

# Our beavers have been busy

It is just over six months since beavers returned to Knapdale and already they are changing the landscape. *Simon Jones*, Scottish Beaver Trial Project Manager, tells us more.

Those keeping up with the latest on the Scottish Beaver Trial (SBT) blog (sign up at [www.scottishbeavers.org.uk](http://www.scottishbeavers.org.uk)) will already know that our beavers have been really busy over the last few months making their new pads feel more like home. Dams have been created, burrows constructed, trees felled – and those visiting the trial site at Knapdale would be hard pushed not to see visual signs of Scotland's newest reintroduction near the water's edge.

A family of four was released into Loch Coille Bharr, a family of four into Loch Linne and the final family of three released into Creag Mhor Loch. Unfortunately, shortly after release a juvenile male from the Loch Linne family died (a post-mortem proved

inconclusive). The family at Loch Coille Bharr and the remaining three animals at Loch

Linne settled almost immediately and are regularly observed and tracked by field staff and volunteers.

For the first week, the third family at Creag Mhor also appeared to have settled down and they were recorded swimming and feeding as normal. But one week later, it all changed when the adult female disappeared. The time of her disappearance coincided with unauthorised shooting heard in the same area.

Sensing something was up, the adult male, Andreas, left the original release loch and after a few weeks was discovered at Lakeland Marine Farm at Port Na Moine near Kilmartin. The team set about monitoring him for a couple of nights before moving in with their nets. Once recaptured, it was clear that he had lost a little weight but was otherwise in good condition. Samples were taken and a new tracking device fitted before he was released back into his original loch. Temporary fencing was put in place and a stream leading out from the site was marked with an unfamiliar scent of another adult beaver to encourage Andreas to stay in his loch. But as a solitary male in search of his family unit, only time will tell if these

#### LEFT TOP TO BOTTOM

Project staff joined beaver experts from around the globe for a symposium in Lithuania.

When beavers fell a tree, the stump left behind will normally begin to regrow. Beavers change the structure of the woodland edge that they live in and make it more suitable for a wide range of species to live there.

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**ABOVE**  
Andreas is recaptured and returned to his original loch but the search continues for the two missing females.



**LEFT**  
Gordon Buchanan and the BBC Autumnwatch team joined Field Officer Jenny Holden for a spot of beaver watching. The feature was broadcast on 3 October.



deterrents will work. Meanwhile, the SBT team is still busy trying to locate the two remaining beavers in his family.

In recent months, new reports of beaver activity just outside the release site have come in and we are all hoping that at least one of our females may return to the fold.

The Scottish Beaver Trial is a time-limited trial reintroduction of the European beavers to Knapdale, Mid-Argyll. Scottish Natural Heritage is coordinating the independent scientific monitoring of the trial, reporting on whether the conditions of the licence are being fully addressed. For more information on the monitoring being undertaken visit [www.snh.org.uk/scottishbeavertrial](http://www.snh.org.uk/scottishbeavertrial)