



Beaver business

Beaver news update: August 2009

www.scottishbeavers.org.uk

An update from the Scottish Beaver Trial



In May we were delighted to announce that the Scottish Beaver Trial had officially begun! After an absence of 400 years beavers were returned into the wild in Scotland. We are now pleased to provide you with the first update from the field so you can hear how our beavers have been doing.



On 29 May, we released 11 beavers in three family groups into three different and carefully selected sites within the trial area in Knapdale, Mid-Argyll. A family of four was released into Loch Coille Bharr, a family of four into Loch Linne and the final family of three was released into Creag Mhor Loch.

Our trial reintroduction is about finding out how the beaver impacts on the Scottish environment, and how the animals cope in their new habitat. Observation and tracking began immediately post-release. Unfortunately, shortly after release, a juvenile male from the Loch Linne family died. A post-mortem was carried out by independent veterinary professionals, but the results were inconclusive. This was a sad loss to the SBT team, however it has not affected the other animals in the family and all these animals appear to be in good health and at ease in their new surroundings.



The families based at Loch Linne and Loch Coille Bharr have settled in well and are actively feeding on vegetation around the water's edge. They are regularly tracked and seen by field staff and volunteers. The family in Loch Linne have been particularly busy building a lodge under a large boulder. They have also quickly created an area of 'beaver coppice' amongst dense woodland near the boat jetty at this secluded site and new shoots are already emerging from the stumps of some of the trees they have felled.

Much like the others, the third family at Creag Mhor also appeared to have settled down well for the first week, and they were recorded swimming and feeding as normal. One week later, an unauthorized shooting was heard in the area which coincided with some disruption within the family. The adult female disappeared and the adult male and juvenile female moved on from the area. The shooting incident has been reported to the police for further investigation. We are now working to recapture the adult male and juvenile female and plan to return them to the original release site.

Simon Jones, Scottish Beaver Trial Project Manager, said: "Despite the unexpected events with the Creag Mhor family, we are delighted that the majority of beavers have settled quickly, and are behaving naturally. The animals are being routinely observed and recorded as part of the trial in accordance with the licence conditions set by the Scottish Government.



"These are wild animals and we expected some movement which is one of the reasons why they are monitored so closely. The Beaver Field Officer, Jenny Holden, and her team of volunteers have been working around the clock to help with tracking activities. Tracking requires a combination of methods including looking for field signs, observing beaver activity, and following radio signals from the transmitters attached to the animals. Radio signals can be lost depending on the beavers' movements and the terrain surrounding them. It can take time to establish the location of certain individuals as tracking techniques do not always provide instant results."

The numbers of people involved in the project continues to grow and Jenny has a group of around eight regular volunteers who are assisting with many aspects of the trial, focusing mainly on tracking and recording animals in the field. Three beaver-training days were held in May and the first volunteer training night was held on the 1st of July.



You can keep up-to-date with the latest news from the field by visiting www.scottishbeavers.org.uk. From there you can access our Field Officer's Blog as well as gaining more information about our trial.

Despite generous grant awards and public donations, both charities (SWT and RZSS) are continuing to raise the funds for the Trial. If you would like to support this project, please make a donation to the Scottish Beaver Trial. You can do this online at www.swt.org.uk/donate or by sending a cheque made payable to "Scottish Wildlife Trust" to Scottish Beaver Trial, Scottish Wildlife Trust, Cramond House, 3 Kirk Cramond, Edinburgh EH4 6HZ.

Many thanks for your interest and support.

[Scottish Beaver Trial Project Team](#)



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The Scottish Beaver Trial is a partnership project between the [Royal Zoological Society of Scotland](#), the [Scottish Wildlife Trust](#) and host [Forestry Commission Scotland](#) to undertake a time-limited trial reintroduction of European beavers to Knapdale, Mid-Argyll. For more information, visit www.scottishbeavers.org.uk. The Scottish Government has asked [Scottish Natural Heritage](#) to coordinate the independent scientific monitoring of the trial, reporting on whether the conditions of the licence are being fully addressed on the ground.

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