

Cairngorm Park Spey Catchment Beaver Translocation Proposal response
from
NFU Scotland

20/09/2023

Dear Sirs/ Madam,

NFUS is aware that there are number of benefits beavers can provide to the Scottish environment however proposals like the CNPA proposal on translocation of the Scottish Beaver population should consider negative impact that may occur to those living and working in the proximity of the proposed translocation. Before any proposal can be agreed possible negative impacts must be addressed and strategies agreed to mitigate or address the negative impacts of the proposal on individuals.

We welcome the effort which CNPA staff have been going to get out and fully engaging with Farmers, Crofters and Land managers within the Spey Catchment area. They have made every effort to help our members understand the full facts around the proposed releases, any detrimental effects these may have on their businesses as well as promoting the benefits. It is also positive that CNPA have dedicated staff and resource to help with any issues that arise.

NFUS has been approached by several of our members /land managers who are concerned about these proposals and the negative effect that they are likely to have on their businesses and their land.

In response to the Cairngorm / Spey Catchment translocation proposals: -

- NFU Scotland very much believes that natural expansion of Beavers will continue without the need for translocation. We believe that the translocation of beavers should not be considered unless a robust mitigation scheme with mitigation measures for all negative impacts is established with guaranteed funding in place to allow those negatively impacted to protect their property. We are encouraged by the CNPA's willingness to engage with landowners and identify how they might help mitigate any potential damage to or loss of productive Agricultural land due to damage or flooding resulting from Beaver introductions.
- We and our members welcome the opportunity identify areas of greatest potential conflict and urge the CNPA to highlight these areas within their Translocation application including the measures of mitigation that CNPA will undertake in these conflict areas. A formal framework of measures like damn removal, trapping, relocation and where other methods fail, or are inappropriate, lethal control would provide landowners with the reassurance that productive land would be protected, and these steps will be under taken swiftly where needed.
- Where licenses are required CNPA should commit time to land managers in the completion of such applications.
The proposal must also consider the impact of the introduction for land outside of the park. We have concerns that downstream interests will be negatively affected by the introduction of beavers to the Spey beyond the park area. We ask will the CNPA afford these interests the same level of protection and assistance with mitigation and control measures as those within the Park area will receive?
- While the consultation process appears to be very full and widespread there will likely be areas affected, as the beaver population expands, that were not identified as potential conflict areas. If these areas include productive land, they will need to be dealt with swiftly before damage occurs.
- As it stands NatureScot does not fund all mitigation, land managers bear most of cost implementing measures to protect their property. Future support continues to be debated, robust measures and long-term government

financial support is needed before any consideration should be given to further translocation or reinforcement projects.

- We were disappointed that the latest Nature Scot beaver strategy fails to address the costs of damage being caused by beavers, costs that are being borne by the farmers, crofters and land managers suffering these losses and damage. Until this is fully addressed along with a proper suite of fully funded mitigation options no new translocations should be taking place.
- If, against what we believe will be better judgement, the translocation is approved we would like assurances around how quickly mitigation measures would be available to those effected. We cannot see our members subjected to further damage caused by delays in bank repair, dam removals, relocation of problem beavers or lethal control licenses being granted.

We are concerned at the potential loss of productive land which is already in very short supply within the Cairngorm Park and Spey Catchment, This land is hugely important to the viability of these farms and loss of grazing or worse still land to make important winter feed could challenge the future of these businesses and the dependent rural communities. These areas are relatively small in terms of area but are hugely important to the viability of these farm/ croft businesses.

We cannot overstate the concerns that our members in the Cairngorm Park area and further down the catchment have with the proposed translocation of beavers to the Spey is already untold stress and anxiety for amongst those likely to be impacted by this proposal.

Members also have concerns around potential damage to much of the riparian planting they have done over the last number of years to help with flood management and water temperature control within the river for example. Much of this planting was done with Scot Gov funding support to improve the environment and could be lost if plantings failed due to beaver damage and landowners may be forced to repay the funding they received.

We believe that at this time these proposals should be withdrawn until the full suite of mitigation measures are available and fully funded to all experiencing the negative effects of beavers. Full cost recovery for any damage caused by beavers like increased flooding, riverbank damage (very likely in the soft banks of the River Spey and its tributaries, woodland damage and grazing/ crop losses.

We urge Nature Scot and Scottish Government to put a hold on any further translocations until a fully funded mitigation and compensation for loss schemes are in place.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Wilson

NFU Scotland Highland Regional Manager

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]