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Keystone species: their activity helps to support entire ecosystems
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Some benefits of beaver dams and canals:
- Dam and canal building creates a mosaic of watery habitats
- They slow, spread and store water to create a spongy landscape
- In times of drought, water is often still found in beaver ponds
- The dams reduce flood risk downstream during heavy rain
- Dams act as a filter to improve water quality in rivers and streams
- Slowing water flow encourages the growth of river plants and algae, therefore beaver ponds can absorb more carbon dioxide which helps prevent climate change
- Beavers create conditions that support abundant life along our rivers including frogs, kingfishers, snakes, dragonflies and otters.

Key features
- Thick, waterproof fur
- Large paddle-shaped tail
- Webbed feet for swimming propulsion
- Can hold breath for up to 15 minutes under water
- Large, iron-filled, orange front teeth, used to coppice trees

Challenges
Restoring beavers to their original locations can be a challenge - their return could affect those who live and farm the land nearby. There may be special trees people don't want to be coppiced or wetlands created where farming takes place. These challenges can be overcome with management and collaboration.