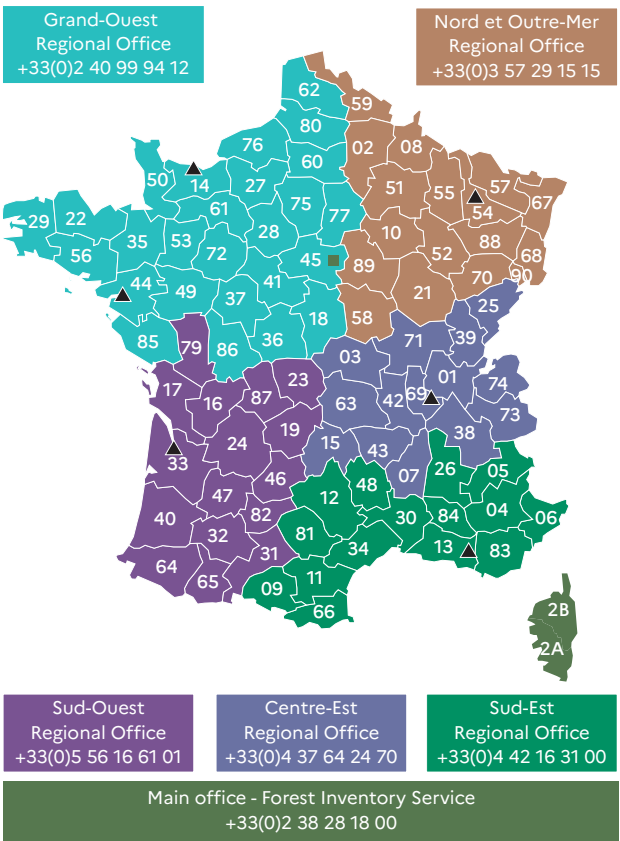


FRANCE'S FORESTS

Since the early 19th century, the surface area of French forests in mainland France and Corsica has doubled. This forest, with its great biological diversity, is dominated by broadleaved species (oak, beech, etc.), but is also characterised by coniferous trees in mountainous areas and artificial woodlands.

State of the forest as a resource

French forests are currently facing the effects of climate change and damaged by various pathogens (fungi, insects, bacteria, etc.). In 10 years (between 2012 and 2022), tree mortality has doubled and tree growth rate has slowed down by 4%. Therefore, ongoing information gathering is all the more essential to produce the information needed for sustainable forest management.



IGN AND THE NATIONAL FOREST INVENTORY

The French National Institute for Geographic and Forestry Information (IGN) is a public body under the supervision of the Ministries of Ecology and Forestry.

Its mission is to produce and disseminate reference data (open data) and representations (online and paper maps, geovisualisation) relating to knowledge of the national territory and French forests, as well as their evolution.

A public service mission

Created in 1958 to provide expert, neutral knowledge of the forest, the forest inventory is the only tool capable of describing all forest ecosystems and wood resources in public and private forests in mainland France and Corsica.

The information gathered in the field is used to define, implement and assess public policies relating to forests, ecology, energy, regional planning, climate change, and so on.

Since 2017, the 'national forest inventory' survey has been one of the mandatory surveys recognized as being of general interest and of statistical quality (in the same way as the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE)).

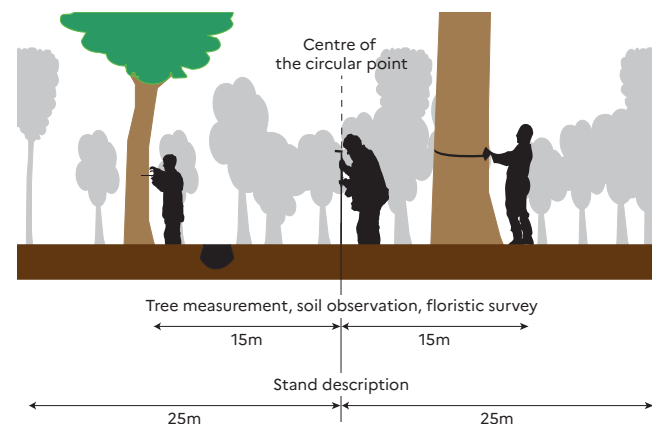
This label granted by the French National Council for Statistical Information is a guarantee of quality and objectivity.



THE INVENTORY METHOD

Every year, inventory staff travel all over France and Corsica to observe and measure all French forests, whether public or private.

The field surveys cover an annual sample of around 14,000 inventoried points throughout the country. Their locations are drawn at random after analysis of aerial photographs of over 100,000 sites evenly distributed across the territory.



Observations, measurements and descriptions

An inventory point, otherwise known as a plot, is located in a forest, copse, heathland or close to a hedgerow. It is visited by a team of two field staff who record the dendrometric, floristic, pedological features and other variables.

The field staff observe and measure the trees (species, circumference, height, growth, health, etc.). They describe the forest stand, lying deadwood, vegetation, regeneration and pressure from large ungulates, as well as the ecological conditions (slope, exposure and soil).

The existence of an inventory plot on a property should not in any way alter the owner's plans for the site, particularly as the plot is likely to be visited again within a 5 years interval to observe the evolution of the stand, the trees and the forest ecosystem.

CONFIDENTIAL DATA...

The data collected on each property is checked, recorded in databases and aggregated to provide results for a minimum area of several thousand hectares.

The exact coordinates of the inventoried area are not disclosed and are protected by statistical secrecy in application of law no. 51-711 of 7 June 1951, as amended. Confidentiality is strictly respected (no link is established between the data disseminated and the properties).

... invaluable for understanding France's forests

National and regional forest inventory results (statistical data, interactive mapping, and so on) are available free of charge on the <https://inventaire-forestier.ign.fr> website

Since July 2023, IGN has been running the French Forest Observatory in partnership with ONF, CNPF, OFB, France Bois Forêt and the Ministries of Agriculture and Ecological Transition.

This Observatory brings together reference information (including forest inventory data) on the current major forestry issues, as well as maps and services useful for understanding and managing forests at a regional level. <https://observatoire.foret.gouv.fr>

