



Beaver Impacts Summary

The impacts of beavers depend on the habitats the locations that beavers decide to set up a territory in. The impacts can vary from negligible to unacceptable. As defined by NatureScot they are 'those that damage property or infrastructure or cause significant problems for land management.'

We've carefully chosen the release locations to minimise potential negative impacts. Over time the beavers' territories and population will expand and will have greater impacts, both positive and negative, the magnitude of which will be site specific. We are already working with stakeholders to identify, mitigate and develop robust monitoring to identify and address concerns, for example, the Cairngorms Aspen Group and the Spey Fishery Board.

The table below identifies the main potential impacts that beavers could have and how these can be mitigated (lessened to an acceptable level).

| Type of site | Potential beaver impact | Suggested mitigation |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Transport infrastructure | Flooding from dams | Flow device or dam removal |
| Transport infrastructure culverts | Damming or blocking by debris | Culvert protection and/ or flow device, dam removal |
| Water treatment works | Flooding from dams | Flow device or dam removal |
| Protected landscapes | Felling trees, nibbling bark | Tree protection mesh or paint |
| Protected sites | Alteration of habitats | Monitoring then a specific action plan if required |
| Protected species | Alteration of habitats | Monitoring then a specific action plan if required |
| Flood embankments | Burrowing | Mesh pinned to the banks (but beaver may burrow under the lower end of the mesh) or sheet piling |
| Riparian woodland | Felling trees | Monitoring then a specific action plan if required |



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| | | Alongside proactive planting in key areas |
| Gardens | Eating vegetables and trees / bushes | Fencing and / or tree protection |
| Public health | Very small additional risk | Existing water treatment regime will suffice |
| Animal health | Negligible risk | None required |
| Culverts | Damming or blocking by debris | Culvert protection and / or flow device, dam removal |
| Septic tanks | Flooding from dams | Flow device or dam removal |

NatureScot published the River Spey Environmental Report identifying specific impacts beavers could have on the Spey catchment. You can read the report by [clicking here](#). NatureScot are also producing a Habitats Regulations Assessment to look at impacts upon designated sites, habitats and species, along with an associated Management and Monitoring plan, these will be available on their website shortly.

Below we outline our proposed approach within the National Park in response to each potential impact identified in the River Spey Environmental Report.

Our approach will be adaptive informed by monitoring.

| What could be potentially affected See Environmental Report for details of impacts | Effect (positive or negative) | Park Authority's proposed action |
|--|--|--|
| Wider biodiversity | + | None. Research has shown that beavers bring multiple benefits for biodiversity |
| Riparian woodland | + / - the effect is dependent on local grazing pressure (non beaver) | Monitor herbivore grazing pressure at the release sites |



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| Aspen | + / - the effect on aspen is dependent on grazing pressure (non beaver) | Monitor grazing pressure on the release sites Monitor key aspen stands Protect some key aspen if necessary Increase the amount of aspen and aspen regeneration within the Park |
| Bryophytes and lichens | + / - | Monitor key sites Protect some key trees if necessary |
| Protected plant species susceptible to raised water levels | Neutral / - | Monitor key sites and implement mitigation if required |
| Atlantic salmon | + / - | Key monitoring sites identified by overlaying spawning habitat and dam capacity data Implement mitigation if required Identify if there is a need for research into upstream fish passage and beaver dams Identify if there is a need for research of the effects of beaver dams on spawning sites |
| Freshwater pearl mussel | + / - | Monitor key sites and implement mitigation if required |
| Water quality, resource and ecological status | + | Use dam removal as a last resort |
| Population and human health | Neutral | Take advice from the Highland Council Environmental Health Department |
| Cultural heritage | Neutral | Monitor the historic landscape at Rothiemurchus Take advice from Historic Environment Scotland |
| Forestry | + / - | Liaise with woodland owners to identify any issues quickly Promote establishing more riparian woodland |
| Fisheries | + / - | See Atlantic salmon Publicise monitoring and research findings on beavers and fish in the Spey Catchment |
| Agriculture | + / - | Work with farmers to ensure mitigation advice is given promptly and delivered through the NatureScot Management & Mitigation Framework |



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| | | Encourage the uptake of wetland and riparian options that are currently available through government agricultural support |
| Railways | Neutral / - | Create a linear infrastructure group to discuss common issues, solutions and share best practice |
| Roads | Neutral / - | Create a linear infrastructure group to discuss common issues, solutions and share best practice |

For more information and descriptions of the mitigation devices please see our FAQs on Managing Beavers on our website, [Beavers - Cairngorms National Park Authority](#)