

## **DRAFT NOVEMBER 2012**

### **Welcome**

Welcome to the website of the Tayside Beaver Study Group (TBSG).

This group was established in May 2012 in response to a decision by the Environment Minister, to tolerate and study beavers which had become established across the Tay Catchment.

This web site includes a range of information about our work and advice. It will be updated regularly to give details about the projects we are undertaking and also to provide advice on mitigating damage to other land use interests.

*Suggest the headings highlighted in yellow below are opened via tabs or separate pages.*

### **Agreed Terms of Reference (Agreed at Inaugural Meeting 3 May 2012)**

#### **1. Background**

There is currently a breeding population of beavers living in the wild in Tayside. The Minister for Environment has decided that these animals should be allowed to remain in place for the duration of the official trial beaver reintroduction in Knapdale in Argyll. At the end of the trial period in 2015, he will take a decision on the future of beavers in Scotland – both those in Knapdale and on Tayside.

#### **2. Aims of the Group**

The group has two principal aims:

- To gather additional information and monitor impacts of the Tayside beavers on other wildlife and land uses in the area, to help inform Ministers' decisions on the future of beavers in Scotland in 2015; and
- To help identify a variety of means to resolve any conflicts between beavers and land uses in the area and provide advice and practical help to land owners at a local level, and to consider how these means could be used more widely in the future.

The group will agree a programme of work to achieve these aims.

The group will commence in early 2012 and run until Ministers decide the future of beavers living in the wild in Scotland in 2015.

### **3. Membership**

The group will be chaired by David Bale, SNH Area Manager for Tayside and Grampian.

The group shall comprise one representative from each of the following organisations:

- Royal Zoological Society Scotland (RZSS)
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency
- Scottish Government (SG)
- Scottish Land and Estates (SLE)
- Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)
- Scottish Wild Beaver Group (SWBG)
- Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT)
- Tay District Salmon Fishery Board (TDSFB)
- NFUS
- ConFor

The group may invite other individuals to attend to provide advice.

The SG representative would co-ordinate interests across central Government including the Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate (RPID), Science Advice for Scottish Agriculture (SASA), and Veterinary Advisors.

### **4. Running of the Group**

The group will agree amongst itself how the group should be run, including the frequency and location of meetings.

SNH will provide a secretariat for the Group.

### **5. Reporting**

This group will report annually on its activities to the Minister for Environment, and provide briefings as necessary to the National Species Reintroduction Forum.

### **6. Resources**

The work of the group will be supported primarily from the existing resources of its members.

SNH has up to £50,000 pa over the next three financial years (12/13 to 14/15) to contribute to the costs of gathering additional information to help inform the Minister's decision in 2015 on the future of beavers in Scotland. This is in addition to the current population survey being carried out. The deliberations of the group will help to inform SNH's decisions as to how to deploy these resources.

## 7. Exclusions

The remit of the group does not extend to the following activities:

- Promotional work designed to increase support for beaver reintroduction
- Compensation to land managers for any loss incurred from these beavers
- Monitoring and regulation of private collections
- Running or monitoring of the Scottish Beaver Trial at Knapdale
- Investigation and management of any beavers found outwith the Tay and Earn river catchments (*precise area to be confirmed*)
- Decision on any licence applications for the release of beavers in Scotland

## About Us

The Tayside Beaver Study Group is made up of a small number of representatives from a range of organisations involved with beavers.

Our current membership is:

David Bale	Scottish Natural Heritage (Chair)
Roisin Campbell-Palmer	Royal Zoological Society of Scotland
Hugh Dignon	Scottish Government
Jamie Farquhar	ConFor
David Gemmell	Scottish Land and Estates
Simon Jones	Scottish Wildlife Trust
Ian Lorimer	Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
Ian Mackintosh	National Farmers Union Scotland
Alan Ross	Scottish Wild Beaver Group
James Scott	Scottish Natural Heritage
David Summers	Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board

SNH also provides the secretariat to the TBSG.

## Legal Situation

The following information is based on legal advice received by SNH. It is not a definitive interpretation of the law, which only a Court can provide.

Beavers are not presently protected in Scotland and it remains an offence to release or allow to escape from captivity a beaver without a licence from SNH.

Possession of a beaver, alive or dead, which has been taken from the wild in a European Union Member State, is an offence without a licence from SNH.

Those studying or watching beavers should ensure that their presence does not result in the disturbance of neighbouring protected species of wildlife or their habitats

Landowners wishing to control beavers may do so, provided that conditions on firearms certificates are adhered to and that the beaver is not subsequently taken into their possession. In effect, this means that legal beaver control is not straightforward. Please use the contact form elsewhere on this page, or contact SNH directly for more information. In the longer term, it is possible that practical mitigation will be more successful than removal of an animal.

It is important to us that valuable information is not lost if animals are controlled. We would urge anyone who feels that beaver control is the only possible solution to contact SNH prior to taking any action.

Contact details:-

## **Our Work to date**

A study of the population and distribution of beavers across Tayside was undertaken by SNH in 2010 and can be accessed here ([link](#)).

TBSG members have been involved in the installation of a flow control device, which helps to prevent dams causing problem flooding. We are involved in other practical mitigation projects such as tree protection and are happy to offer advice to landowners who have beavers present. More information is available on the advice page of this website.

As of December 2012, We are about to embark on our most significant project yet to better understand the health and genetic status of the Tayside beavers. This involves trapping a sample of animals and taking blood samples, some measurements and getting a vet to examine the animals for potential parasites. The animals will then be released, under licence, where they were caught.

## **Advice for Land Owners and Managers**

The TBSG is keen to provide advice on practical solutions that may reduce conflict between beavers and other uses of land and water. If you have beavers on your land and would wish for advice on any issues arising from their presence, please do contact ....

We can offer advice on issues such as:

Flow control devices for beaver dams;  
Tree protection;  
Flood Bank protection;

*Link to Delvine footage?*

## Contact us

Who to add?  
SNH; SWBG; SWT etc