



Beaver Update

September 2026

Pete Short and Jonathan Willet (10 October 2026)

Beaver Population Summary

Year 1 releases – 18

Year 2 releases – 15

Year 3 releases – 7

Total = 40

2024 wild-born kits – 2 (from 2 families)

2025 wild-born kits – 18 (from 8 families)

2026 wild-born kits – 15 (from 8 families)

Total = 35

Total of 75 (including, possibly, 2 beavers outwith the National Park boundary – Fochabers/ Spey Mouth).

Activity

- Rothiemurchus (Lochan Mor/ Lily Loch): Beavers still active on the site. No kits seen during the kit watch period. Annual landscape assessment completed (year 3). Scattered feeding signs upstream of Aviemore along the Spey.
- Kinrara 1: Beavers are still active on this site. The existing beaver dam has breached and the level of Loch Alvie is dropping (see Mitigation section)
- Kinrara 2: Beavers are still active on this site.
- Kinrara 3: No beavers seen on site this month.
- Kinrara 4: Limited activity on site. The low (4m by 30cm) dam on the outflow of the Bogach has been submerged by the increase in water levels after the heavy rains in late September.
- Glen Tromie: Fresh feeding activity upstream from the release site on the Tromie, almost all Rowan trees.



- Insh Marshes: Beavers still active on site and have explored nearly all of the reserve.
- Inshriach: Beavers are still active on the site.
- Loch Morlich 1: Beavers are still active on the site. One sub-adult seen at 1130 during the canoe survey.
- Aviemore area: No reported activity this month. This area will be surveyed on land and by canoe in September.
- Kingussie Grazings: Some fresh feeding activity.

Sites outwith Kingussie to Aviemore

- Garmouth beaver: One report of two beavers in Fochabers/ Spey Mouth area – still to be confirmed.
- Laggan Bridge: Fresh feeding signs seen along the Spey.
- Boat of Garten: Feeding activity recorded up and downstream of the burrow.
- Grantown between the A95 bridge and the Cairn Distillery: Fresh activity found.
- River Nethy (below the Telford bridge): Single beaver seen on camera earlier in the month.

Monitoring and Mitigation Plan Actions

- Monthly patrols of release sites undertaken.
- Historic beaver dam removal site. A single beaver was seen on a trail camera twice this month.
- One complete dam was built on the inflow river to Loch Morlich in early September, near the Hayfield (10m long and 45cm high) and two other attempts at damming in the area – ongoing bi-weekly monitoring taking place in communication with partner organisations and the landowner. The dam was partially breached after the 8 September following heavy rain and has now almost completely washed away. Weekly monitoring of the site.
- Weekly site visits to the Kinrara dam, monitoring the water levels on Loch Alvie. The dam was being added to and rose from 1m to 1.3m between July and September. Two adjacent landowners raised their concerns about the impact on their access roads and it was agreed to apply for a licence to notch the dam to lower the water level and then install a flow device. The licence was granted on the 24 September two days after it was applied for. By the time the heavy rain of the Tuesday and raised the water level enough to breach the dam and the water was flowing very



strongly through it. The water level of Loch Alvie had dropped 28cm by the 2 October, so weekly monitoring is resuming and if the beavers leave the dam with the breach open, no further action will be taken.

- Large trees that fell over a year ago into the River Nethy Confluence that were collecting debris were initially reported as a beaver dam. A site meeting with the Spey Fishery Board, the landowners and tenant farmer was arranged the day after the call about this to the Beaver Team. As the water was flowing over the structure it could not be determined that it was a dam on the day of the site visit. The next day the water level had dropped, and the Beaver Project Manager visited the site and determined it was not a beaver dam. Subsequently the material and fallen trees were partially removed by the Spey Fishery Board staff, with landowner agreement, as they felt the material was impeding salmon passage upstream. A meeting to discuss woody material in this part of the Nethy, as well as fish passage, flooding and erosion is being arranged in November.
- Beavers have been feeding on 60+cm diameter Aspens on the shores of Loch Alvie, this was noted on the 25 September during the canoe survey. A later site visit determined that of the seven large trees there, three had been felled. It was decided to protect two of the four remaining trees and also another tree at Allt Dibheach (Loch Alvie outflow).
- Meeting with Rothiemurchus Estate to discuss visitor use of the Lochan Mor site and the fact that some people have been standing on top of the beaver lodge. It was agreed to install people counters at the Inverdrue and Milton Cottage ends of the access track and prepare new signage for close to the beaver lodge explaining about the legal status of beavers and what constitutes illegal disturbance to them.
- Suspected new beaver territory near the confluence of the Truim. A site visit with the landowner has been arranged in November to discuss beaver ecology, look at the feeding signs and walk the riverbank to see if a burrow is visible.

Raising Awareness and Understanding

- Cairngorms Beaver Group meeting, 22 September
- Monitoring and Mitigation Group meeting, 23 September
- Led walks in Glenmore for EuroWildcat conference delegates. 50 participants
- Manned a beaver stand of the NPUK conference. 40 participants.
- Led canoe day for NPUK conference delegates. 12 participants



- Led a Beaver Walk to the Acres, Kingussie as part of the Badenoch Heritage Festival. 30 participants

***N.B.** If beavers are found in an area where the landowner was not previously aware of their presence, the Park Authority will contact that landowner. The Park Authority does not routinely contact landowners with general updates; this monthly update does that. There are WhatsApp Groups for landowners around releases sites and also in any high impact areas, which have beavers present e.g. Laggan.*

Summary of the Beaver Field Sign Canoe Survey of the Spey

September 25 to 2 October

Friday 25 September

Loch Morlich and Loch Alvie

There was not a great deal of fresh beaver feeding signs found round Loch Morlich, the bulk of the feeding was in the inflow to Loch Morlich, it is also where the greatest density of willows is. There is a bit of feeding activity on the outflow of Loch Morlich, The Luineag, but this may just be the beavers from the inflow. Loch Alvie showed plenty feeding around the loch side. This seems to be why the dam was increased in height to allow easier access to the trees there. Most of the feeding activity is from the memorial peninsula to the northern end of the loch.

Monday 28 September

Spey Dam to Lochan Uvie

Beaver feeding sign was found on almost all the palatable trees on this stretch, however large stretches have no or very few palatable trees, mainly the sections with flood embankments. Poor condition of riverbanks and flood embankments was noted where there was erosion caused by sheep or cattle having access to these areas. The Laggan beaver was still active on site. A suspected territory was found upstream of the confluence of the Truim and Spey, there was a good amount of fresh feeding signs to indicate that the beaver was living there.



Tuesday 29 September

Lochan Uvie to Kingussie

Beaver feeding sign was found on almost all the palatable trees on this stretch. There was a large stretch of Alder dominated (unpalatable) riparian woodland down to Newtonmore Golf course. Very few feeding signs found here. Some feeding on willows along the banks at Pitmain Farm and on Sycamores at The Dell, Kingussie. No indication of a territorial beaver as the feeding was of various ages and not concentrated.

Wednesday 30 September

Kingussie to Dalfaber

Known territories confirmed through Insh Marshes and Kinraig. More feeding upstream of the Inshriach territory, there are more beaver there, so they are moving further afield to eat. Another territory on the Spey at Kinrara. No sign of a territory in the Aviemore stretch of the Spey.

Thursday 1 October

Dalfaber to Grantown-on-Spey

A new territory is suspected between Dalfaber and Kinchurdy, again regular feeding signs of various ages along the river. Lots of activity on the island at the Cairn Distillery.

Friday 2 October

Grantown-on-Spey to Advie Bridge.

One feeding sign was seen on an exposed pine root, no evidence of beaver activity other than that on the whole stretch. The dominant riparian woodland here is Alder and the river loses height, so is noticeable faster flowing than the other four stretches we paddled.

Summary

Beaver feeding activity is more widespread on the Spey than last year, as you would expect with an expanding population. There were two new suspected territories found, bring the total to 15 in the upper Spey catchment, almost all of these are on the Spey. Beaver burrows were very hard to find, although they are the structures that beavers are using to live in, on the Spey. Over time these should become more obvious. The



beavers are still favouring the best available feeding habitat, so at the moment the location of prospective new territories can be pinpointed fairly accurately.