Appendix 1: Translocation project form

Purpose of the form

- To provide a checklist of the issues to consider and address when planning conservation translocations in Scotland
- To summarise the key information needed to underpin consultation with other people or organisations that may be affected by a translocation
- To serve as a formal Project Proposal Form where translocations require permissions from Scottish Natural Heritage (including the granting of species licences)
- To provide a mechanism to document and record translocations to help inform future projects

What is in the form?

The form is structured as follows:

Sections 1-4	Contact details, the species involved and the purpose of the translocation
Section 5	Details of the donor and release sites
Section 6	Translocation methodology
Section 7	Summary of the benefits
Section 8	Permits and legal issues
Section 9	Assessment of biological risks
Section 10	Assessment of socio-economic risks
Section 11	Details of monitoring and ongoing management plans
Section 12	Summary of communication plan
Sections 13-14	Data confidentiality statement and declaration

Do I have to fill it in?

- Completion of this Translocation Project Form is recommended for all conservation translocations in Scotland as part of 'best-practice' planning
- Completion is mandatory for all conservation translocations which require licences from SNH

How to fill it in

This *Translocation Project Form* is based on the *Scottish Code for Conservation Translocations* and associated *Best Practice Guidelines for Conservation Translocations in Scotland*, and the Code/Guidelines should be consulted when completing the form. If further assistance is needed, contact Scottish Natural Heritage.

For low risk and uncontentious translocations, filling in the form should be straightforward. For instance, in sections 8-10, where your responses fall into the 'green light' category, just a few words are needed explaining that there are no appreciable risks or legislative issues.

Where risks or legislative constraints are identified, additional information should be provided. There is no set word-limit to this. The guidance is to succinctly express sufficient detail to enable the issues to be evaluated and understood in a clear and transparent fashion. Text boxes in the form can be expanded as required. Where translocations require a licence, but the translocation itself is intrinsically 'low risk', then the licence application process can be very straightforward. In the case of unusually complex and/or controversial translocations additional supporting information can be appended to the form.

A 'WORD' version of the form can be downloaded at www.snh.gov.uk/translocation-code. An example of a completed copy of the form for a relatively 'straightforward' translocation is available in Appendix 2 of the Best Practice Guidelines for Conservation Translocations in Scotland.

What to do with this form

For projects requiring a licence from SNH, send the completed form to:

Licensing Team
Scottish Natural Heritage
Great Glen House
Leachkin Road
Inverness
Email: licensing@snh.gov.uk

The licensing team will then respond to the application.

All other completed forms should be sent to: translocations@snh.gov.uk

What happens next?

The form will be added to the Scottish Conservation Translocation database which will be accessible from 2015 (environmentally sensitive information and personal data will not be made public).

1. Lead applicant details

Name Grant Moir
Address 14 The Square, Grantown on Spey, Moray, PH26 3HG
Telephone number [redacted]
Email [redacted]
Organisation Cairngorms National Park Authority
Position Chief Executive Officer

2. Project partners (add more boxes as required)

Name We are working with a range of delivery partners, in the first release phase of Bringing Beavers Back to the Cairngorms these are:
*[redacted], Beaver Trust - [redacted]
** [redacted], Rothiemurchus - [redacted]
**[redacted], Wildland Cairngorms - [redacted]
**[redacted], RSPB Scotland - [redacted]
Other delivery partners will be identified in due course when suitable sites and landowners come forward over the five year licence period.
Organisation See above
Email See above
Role in project * expert advice and support including delivery of the beaver translocation. ** release site landowners and managers.

3. Project details

Project title Bringing beavers back to the Cairngorms National Park
Our overarching vision is to achieve a healthy population of beavers in the Cairngorms National Park, bringing maximum benefits for wildlife and people. This includes supporting land managers and communities to live alongside beavers.
Focal species Eurasian beaver (*Castor fiber*)
Desired outcome(s) In collaboration with a range of delivery partners, to successfully reintroduce beavers to the upper Spey to establish a self-sustaining population.
To contribute towards the aims and objectives of the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2022 - 27 (https://cairngorms.co.uk/working-together/partnershipplan/) to restore and connect rivers to thriving wetlands and floodplains helping mitigate the impacts of climate change, and to facilitate beaver translocation to the National Park by 2027.
To provide suitable release sites for beavers translocated from conflict sites following Scottish Government priority to reduce lethal control rates of beavers within Scotland and contribute to the delivery of the Scotland's Beaver Strategy 2022 - 2045.
Expected timescale for outcome(s) to be achieved Five years: November 2023 - November 2028

Goals
1 - To bring back beavers as a lost species to the Cairngorms National Park, by releasing a number of beaver families over a five-year period into the upper Spey catchment to establish a self-sustaining population
2 - To facilitate the increase and expansion of the beaver population through liaising closely with communities, landowners and land managers who have beaver territories on their land.
3 - Facilitating the delivery of mitigation measures to avoid, mitigate or reverse impacts of beavers, to ensure unacceptable impacts are avoided as far as is possible.
4 - To work in collaboration with a range of project delivery partners and land managers to monitor beavers and their impacts.
5 - To support landowners and communities to live alongside beavers, including helping them access and implement practical mitigation measures detailed in NatureScot beaver mitigation scheme.
6 - To encourage public engagement and education to raise awareness, both within the local community and at a national level, of the biodiversity benefits of beavers and ecosystem services. This would include demonstration of how beaver activities complement those of the Spey Catchment Initiative, who already undertake large-scale freshwater habitat restoration.
7 - Building on the knowledge gained through the initial translocation, develop a carefully considered and informed timetable for proposed future releases to other catchments within the Cairngorms National Park.
Proposed start date (capture/collection date(s)) Autumn 2023
Proposed release date(s) Autumn 2023 to Spring 2028
Type of translocation (reinforcement, reintroduction, assisted colonisation, ecological replacement) Reintroduction to a currently uncolonised catchment, the Spey
Donor source type (wild or *ex situ* or both) Wild, Scottish born

4. Rationale

Overview of the project
Subject to a licence being granted by NatureScot the Cairngorms National Park Authority will work with landowners to release a number of beaver families, over the five year licencing period,as a founder population into suitable habitat in the upper Spey. This will act to increase the current range of beavers in Scotland as set out as a priority in the Scottish Beaver Strategy 2022 - 2045. The initial release sites have been selected on the basis of having enough summer grazing and winter browsing to give the best chance for the beavers settling in close proximity to were they were released. Over the proposed five year period there will be sufficient families released to establish a self-sustaining, genetically diverse population that will colonise the Spey catchment over time. The Park Authority, working with other partners will monitor the released beavers and regularly report on their activity. The Park Authority will be the first point of contact for dealing with any issues caused by the beavers and will engage with NatureScot and utilise the Beaver Mitigation Scheme if activity impacts become unacceptable (defined by NatureScot as those that damage property or infrastructure, or cause significant problems for land management).
Why is a translocation necessary? We are in the midst of a climate and nature emergency; the Scottish Government has set ambitious and impressive targets to address both these emergencies. Beavers have a scientifically recognised role as a keystone species and ecological engineer, with the potential to play a vital role in addressing the twin crises through habitat restoration and improved ecological functionality, as such expansion in their numbers and range should be facilitated throughout Scotland. A robust survey and assessment of the likelihood of beavers naturally colonising river catchments within the

Cairngorms National Park has been undertaken and demonstrated that given current population numbers and distribution of beavers from the nearest known populations catchments, it is highly unlikely without assistance via proactive translocations (Appendix 1). Such translocations are now ScotGov policy as of November 2021. Beavers were afforded European Protected Species status in Scotland in 2019, but under certain circumstances landowners can apply to NatureScot for a lethal control license if beavers are causing significant damage, particularly to agriculture on prime agricultural land and in which no alternative mitigation is currently possible. To help resolve both difficulties facing some landowners and allow the Scottish beaver population to retain favourable conservation status and appropriate genetic diversity, the Scottish Government has clarified its strong determination to see more beavers translocated within Scotland to directly reduce current cull figures. The use of lethal control is of significant public concern and alternative solutions, such as translocations, should be sought to ensure healthy beaver populations.
What other options have been considered, and why have they been discounted (see Chapter 3)? Natural colonisation into the Cairngorms National Park would be very challenging from the Tay catchment given numerous artificial structures restricting connectivity and the large areas of unsuitable habitat between catchments. Colonisation from the east by beavers dispersing into new catchments via the sea or over low lying watersheds would be in the medium term in the east of the National Park but in the long term for the Spey. If beavers did find their way the resulting founder populations would be very small and vulnerable, translocation could facilitate a more genetically diverse and a greater likelihood of a self-sustaining population.

The level of detail provided should be proportionate to the potential impacts of the translocation

Please expand text boxes or provide additional information as required, to enable a thorough and balanced evaluation of the translocation

5. Population information

5.1. *Donor population details* (add additional pages for each donor population)

Donor Population 1
Population name Tayside
Population location (region, country) River Tay catchment, Perthshire, Scotland
Grid reference / coordinates (including details of coordinate system, datum etc) Landowner locations are sensitive, any trap and removal would only take place under licence issued to Dr Roisin Campbell-Palmer, Beaver Trust, working with permission from landowners which may have been issued lethal control licences by NatureScot and therefore treated in the strictest confidence
Date(s) of removal From Autumn 2023 to Spring 2028. Trapping period runs annually from mid August to mid March. The aim would be to release beavers soon after a suitable pair / small family unit is identified, been health screened and confirmation that no further related animals are left at the trapping site.

If sampled from the wild
Landowner name Confidential. Beavers would be sourced across several sites via live trapping with landowner permission. Of those engaging with the NatureScot's Beaver Mitigation Scheme where typically lethal control licences have been issued and landowners wish to engage with trap and removal as alternative mitigation. The actual trap site details for each proposed will not be known at time of application and / or until suitable beaver candidates have been trapped and deemed suitable for release.
Land owner contact details N/A
Land manager name (if different to above)
Land manager contact details N/A
Land owner / manager permission granted? (including date permission granted) All trapping is undertaken with landowner permission under trap and removal licence issued by NatureScot to Dr Roisin Campbell-Palmer, Beaver Trust.
Conservation protection afforded to the site (if yes, what type) Most likely, but not exclusively, Prime Agricultural Land grade 1-3a.
Population size of focal species The most recent population estimates of beavers within the Tayside and Forth catchments are given as a minimum of 251 active territories, and have been demonstrated as increasing in distribution across Scotland. Population size has been deemed by NatureScot to be in favourable conservation status.
How population size was estimated (survey method, date(s) of estimate) Field sign survey commissioned by NatureScot, Campbell-Palmer et al. 2021 https://www.nature.scot/doc/naturescot-research-report-1274-survey-tayside-area-beaver-population-2020-2021

If sampled from an* ex situ *collection
Name of collection owner
Collection owner contact details
Name of collection
Population size of *original* donor population
How *original* population size was estimated (survey method, date(s) of estimate)
Population size of *ex situ* population

How *ex situ* population size was estimated (survey method, time of estimate)
Ex situ population consists of captive bred/reared individuals or is the original wild-collected stock?

Number of donor individuals to be removed /sampled Minimum of six pairs with any dependent offspring in the first year, up to 12 pairs (and dependents) over next five years according to annual assessment of population survival, expansion and available release sites. Estimate (12 - 60 individuals).
Nature of donor material (e.g. eggs, seeds, larvae, adults etc) Adults and any dependent offspring, sub-adults of dispersal age.
Donor selection method (e.g. random sampling vs selection for specific traits; number of mothers when progeny sampled; collection area etc) Removal according to issuing of trap and removal licence, all family members at any one site removed and translocated as a pair / family unit as far as possible.
Habitat type of donor population (e.g. Phase 1 habitat category, NVC or HIS) Most likely Prime Agricultural Land.
Intra-specific classification of donor population (e.g. sub-species / variety / ecotype / race)

Additional information about donor population relevant to the translocation The Tayside population has been well sampled and monitored; population distribution and estimates, health status and genetic diversity. Data published by NatureScot has demonstrated that population numbers and expansion are not being reduced through lethal control / trapping in these source areas. It is currently considered as in favourable conservation status, meeting one of the licensing conditions for the issuing of lethal control as a last resort mitigation is met and can be licensed by NatureScot. Since 2019 Dr Roisin Campbell-Palmer has held a licence for trap and relocation, with a long-standing collaboration with Dr Romain Pizzi to undertake beaver health screening according to agreed protocols. More recently the Beaver Trust has invested in beaver holding facilities with Five Sisters Zoo staff undertaking captive care. This donor population has been deemed suitable for licensed beavers translocations in Scotland including Scottish beaver (Knapale); Argaty Red Kites (Doune) and multiple enclosed beaver projects licensed by Natural England and Natural Resource Wales.

5.2. *Release site details* (add additional pages for each release site)

Release site 1
Population name [redacted], Rothiemurchus
Population location (region, country) Upper Spey, near Aviemore
Grid reference / coordinates (including details of coordinate system, datum etc) [redacted]
Inside or outside of native range of translocated species or type? Outside
Inside or outside of natural range of translocated species or type? Inside
Date(s) of release Autumn 2023 – spring 2024

Landowner name Rothiemurchus Estate
Landowner contact details [redacted]
Land manager name (if different to above)
Land manager contact detail [redacted]
Landowner / manager permission granted? (including date permission granted) Yes, 9th July 2023
Conservation protection afforded to the site (if yes, what type) Within Cairngorms Special Protection Area; North Rothiemurchus Pinewood SSSI; Cairngorms Special Area of Conservation
Habitat type (e.g. Phase 1 habitat category, NVC or HIS, or general description) This is a good sized fresh water loch lined by diverse woodland with diverse understorey including grasses and bracken.
Proximity and context to other populations of the focal species Nearest known populations are present in Pitlochry, Tayside and on the River Beauly, both > 50 miles away with no direct and unimpeded connection via freshwater courses. Should beavers be released across the multiple release sites in this application, then release sites are all connected via the River Spey and within a range of <15km of each other

Which donor populations are being released at this site? Wild Tayside catchment
Distance of donor population(s) to release site
~55 miles
Is the donor population in the same country as release site? Yes
Number of individuals to be released 1 pair with any dependent offspring
Nature of released material (e.g. eggs, seeds, larvae, adults, sex ratios etc) Adults 1:1 (with any dependent offspring)
If multiple donor sources are used, what are the proportions of the mix? All animals will be sourced from conflict sites within the Tay and Forth catchment

If an existing population is present at the release site (reinforcement)

Population size of resident population
How population size was estimated (survey method, date(s) of estimate)
Reason for reinforcement
Intra-specific classification of *resident* population (e.g. sub-species / variety / ecotype / race)
Intra-specific classification of *donor* population(s) (e.g. sub-species / variety / ecotype / race)

Release strategy summary (including details of *what* is released *where*)
A site visit to [redacted] has been undertaken with Park Authority staff and Dr Roisin Campbell-Palmer (further details in the feasibility report attached Appendix 2). The [redacted]. The [redacted] is almost [redacted] with woodland.

All beavers will be live trapped and transported by the Beaver Trust according to established best practice protocols via experience gained in other translocations over several years. Following negative health screening results and being signed fit for release by a specialist wildlife vet. Each individual will be microchipped enabling permanent identification. Beavers will be crated in specifically designed travel crates at Five Sister Zoo on morning of release. Each crate will be provisioned with a deep straw layer and apples for food and moisture. Crates will be covered with light sheets to keep animals calm and darkened, but ensuring good ventilation. On site beavers can be transported closely to the loch shoreline itself via vehicles, with last distance covered by carrying crates/ or with assitence from trailer and quad. A visual examination will be undertaken before animals are released. Each travel crate will be positioned in close proximity to the water line so that beavers can immediately seek the water. Beavers would be released simultaneously as a pair/ family unit. Only a small number of people will be present for the release, with further viewing from a distance possble from the public track. Noise and disturbance will be kept to a minimum.

It is proposed that the beavers are released on [redacted] easily accessible areas to the public and access track [redacted]. This enables the beavers to be away from view and have immediate access to water.

Release site preparation ahead of the release may include the creation of freshly cut brash placed [redacted] create immediate shelter, family reuniting and foraging points to encourage site fidelity. Several camera traps will also be placed in likely used areas ahead of the release to reduce disturbance - it is proposed these are baited with food items and used bedding from the beavers again as a temporary monitoring and settling in tool.

Additional information about the release site relevant to the translocation
Information relating to additional sites is provided in Appendix 2.2 Additional release site details

6. Methodological summary

Outline the approaches that will be used in undertaking the translocation, including key relevant aspects of the species' biology and any specialist advice received. This should provide sufficient information to demonstrate that achieving the desired conservation outcome is feasible (see Chapter 6 for more details of relevant issues)

Understanding species biology - the Eurasian beaver is a well studied species that has been widely and successfully translocated across Europe. Beaver translocations have been undertaken in Scotland officially via the Scottish Beaver Trial. Translocation husbandry and best practices are well documented, this application would work closely with NatureScot's Beaver Mitigation Team and The Beaver Trust who have actively translocated beavers across Britain. The Beaver Trust, namely Dr Roisin Campbell-Palmer, hold trapping and translocation licences, all relevant equipment and, in collaboration with Five Sisters Zoo, undertake all animal pre-release assessments and screening to pass individuals fit for release and according to all current requirements.

Given the beaver breeding period and licencing requirements, any animals would only be trapped and relocated from the end of the kit dependency period. Trapping will occur from the 16th of August 2023 to end of March 2024 to ensure very young kits and late pregnancy females are not translocated. Given beaver breeding structure, it is likely that any bonded pairs may have dependent offspring, usually 2-4 on average, during the trapping period. Beavers typically remain within the family unit before dispersing in the 2nd year. Therefore, any dependent young will be trapped and relocated with their parents. Monitoring at a trapping site will continue until there is a strong confidence no dependents remain. Any translocated offspring would also be expected to disperse from the release site in their 2nd year to find suitable habitat, typically within a few kilometres or less. Beaver dispersal typically follows water courses, with open land dispersal more unlikely.

All release sites offer immediate access to large water bodies and riparian food resource. Depending on the time of year and age of any dependent young being released, additional provisional shelter may be created ahead of the release. This will take the form or either a rudimentary shelter created from straw bales and a brash top or piles of freshly cut brash placed along the shoreline to provide immediate shelter on release, and a place for the family to come together. Animals can both forage on these piles and dig underneath to create shelter.

Donor population - Tayside wild population.
- NatureScot have deemed there are sufficient numbers and an increasing population throughout Tayside to permit removal predominantly as a last resort, following a hierarchy of mitigation, in areas where lethal control licences have been issued. Trapping and translocation can be a suitable alternative to reduce permitted cull levels. Any such removal is agreed to not have adverse effects on the donor population. Adequate and proven screening, quarantine and biosecurity procedures are in place and have been previously accepted for similar wild release projects to both Red Kite Centre at Doune, and RSPB Loch Lomond.
- Any beavers used in this project will be responsibly sourced and undergo any pre-agreed health screening in line with any statutory requirements, following procedures previously employed by similar beaver projects. The veterinary and animal care team at Five Sisters Zoo are highly experienced in beaver handling, captive care and have been undertaking beaver translocation work for a number of years in collaboration with Dr Roisin Campbell-Palmer.
- Particular attention will be given to the proximity of trapping locations in order to maximise the trapping of a complete family unit, whilst minimising the risk of trapping potentially related neighbouring territories, in order to ensure both good welfare and as far as possible increasing genetic diversity.

Release site and strategy
Release site selection has been based on a robust understanding of beaver habitat requirements and experience from beaver distribution surveys and release projects over the last 15 years. All release sites proposed meet the species requirements. In addition, the sites proposed are highly

connected to suitable habitat across the upper Spey catchment and so released animals can relocate should they choose, with future offspring having a range of suitable site options. All sites have also been confirmed to support large quantities of year round vegetation and shelter opportunities, including when the river is in spate. The upper Spey represents a catchment with high beaver carrying capacity and connectivity, therefore capable of supporting viable future populations over the long-term. The proposed release sites also represent those requiring few pre-release site preparation requirements beyond temporary shelters or temporary damming of small water courses to produce deeper impounded water for release.

The overall release strategy across these sites includes the consideration of when to release beavers and which pairing / family group may be best suited to each site. Namely those pairs with dependent young <1year old will be released into more contained, deeper water bodies, whilst adult pairs without dependent young would be released into more connected water courses. This is to encourage family cohesion and release site fidelity as far as possible. Note long-term weather forecast and river spate conditions will be monitored ahead of any release.

To try and ensure all individuals are in as best condition for release as possible candidates will be temporarily held in purpose-built beaver holding facilities at Five Sister Zoo to ensure that a family unit is maintained and enable veterinary assessment prior to release. Sample collection or any health screening requirements can be undertaken by the zoo's experienced veterinary and animal husbandry team. Any translocated beavers will be individually tagged for future identification and monitoring purposes before being transported to the release site.

Beavers would be transported to the release site in specific transport crates on the day of release. To try to increase release site fidelity, food and used bedding from the individuals being released will be placed at various points around the water's edge of the release pond. This does not guarantee successful retention but has worked well at other releases. All noise, movement and number of people present will be kept to a minimum with observation from a distance behind the crates. Animals will be allowed to exit crates in their own time and move around freely. Remote cameras will be placed around the release ponds in advance and baited feeding points maintained over the first few weeks to check for beaver presence. Any walking in and around each beaver site will be minimised as far as possible for the first few weeks, apart from camera trap checks during the day, so as to allow beavers to settle and establish.

Monitoring of the beavers post-release would involve routine checking for fresh field signs by the Park Authority and project partner staff and volunteers. Additional ad-hoc surveys will be carried out by the wider Park Authority team and local landowners / managers. Reports of beavers and beaver activities by the public will be encouraged and a reporting App launched.

How to fill in the benefits, legislation and risk sections

The following sections of the Translocation Project Form include tables summarising benefits, legislative considerations, biological risks and socioeconomic risks.

For the benefits table, indicate the types and levels of benefit.

For the tables of legislation/biological risk/socio-economic risk, delete and edit the pre-entered text to capture the relevant issues for your translocation. Use the Best Practice Guidelines to assist in this process.

Add additional rows as required if important issues for your translocation are not captured in the templates.

Where there is an appreciable benefit, legislative issue or risk (e.g. a response in the 'medium' or 'high' columns for any row in any table), use the text box below each table to expand on each individual issue:

- Benefits: explain the nature of the benefits
- Legislation
    - Where a species licence or a non-native species licence is required complete the additional *Species* or *Non-native species Licence Application Information*
    - List other permits/permissions required and obtained and the steps taken to ensure the translocation is legal
- Biological risks: outline the steps taken to mitigate against risks
- Socioeconomic risks: outline the steps taken to mitigate against problems

7. Benefits

7.1. Benefits Table (tick as appropriate) *****

Beneficiary	Benefit type	Level of benefit* Low	Med.	High
Focal Species	***Reducing extinction risk and/or improving the conservation status of a species by:***			
	Increasing the number of individuals, improving population structure, and/or increasing the number of locations at which a species occurs	☐	☐	☒
	Improving the genetic health and resilience of a population by directly introducing genetic diversity	☐	☐	☒
	Establishing 'bridging populations', to facilitate migration and /or gene flow	☐	☐	☒
	Establishing populations in areas where the species will experience reduced levels of threat (e.g. by moving organisms into more suitable 'climate space', disease-free areas, or localities with suitable management)	☐	☐	☒
Habitat / Ecosystem	***Improving the conservation status of an ecosystem, habitat and/or other species by:***			
	Increasing the overall species richness of a habitat to enhance its biodiversity value	☐	☐	☒
	Increasing habitat quality (e.g. translocating species to change grazing regimes)	☐	☐	☒
	Improving ecosystem services and functions (e.g. translocating species to provide pollinator services)	☐	☐	☒
People	***<u>Additional</u> socio-economic benefits that may arise as a result of conservation translocations through:***			
	Enriched human experiences and environmental awareness due to increased contact with biodiversity	☐	☐	☒
	Increased benefits to humans from ecosystem services (e.g. pollination)	☐	☐	☒
	Increased income (e.g. revenue from ecotourism where the translocated species leads to increased visits or spend)	☐	☐	☒

- Low value benefits are those which make little appreciable difference to people or the conservation status of the species/habitats/ecosystems concerned. Medium value benefits are those which bring some gains, such as improving the local or regional conservation status of a species or habitat, or socioeconomic benefit to a small

number of individuals. High value benefits are those which improve the national/international conservation status of a species or habitat, or bring appreciable socioeconomic benefits to communities or wider groups of society.

7.2. Details of benefits (expand on the ‘medium’ and ‘high’ benefits identified above)

Focal species benefits - Translocating beavers to the Cairngorms would help with conflict management in existing populations within the Tayside region due to beaver activities (predominantly damming, burrowing and foraging) in prime agricultural land. Some landowners have been granted lethal control licenses to deal with these issues where no alternatives exist. Translocations will allow the beaver population to grow outside of prime agricultural areas, colonise new catchments and encourage population connectivity across Scotland. This would readily increase numbers and population expansion. Any beavers used in this project will be responsibly sourced and undergo appropriate health screening in line with any statutory requirements, following procedures previously employed by similar beaver projects. Note: beavers can only be trapped and translocated from Scotland under strict license conditions issued by NatureScot. Particular attention will be given to the proximity of trapping location of these individuals to try to minimise capturing neighbouring territories. The aim of avoiding this is to reduce inbreeding but also maintain current genetic diversity levels that could be reduced by lethal control. Given landscape, hydrological and land-use differences between Tayside and Speyside, it is expected beaver populations will face reduced levels of threat.

Habitat / ecosystem benefits - We are in a climate and nature emergency. The Park Authority recognises beavers as keystone species and ecological engineers who's activities will change, restore and renaturalise the landscape. Multiple peer-reviewed publications, including the NatureScot Beavers in Scotland: a report to the Scottish Government 2015 and the recent Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Spey catchment indicate beavers will provide numerous biodiversity and environmental benefits to help meet wider habitat restoration goals, including improved ecological functionality through wetland creation and expansion, reconnecting the floodplain, water quality improvement and storage, flood attenuation and riparian woodland improvement which also help meet the targets of the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2022 - 27 and Cairngorms Nature Action Plan 2019 - 24.

People - the release and restoration of beavers within the Cairngorms National Park and the interest from local and national audiences will provide a substantial platform to raise the profile of both the species and freshwater habitats, increasing environmental awareness. There is an opportunity to demonstrate an exemplar approach to beaver translocation, mitigation and management, bringing maximum benefits for wildlife and people. This includes supporting land managers and communities to live alongside beavers. A wide range of engagement opportunities exist from website and social media platforms, to wildlife watching opportunities for all abilities, local school and community outreach projects, to ecotourism spend in local shops and accommodation outlets. There is high local revenue potential with this project as we have seen as a result of the reestablishment of the osprey and subsequently the development of Boat of Garten as the Osprey Village. People will also benefit locally from the ecosystem services they provide, such as storing water which can reduce the impacts of flooding and drought, especially as populations grow.

8. Legislation

8.1. Legislation table (delete/edit as applicable to present the legislation relevant to your translocation – see Chapter 5 for further details on legislative issues)

Degree of constraints (statutory and non-statutory) on:	Low	Medium (should involve consultation with SNH or other relevant body)	High (covered by formal legislation)
Translocated species			**EPS**
Release site (current)			**Release site is (or is in proximity to) a SSSI, SAC, SPA, NNR, Ramsar site** **Release site contains protected species which may be affected by the translocation**
Release site (post-release)	**Establishment of the translocated species may result in legal protection being applied to some specific places (e.g. its breeding sites/resting places) that may impact on its management (e.g. may add hurdles to planning applications). Any impact on proposed developments classified as low by CNPA Planning Manager**		
Source population site	**No formal conservation protection - landowner permission should be sought**		
Animal welfare	**Handling and movement of vertebrates. Expert staff and existing welfare protocols mitigate this risk to low.**		
Quarantine/biosecurity	**Within country movements of species not covered by biosecurity legislation and not known to pose a biosecurity risk, SEA ER (2022) and SEA ER – Spey (2023)**		

	identified Beavers as having no significant additional human health risk.		
Dangerous species	**Organisms that could potentially harm humans during the translocation process. Expert staff and existing welfare protocols mitigate this risk to low.**		

8.2. Species or Non-native Species Licences - Additional Information (see Chapter 5)
Only complete section 8.2. if a Species or Non-native Species licence is required

When do you need a licence/licences for (start & end dates)? November 2023 to November 2028
Provide names, addresses and organisations (if applicable) of any additional persons you want to include on the licences (either as Agent or Assistant) [redacted]
Provide your previous experience in carrying out species translocations or related activities (including details of any previous licences held in Scotland or the wider UK for similar work) Cairngorms National Park Authority Specialist ongoing advice has been sought from the Beaver Trust, namely Dr Roisin Campbell-Palmer who has led on beaver translocation on projects throughout Britain.
Please provide the contact details of a referee (Name, address, telephone number, email, plus licence numbers held by the referee if applicable) - only complete this if the applicant has not held a licence for similar work in the last five years

8.2.1. Species licences

List the species for which a 'species licence' is required (e.g. focal species, and/or any other species that may be affected - see Chapter 5 for more details) Focal species - Eurasian beaver
What activities require a species licence? (Capture, injure, kill, pick, uproot, take, disturb, possess, transport, etc.?) Release licence along with suitable licensing to undertake beaver mitigation work and potentially to relocate individuals and re-release any rehabilitated animals (capture, disturb, possess). All capture and transportation of source animals would be undertaken under existing licence held by Dr Roisin Campbell-Palmer (222487)
What other solutions have been considered and why have these been discounted (i.e. why can't you undertake the work in a way which does not require a licence)? As an European Protected Species a release licence will be required to undertake the reintroduction of this species to the Cairngorms National Park. The Park Authority staff linked to the beaver project will require a species licence to undertake mitigation work including dam management, in line with

the current NatureScot Beaver Mitigation Scheme
What will the impact of the proposed translocation be on the conservation status of the population/ species concerned? The proposed action will found a new beaver population and in time allow further colonisation into new catchments. In turn this will lead to enhanced resilience and more adaptive capability to environmental change of this population. Creating a self-sustaining population in the Spey catchment will expand the distribution of beavers in Scotland and increase the chance of natural recolonisation occurring within its former range. As such this will improve the overall conservation status of this species in Scotland.

8.2.2. Non-native species licences

Do you need a 'non-native species licence' for the species you wish to translocate (see Chapter 5 for more details)? Yes
What alternative options have been considered and why have these been discounted (e.g. promoting natural recolonisation)? (give further details in Section 4)
Summarise any threats the translocated species poses to the release site and wider environment? (give further details in Section 8 and 9) The Strategic Environmental Assessment - Envvironmental Report and Habitats Regulations Assessment both concluded that beavers could be released in the Spey catchment but that a monitoring plan was required to determine if beavers were having unacceptable impacts on protected habitats and species. This plan is currently being finalised by NatureScot and the Park Authority. Any actions required to avoid, mitigate impacts would be delivered by the Park Authority, NatureScot or the project delivery partners.
Summarise actions that will be taken to reduce the risk of the translocated species causing negative impacts, how any risks will be monitored and how remedial action will be implemented if any risk is realised? (give further details in Section 8, 9 and 11) We have considered impacts and implications and remediative action and these are summarised in our Monitoring and Management Plan that is being finalised and will combine the monitoring required by the Habitats Regulations Assessment, outlining when action is required and what action is required. In addition, this will outline the additional monitoring that the Park Authority is and will be taking forward. This report will be circulated to the beaver monitoring sub-group (consisting of representatives from NatureScot's Beaver Team, Park Authority staff and RSPB Scotland staff) and put to NatureScot for approval by the second week of November. We have consulted our Planning Manager and the impacts of beavers on future developments with regard to their EPS status was thought to be minimal.

8.3. Legislation other than Species or Non-native Species Licences

Provide a summary of permits/permissions obtained, consultation undertaken, and the steps taken to ensure the translocation is legal. This should include details of any consents needed for protected places (see Chapter 5). SSSI Consent received from NatureScot Strategic Environmental Assessment undertaken by NatureScot

9. Biological risks

9.1. Biological risk table (delete/edit as applicable – see Chapter 7 for further details)

Risk attribute	No/Low risk: Self-certification	Medium risk: Advisory (should involve consultation with SNH or other relevant body)	High risk: Detailed evaluation (and specialist advice)
Distance of the translocation		**Regional movement (e.g. between major regions within Scotland)**	
Threat to the source population	**Source population is one of many that is large in size and removal of individuals/propagules for the translocation will have no discernible effect**		
Establishment following the translocation may cause loss/reduction of important habitat			**May lead to clearly recognisable impacts and major habitat change. This will be localised to riparian zones and existing wetlands. Such change is not necessarily an undesirable outcome.**
Establishment may cause loss/reduction of important species		**May lead to impacts on vulnerable species (e.g. scrub restoration may negatively impact on an existing ground flora)**	
Translocation may spread pests and diseases	**SEA ER – Spey (2023) identified Beavers as having no significant additional human health risk. Animal Welfare protocols require disease screening during captivity.**		
Hybridisation threat (intra-specific races or inter-specific)	**No known problems**		

Species is likely to spread beyond the confines of the release site	**Species has potential for effective spread beyond the release sites. This is a desired outcome and the national and local SEA ER**		
Potential for animal welfare concerns to released animals or those they interact with	**No concerns due to strict animal welfare and handling protocols developed over decades.**		

9.2. Details of steps taken to mitigate any biological risks and an appraisal of whether it is ‘safe to proceed’. Also detail any consultation undertaken and specialist advice received.
All beavers will undergo full health screening prior to release as per agreed NatureScot licence conditions. Disease risk assessments and diagnostic protocols have been developed over several years in collaboration with Scottish Government vets, wildlife specialist vet Dr Romain Pizzi, RZSS Head of Veterinary Services Dr Simon Girling, NatureScot, Fiona Howie Scottland's Rural College and Dr Roisin Campbell-Palmer. These are routinely revised according to ongoing disease monitoring of trapped Tayside beavers. Beavers are kept in quarantine holding facilities ahead of any release with routine barrier techniques to reduce any disease transfer. Beavers would only be released following results of health screening and being signed fit for release by a wildlife specialist vet. Biological samples from each individual are also stored for retrospective testing should disease outbreaks occur at the release site. All released individuals will be micro-chipped to permit post-release screening should they ever be re-trapped and the Park Authority is committed to post-morteum examination of any suitable cadavers recovered for the five year project period. Post-mortem examinations should be undertaken by Scotland's Rural College to enable faster identification of any trends of concern and comparability with ongoing screening of source population in Tayside.

Any equipment and PPE used in animal translocation between sites and different beaver families will be removed from the site following release and fully disinfected between use.

The regional translocation has been approved by ScotGov policy and the Scottish Beaver Strategy 2022 - 2045. Therefore the biological risk must be sufficiently mitigated for that to happen.

Overall beavers are anticipated to impact in a mainly positive way on the important conservation features though aspen, lichen and bryophytes, and salmonids (especially in relation to migration) have been identified as potentially suffering negative impacts in localised areas. Appropriate monitoring has been designed and will be used to evaluate the need for mitigation of any negative impacts, this will be detailed in the Monitoring and Management Plan (see 8.2.2). Both protected species and habitats and key non-protected species and habitats will be included in this plan.

We feel that all the biological risks can be mitigated sufficiently, therefore it is "safe to proceed".

10. Socioeconomic risks

10.1. Socioeconomic risk table (delete/edit as applicable – see Chapter 8 for further details)

Risk attribute	No/Low risk: Self-certification	Medium risk: Advisory (should involve consultation with SNH)	High risk: Detailed evaluation (and specialist advice)
Likelihood of strong social resistance by some to translocation	**In general, there has been a great deal of public support for the proposal, with most feeling there will be little impact on them and major wider landscape benefits.**		**A number of farmers have expressed their lack of support for the reintroduction or that it has been rushed and feel that the mitigation available is not commensurate with the risk to their businesses. Some have expressed this at meetings, but we have been told there are more who haven't engaged due to a resignation that the proposal is a *fait accompli*.**
Harm to human health and well-being	**No known risks to human health**		
Harm to human livelihoods	**Unlikely in general**		**Farmers have highlighted that flooding on farms or damage to flood embankments leading to flooding could have a major or catastrophic financial impact on their business.**

Insufficient resources may prevent successful implementation of the translocation plan	**Translocation is relatively low cost and resourced by NatureScot**		
Major financial costs once the translocation has been completed (e.g. control measures if the population has greater impacts than envisaged)		**The translocation will have impacts which require ongoing management. The exact cost of these is unknow, as they have not been fully detailed elsewhere in Scotland.**	

10.2. Details of steps taken to mitigate socioeconomic problems and an appraisal of whether it is 'safe to proceed' (including information on stakeholder consultation, specialist advice received, and how any concerns have been addressed)

The key socioeconomic issue that has been brought to our attention through the formal and informal engagement is the issue of beaver impacts on productive farmland due to flooding and their potential impacts on the integrity of flood banks protecting productive farmland from high river levels (see Table 10.1). Though some farmers simply do not want beavers reintroduced, others would be content if they had access to a funding mechanism that would cover the costs of damage to any flood embankments damaged by beavers and compensation for loss of farm income due to beaver activity. The within farm flooding issues can be dealt with through the current mitigation scheme, up to and including translocation of animals, but some time cost would be borne by the farmer. The Park Authority Beaver Project Manager will be able to provide additional support in the form of advice, help with licence administration and delivery of mitigation measures. However, the issue with the flood embankments and any compensation for loss of income due to a breach is more complicated as this involves the future Scottish Agricultural Bill and associated agricultural payments scheme, which is still under discussion. NatureScot's position was that there would be no funding for the reinstatement of flood embankments due to damage caused by beaver burrows, nor compensation for loss of income.

A meeting with the Park Authority was requested by [redacted] of [redacted] on behalf of three other farmers in the Nethy Bridge area, this took place in Grantown on Spey on 23 August 2023. Following this meeting the Park Authority convened a site meeting, requested by [redacted] on 27 September at a farm near Nethy Bridge with flood embankments. This meeting had an expert from the Beaver Trust and a representative from NatureScot's Beaver Team to discuss the issues and mitigation, six farmers attended. NatureScot stated that there was currently no funding available to reinstate flood embankments damaged by beavers through the mitigation scheme, this did not satisfy the farmers attending. At the request of [redacted] of [redacted], a meeting at Laggan Village Hall on 12 October was convened with 17 crofters, farmers and members of the public in attendance. This gave the opportunity for the Park Authority to hear the attendees' concerns, leading to the unanimous request at that meeting that there should be a beaver exclusion zone within the Laggan area. This was also a view expressed by some farmers at the Nethy Bridge meeting. A meeting with crofters and farmers in Kingussie was convened at the request of [redacted] on 14 September, specifically looking at potential flooding issues on their land. After discussions and looking specifically at the "main drain" it was determined that the narrow

section of the drain coming from the town was high-risk and no damming could be accepted there, but that damming of the wider section of the "main drain" closer to the river was acceptable, provided the water level did not get high enough to waterlog the adjacent fields. However, an email sent on 17 October by [redacted], reiterated the points made by other farmers and crofters in 10.2 and above. [redacted] view of the beavers had changed since the Kingussie meeting, [redacted] was now asking for an exclusion zone on the [redacted] below Kingussie, and indicated this was supported by the other crofters in this area (see Appendix 6.1). The Nethy Bridge and Laggan meetings are summarised in Appendix 6. No formal note was made of the Kingussie meeting as the meeting was informal and somewhat discursive. By the end of the meeting those remaining seemed to have reached a consensus, as noted in the text above.

The frequency of flood embankment damage caused by beavers is a matter for debate. In Scotland NatureScot were only aware of two incidents, with one of these not being clear if beavers were to blame. Farmers at the Nethy Bridge meeting advised us that badgers, rabbits and even moles can have an impact on the integrity of flood embankments during high water events.

The three key unresolved socioeconomic issues brought to the attention of the Park Authority are; the loss of farm income due to any damage caused by beavers, the amount of time it could take to undertake mitigation measures (again a financial cost) and the reinstatement of flood embankments weakened by beavers.

In terms of the risk of major financial costs, this is partially addressed in the text above. The Park Authority has employed a Beaver Project Manager to deal with beaver issues timeously before they become major issues, additional Park Authority staff can be called on if this was required, there is also a small budget for mitigation materials. In the short-term (10 years) beaver numbers have been modelled to remain relatively small and within the Aviemore - Kingussie area, therefore major costs are very unlikely due to the nature of the habitat and land use there. The question of major financial costs in the long term could be answered by assessing the impacts of the large beaver population in the catchments in the southern Highlands and central Scotland. However, there are no recent figures on this, so it is impossible to say if there are (or aren't) major financial costs post-establishment of a self-sustaining beaver population.

In terms of being "safe to proceed" if NatureScot's mitigation measures, which we will be following, address the issues highlighted above, then it is "safe to proceed".

11. Monitoring and adaptive management (see Chapter 9)

Outline the type, frequency, and duration of planned monitoring

The River Spey Strategic Environmental Assessment - Environmental Report and Habitats Regulation Assessment both concluded that beavers could be released into the Spey catchment but that a monitoring plan was required, to determine if beavers were having unacceptable impacts on protected habitats and species and if so, then identifying the action required to avoid or mitigate these impacts. The drafting of this detailed plan is being led by NatureScot in partnership with the the Park Authority and RSPB. This plan will need to satisfy NatureScot with respect to the protected habitats and species and then be finalised before any licence can be granted. Two meetings to discuss the monitoring plan took place on 29 September and 16 October. The finalised Monitoring and Management Plan will outline the monitoring that the Park Authority is taking forward in addition to that identified in the Habitats Regulation Assessment and required the monitoring of beaver territories, dispersal and breeding success (undertaken twice a year as per NatureScot's guidance). This plan will be reviewed annually at the same time as the production of the annual Beaver Monitoring and Mitigation report. A full review of the monitoring will take place in year five towards the end of the the proposed licencing period.

Outline the arrangements for ongoing management, including an appraisal of the feasibility of reversing the translocation should unacceptable outcomes occur

We will follow the guidance provided by NatureScot's Beaver Mitigation Scheme. The Park Authority have appointed a Beaver Project Manager to act as the main point of contact for both beaver monitoring reports and mitigation measures. This post is supported by a wider Park Authority team and RSPB currently have a member of staff working on the beaver project at Insh Marshes. The Park Authority have committed ongoing resources to support this, initiating a monitoring programme across multiple release sites and the identification and delivery of mitigation measures such as tree protection, dam removal and installation of flow devices as required. The ongoing management will be informally reviewed throughout the year and formally reviewed and reported on in the annual Beaver Monitoring and Mitigation report. This process will seek to improve mitigation design, delivery and outcomes.

The Beaver Mitigation Scheme has the tools required to deal with unacceptable outcomes. If unacceptable outcomes do still occur, then that is an issue for the Beaver Mitigation Scheme rather than the translocation per se. Reversing the translocation would technically be feasible, but it would be contrary to the change in Scottish Government beaver policy announced in November 2021, the vision of the Scottish Beaver Strategy 2022 - 2045 and most likely the majority view of public opinion.

Will biological specimens (e.g. DNA samples, museum specimens) be collected during the translocation and monitoring?
Biological samples will be collected during the health screening process, this will include blood and faecal sampling for disease screening and fur collection as part of a long-term cortisol study. Any excess blood or fur samples will be stored for retrospective disease screening and / or genetic

analysis.
If so, describe the nature of the specimens Excess blood, faecal, cadavers and fur samples.
Where will they be housed? (institution and contact person) Samples will be stored in appropriate facilities at Five Sisters Zoo, held by Dr Romain Pizzi.

12. Communication plan (see Chapter 9)

Outline the plan for communicating the process and outcomes of the translocation (including steps to inform future translocations, stakeholder communication, and public engagement) Our approach to beaver communications can be found in Appendix 7 For the full Report on our engagment activities to date please see Appendix 8.

13. Data confidentiality (delete/edit as applicable)

I give my permission for the information in this form to be included in the Scottish Translocation Database ☒ I give my permission for the information in this form to be included in the Scottish Translocation Database with the following exceptions: specify ☒ Note that personal information and geographically sensitive information will not be made public. *Note that personal information and geographically sensitive information will not be made public*

14. Declaration

- I declare that this translocation will be undertaken in accord with the *Scottish Code for Conservation Translocations* and associated Best Practice Guidelines.

- For translocations which require SNH to grant a Species and/or Non-native species licence, I agree to the terms of the licence application:

    - *Applicants should note that it is an offence under Section 17 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and under Regulation 46 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994 to knowingly or recklessly provide false information in order to obtain a licence.*

    - *I understand that failure to comply with any conditions included on any licence granted in respect of this application may constitute an offence.*

    - *I declare that the particulars given in this application and any accompanying documents are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief, and I apply for a licence in accordance with these particulars.*

    - *If a licence is granted, I agree to send to SNH a written report of the licensed activities within one month of the expiry of the licence.*

Signed Grant Moir

Date 20/10/23