

Making Space for Beavers

The majority of human-beaver conflicts typically occur within 20m of the water's edge. By allowing the natural regeneration of vegetation and planting with native riparian trees or shrubs, conflicts with beaver activities may be reduced and we can reinstate missing riparian habitats. This can reduce beaver foraging distances and protect more valuable plants, limit the impact of burrowing and increase bank stability. These riparian buffers provide habitat for other wildlife, capture undesirable sedimentary run-off, and assist with natural flood management.

There are several Countryside Stewardship grants available to help you restore riparian habitats on your land:

- **SW1:** 4m to 6m buffer strip on cultivated land at £515 per ha.
- **SW2:** 4m to 6m buffer strip on intensive grassland £235 per ha.
- **SW4:** 12m to 24m watercourse buffer strip on cultivated land £707 per ha.
- **SW11:** Riparian management strip £742 per ha.
- **SW12:** Making space for water £1,489 per ha.

Visit www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants/ for more information.

Legislation in England

On 1 October 2022, the legislation changed to protect wild-living beavers in England. Beavers are now listed in Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, making it an offence to deliberately capture, injure, kill or disturb beavers, or damage and destroy their breeding sites or resting places without a wildlife management licence from Natural England. This follows Scotland's decision to make beavers a protected species in 2019.

Beaver Class Licenses

There are several class licences that can be obtained from Natural England to manage beaver activities in England:

- **CL52**: to modify or remove Eurasian beaver dams or damaged burrows outside their breeding season
- **CL51:** to modify or remove dams, burrows and lodges at any time of year.
- **CL50**: To capture, transport and re-release beavers or modify or remove beaver dams, burrows and lodges at any time of year.

If you would like to attend class license training to apply for a license, please contact Natural England for more details visit www.gov.uk/guidance/beavers-how-to-manage-them-and-when-you-need-a-licence/

Get Support

There are several Beaver Management and Advisory Groups across England to help people coexist with beavers.

Please visit www.beavermanagement.org for more details and how to contact a BMG near you

Scan here

BEAVER MANAGEMENT



Living With Beavers

www.beavermanagement.org

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A Eurasian beaver foraging on the River Otter in Devon

What is a beaver?

The Eurasian beaver is a large, semiaquatic, herbivorous rodent which is native to Britain. It is found in freshwater environments such as rivers, streams, lochs and lakes, and lives in family groups typically of 2 to 5 animals which will contain a mated adult pair and any offspring from that year and the year before.

They were hunted to extinction in Britain roughly 400 years ago for their fur, meat and scent glands but have since been reintroduced. The population is now estimated to be greater than 2,000 animals across Scotland, England and Wales.

Beavers are known as a keystone species due to their ability to shape freshwater habitats which benefits many other animal and plant species. Beavers engineering activity can occasionally bring them into conflict with human infrastructure and farming systems. There are a number of practical prevention and mitigation interventions applied across Europe and North America that can be used to manage conflicts. Contact your local beaver management group to find out more information.

Beaver Activity

Beaver foraging

Beaver foraging opens the woodland canopy, boosting light access and enhancing plant, lichen, and bryophyte diversity. This improves foraging for birds and bats while increasing deadwood, offering cover and habitat for various species and supporting amphibians, birds, and fish. However, tree felling may pose risks in certain areas, necessitating protective measures like wrapping or fencing for sensitive trees near water bodies.

The following Countryside Stewardship grants are available to help you manage beaver foraging activities

- **BC3**: claim £6.34 per metre for wire mesh to prevent beaver foraging of permanent crops.
- **BC4:** claim up to £132.16 per wire mesh tree guard to prevent trees from being felled.

Beaver damming

Beavers construct dams to deepen water in their territory, enhancing safety, expanding foraging areas, and keeping their burrow entrances submerged. These dams also mitigate flooding downstream, drought, and wildfire risks but can lead to localised flooding upstream.

Countryside Stewardship grant **BC5** allows you to claim up to 90% of the costs to obtain expert advice and fund initial management of a beavers dam(s) to prevent serious damage to livestock crops, property or infrastructure

Beaver burrowing

Beavers build lodges and burrows for safety and breeding. Whilst burrowing can create more dynamic river systems, in some locations it can cause conflicts such as weakening flood banks and increasing bank erosion. These impacts can occasionally present a risk to nearby properties, infrastructure or farm machinery.



A woody leaky beaver dam in the River Otter catchment, Devon.

Common Questions

Do beavers carry disease?

Like all native mammals, beavers can be subject to common wildlife diseases and carry host-specific parasites. Long-term health monitoring of Scottish beavers has revealed they do not appear to be significant reservoirs of diseases and the risk of introducing significant diseases to humans, domestic animals or wildlife from captive-bred or wild beavers in Britain is considered low. Ongoing disease surveillance is being undertaken in Britain.

What will control the beaver population?

People often believe beavers have no predators in Britain due to the absence of the Eurasian wolf, lynx and brown bear but young beavers, particularly kits, are predated by a number of species.

Territorial fights, infections from fight wounds and road traffic accidents are likely to be the biggest cause of mortality in adults. With the availability of suitable habitat defining and controlling the size of the population.

Do beavers prevent fish passage?

The impact of beaver dams on migrating fish is complex and site-specific. Research in Scotland found brown trout benefited from habitats and food sources created by beaver dams. However, some dams can limit fish passage during low flow periods. Not all dams obstruct migration, and management can reduce dam height when needed. Guidelines also suggest creating river buffer zones and side channels for fish to bypass dams.