Beavers in Scotland:
Looking Forward to 2045

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Some recent history (short version!)

16th century – Last record of beavers in Scotland

1995 – Feasibility/desirability of reintroduction began

2009 – Scottish Beaver Trial started in Knapdale, Argyll

2012 – Tayside Beaver Study Group established

2015 – ‘Beavers in Scotland’ report to government

2019 – Beavers becomes a European Protected Species in Scotland.
  – Beaver Management Framework agreed.

2021 – Legal challenge to licensing approach applied to management.
  – Government shift in policy to enable wider beaver restoration.

2022/23 – Loch Lomond translocation + Spey/Beauly proposals being developed

September 2022 – ‘Scotland’s Beaver Strategy 2022-2045’
• Why do we need a strategy?
• How did we do it?
• What does it look like and what next?
• Why do we need a strategy?

Photo: Laurie Campbell
What’s happened?

**Beavers**
1995 - Zero beavers

2020/21 - 255 active beaver territories
+ further ongoing conservation translocations

**Policy/legislation**
2003 - First licence application for a beaver trial turned down

2022 - Wider restoration promoted

Photo: Lorne Gill/NatureScot
What’s happened? (contd.)

People

• Significant public and media profile

• Support amongst large numbers of the general public.

• Some major management challenges on Tayside in particular – lack of trust, feelings of powerlessness, implications for wider conservation initiatives.

• Polarisation - Strong aspirations and strong concerns.
‘Human-Wildlife conflict’

• Occurs when parties with strongly held views clash over species management and when one party tries to assert their interests at the expense of the other

• Often between stakeholders with conservation interests, and those with other, primarily economic, interests

• Can be damaging, divisive and intractable with impacts on conservation, livelihoods and relationships between organisations and individuals

We needed a new and better way forward....
• How did we do it?

Photo: Martin Gaywood
Scotland’s Beaver Strategy

Facilitated by, and using the methods of, the IUCN SSC Conservation Planning Specialist Group

www.cpsg.org
A collaborative process

Seven Principles:

• Plan to act
• Inclusive participation
• Sound science
• Good process design & neutral facilitation
• Decisions through consensus
• Generate and share products quickly
• Adapt to changing circumstance
A collaborative process

- **Organising Team** - representing spectrum of views
- **Stakeholder list** - influencers
- **Visioning workshops** – a shared view of the future to 2045
- **Ten year planning workshops** – actions and governance
- **Drafting, agreement and publication**

Up to 81 individuals at a workshop
One year
During covid!
Intensive
We used existing frameworks

- **Scottish Code for Conservation Translocations - 2014**
  (produced by National Species Reintroduction Forum, based on IUCN Guidelines)

- **Management Framework for Beavers in Scotland - 2019**
  (policy, guidance and actions developed with the Scottish Beaver Forum)

www.nature.scot
• What does it look like and what next?

Photo: Terry Whittaker
Scotland’s Beaver Strategy
2022-2045
The strategy document includes:

- Opportunities and challenges (political, economic, social, technological, legal, environmental)
- The strategy development process
- A vision for beavers in Scotland 2045
- Indicators of success
- Ten year plan: Actions 2022-2032
- Policy and programme links
- Strategy governance
- A ministerial foreword – Lorna Slater MSP
- List of supporting organisations
“Throughout Scotland, communities are supported in working together to maximise the ecosystem and wider benefits of beavers while minimising negative impacts.

The beaver population is actively expanded into appropriate areas; adaptive management and mitigation is used to protect assets and interests.”
The Implementation Plan 2022-2032

3 broad themes:

(Divided into goals, objectives and actions – with lead and partner organisations identified, timelines etc.)

- **Conservation Translocation**
  18 actions

- **Management and Mitigation**
  27 actions

- **Research and Innovation**
  28 actions
Taking the strategy forward

Scottish Beaver Advisory Group

• Governance of the strategy
  “…will monitor, review and guide implementation of the strategy”

• Representatives from the key land and water management, conservation, environmental etc. sectors

• Aims to foster collaborative work, and nurture trust and transparency between the different sectors

• Resourcing will be key
Summary

• Beaver reintroduction has had wide public support, but there have been major issues and concerns, especially on Tayside.

• Scotland’s Beaver Strategy was developed through a facilitated, collaborative process

• It is forward looking, and aims to “…reflect the aspirations and concerns of stakeholders as we anticipate an expanding beaver population being restored to Scotland.”

• A new ‘Scottish Beaver Advisory Group’ will contribute to the governance of the strategy.

• The strategy is ‘owned’ by the stakeholders – it is supported by 45 organisations.
Supporting organisations
Thank you!

Thanks to the Organising Team members (Sue Haysom, Kate Maitland, Karen Ramoo, Sarah Robinson, Helen Taylor), facilitators, support staff and stakeholder organisations who took part in the strategy process.