



# Beaver Trust in 2025





**BEAVER  
TRUST**

## Beaver Trust in 2025

**What a year it's been. We've had successes in all areas of our work and are thrilled to see significant progress in beaver restoration right across Britain.**

Policy announcements in England and Wales mean we can now envisage more catchment-scale projects where beaver restoration boosts biodiversity, improves water quality and increases our resilience to extreme weather.

This year has also highlighted the urgent need for beavers in Britain. Met Office statistics confirm that summer 2025 was the hottest on record, putting landscapes and species under huge heat and drought pressure. At the same time, flooding is becoming more common. The Environment Agency estimates that 8 million properties (1 in 4) could be at risk of flooding by 2050.

Research has shown that beavers build resilience into our landscapes, protecting communities from flooding, drought and wildfire. As extreme weather becomes more common, we celebrate our successes but recognise that the benefits won't truly be felt until beaver populations are far greater in number.



# Policy & Influence headline goal:

## Each government in Britain has, and is implementing, a fit for purpose and ambitious national beaver strategy by 2030

The environment is a devolved issue and Scotland, England and Wales are at different stages of beaver restoration. We work with each government in different ways to help them take the next steps.

Our traffic light system (right) tracks progress.

**Scotland** ●

**England** ●

**Wales** ●

Status in each country in November 2025

**In February, Westminster announced that wild beaver releases will be licenced in England. This long-awaited development paves the way for the widespread return of wild living beavers.**

Read our reflections on the news in this blog: [Right to Roam: What next for wild beavers in England.](#)

### Timeline of wild releases in England

**Feb 2025** - Announcement that wild releases will be licenced in England.

**Mar 2025** - The first authorised wild beaver release took place in Dorset.

**Mar 2025** - A two-month window for expressions of interest for wild release licences opened. To date, nine projects have been invited to submit a full application and the first decisions are expected soon.

**Nov 2025** - Natural England started consulting on a long-term management plan for beavers in England.

**Early 2026** - Expressions of interest will reopen.

**End of 2026** - The long-term management plan is due to be published.

**In October, the Welsh Government announced their plans to recognise beavers as a native species and grant them European Protected Species status.**

We have been working hard with our partners in Wales to call for this change, and in June our Policy Lead attended the Welsh Labour Conference as part of these efforts.

This is a welcome step towards allowing wild beavers to return to Wales. [Read our response.](#)

Scotland has long been ahead of England and Wales in beaver restoration. This year, we have unfortunately seen delivery of Scotland's Beaver Strategy stall slightly.

Although there have been more releases, and NatureScot is now inviting expressions of interest for the wild release of beavers to new catchments, we would like to see more ambition from the Scottish Government.

Beaver Trust is a proud member of the Riverscapes Partnership. Alongside The Rivers Trust, National Trust and The Woodlands Trust, we launched the [Making Space for Water campaign](#) at Westminster in June.

One of the biggest challenges to beaver restoration is the risk of conflict with existing land management practices. Financially supporting landowners to make space for water and wildlife along rivers could prove pivotal for beavers' widespread return. If we step back human activity and give beavers space to engineer wetlands, the conflict significantly reduces.

We launched the campaign at Westminster in June, held a fringe event at the Labour Party conference in September and handed in a letter signed by 25 MPs to the Prime Minister in October.

The Making Space for Water petition passed the 10,000 signature milestone in November, showing clear public interest in restoring our waterways. The Westminster Government now needs to formally respond to the campaign asks.

### **The Making Space for Water campaign is asking the Government to:**

- Create a network of connected, nature-rich river corridors – including buffers, riparian tree planting and wetlands.
- Simplify financial incentives for farmers and landowners to restore and enhance these river corridors.



# Restoration headline goal:

On our way to restoring beavers across Britain,  
we aim to have beavers living wild in 45% of  
counties across Britain by 2045

When measuring progress, we consider wild populations from: official releases, unauthorised releases that have since been sanctioned by the government, and natural colonisation from those populations.

November 2025  
**21%**

In 2025, we facilitated 22 beaver releases across Scotland, England and Wales.

- The first authorised wild beaver release in England took place at a National Trust property in Purbeck, Dorset.
- A family of five and a beaver pair were released in the Glen Affric National Nature Reserve in the northwest Highlands. More beavers will join them in the future to establish a thriving population.

## New colleagues

**Cristin Lambert** and **George Layton** (Field Officers) are working on the ground in Scotland to help people live alongside beavers.

Through trapping and translocation they are sourcing beavers for new sites across Britain.



Wild beavers released in Dorset

As we prepare for more wild releases across Britain, we know we can't do everything ourselves. It's vital that we increase the knowledge, skills and confidence of the wider environmental sector. Work this year included:

- 26 training sessions delivered for the Mammal Society and the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.
- The Restoration Team presented their research at the 10th International Beaver Symposium in Inverness (see pictures below).
- Dr Rob Needham, Beaver Trust's Restoration Manager, presented at the Environment Agency's annual fisheries conference.



Beaver Trust has been translocating beavers since 2021. It doesn't take long for beavers to make a difference to the land around them. These blog posts talk about the changes seen at Wyre Forest and Argaty Red Kites.



Commissioned by NatureScot, the Restoration Team completed the fourth and largest beaver survey in the River Tay catchment and surrounding areas.

In the next stage of the project the University of St Andrews will use the data to design a method for monitoring and assessing beaver populations across large areas.

In February, the Environment Agency included beavers in their Natural Flood Management guidance for the first time. It is an encouraging sign of increased acceptance of beavers and the role they can play in our landscapes.

# Communication & Education headline goal: Wild living beavers in Britain are accepted by 75% of the public by 2030

In March 2025, we worked with YouGov to measure public acceptance. The poll showed that 72% of people supported beavers living wild in Britain - a very encouraging starting point.

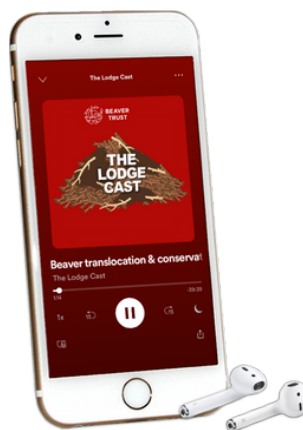
*All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2050 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 28th - 31st March 2025. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).*

March 2025  
**72%**

This level of acceptance is something to celebrate but we cannot be complacent. We plan for the British beaver population to grow to tens of thousands. As it does, their impacts will be felt more widely. We have seen elsewhere in Europe that acceptance in the early years can decrease as a result.

Our balanced and informative communications about beaver impacts, benefits and management options are crucial. In the last year, we have been talking to the public and to people concerned about the return of beavers.

[Series 7 of our podcast](#) focused on beavers and people with conversations about the human elements in beaver restoration.



## New colleague

**Galatea Hoyle**  
(Communications Assistant)  
is bringing creativity and energy to increasing beaver awareness and understanding.

[Series 8](#) takes a closer look at how beavers help reverse biodiversity loss, through the lens of selected species.

You might also enjoy these blog posts from the last 12 months



5 live screenings hosted by Beaver Trust

62 private screenings

Over 2,300 viewers

**Balancing the Scales** is Beaver Trust's third documentary. It explores the delicate balance between beaver restoration and the conservation of migratory fish. Its stunning visuals, insights from leading experts, and narration by Dame Joanna Lumley has earned it excellent feedback and selection for three film festivals.

If you haven't had the chance to watch it yet, it is now [available online](#).

The interactions between beavers and migratory fish are complex and context-dependent, and continue to prompt important questions. This film has started valuable conversations.



It gave me an explanation of how the Beaver dams allow the water flow to slow down but not be blocked completely and then how the fish can usually bypass the dams when migrating." (Charles - Bristol screening)

I went in with the belief that beaver dams do not pose a risk to fish passage, and that the overall benefit of the habitats they create establishes a safe haven for fish. The film however highlighted a more nuanced view with different stakeholders, explained the challenges and that it isn't as clear cut as a yes or no answer" (Andrew - Bristol screening)



We have been developing a practical framework to assess the passability of beaver dams for migratory fish. We are working with a range of stakeholders and government agencies, and hope to publish it in 2026.

## New colleagues

**Oscar Chambers-Smith** (Senior Education Officer) and **Sophie Mackaness** (Education Officer) are rolling out our education project.

A video shown at Protect Our Planet 2025 - a live-streamed event for schools - reached up to 200,000 people.

In the first year of our education project, children at eight primary schools began a three-year journey to inspire nature connectedness through assemblies, workshops and visits to nearby beaver sites.



**I won't forget the genuine delight of the pupils while spotting beaver bite marks on trees**



Five more schools have now joined for their first year in the programme, expanding the project to Scotland and the North of England.

All schools can access free, curriculum-linked resources through our brand new [Education Hub](#).

# Fundraising & Future Plans

Our vision is for thriving waterways vibrant with life, where beavers are embraced as a vital part of our biodiverse landscape. From school children to policy makers there has been a lot more embracing of beavers this year.

There is more work ahead and challenges to overcome but progress is noticeable. Supporters like you have made it possible. We work with the drive and determination demanded by the climate and ecological crises. But you provide funding that turns ambition into action. Thank you.

## New colleague

**Ben Sinfield** (Senior Development Officer) is part of the Fundraising Team, helping Beaver Trust to grow its impact.

2026 will see more wild beaver releases. We will ensure they are welcomed, well-managed and supported by government policy. Through restoration, communication & education, and influencing policy we will bring about change that's urgently needed.

In May, we will host a conference in Newcastle. 'Beavers across Britain - science, practice and policy' will bring together the people driving beaver restoration across Britain. We will tackle challenges, share best practice and spark collaborations.

Sadly, Sandra King will be leaving us at the end of February. At the time of writing, recruitment of a new CEO is in progress. Both Sandra and the trustees are committed to a smooth transition to ensure Beaver Trust's work and impact goes from strength to strength.

**Thank you for your commitment to beaver restoration and all that comes with it: climate resilience, rebounding biodiversity and regenerated landscapes. We hope you continue with us on our journey in 2026.**

## Please stay in touch



**Sandra King**  
Chief Executive Officer  
[sandra@beavertrust.org](mailto:sandra@beavertrust.org)  
+44 7825 818155



**Jolene Macnaughton**  
Senior Fundraising Officer  
[Jolene@beavertrust.org](mailto:Jolene@beavertrust.org)  
+44 7493 718436



**Ben Sinfield**  
Senior Development Officer  
[bens@beavertrust.org](mailto:bens@beavertrust.org)  
+44 7878 857593