

Scottish Environment

LINK statement on legislation giving Eurasian Beavers European Protected Species status

Scottish Environment LINK is the forum for Scotland's voluntary environment community, with over 35 member bodies representing a broad spectrum of environmental interests with the common goal of contributing to a more environmentally sustainable society.

In December 2018, LINK [co-signed an open letter](#) calling on Scottish Government to bring forward important legal protections for beavers.

As such, Scottish Environment LINK welcomes the announcement made by the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, that [legislation giving European Protected Species status to Eurasian Beavers will come into force on the 1st May 2019](#).

Beavers are a keystone species and are widely regarded as nature's "ecosystem engineers". Several environmental benefits are associated with healthy populations of this species, including wetland habitat creation leading to increased biodiversity, water filtration and flood control through damming, and natural woodland management through tree felling and coppicing. At a time when biodiversity across the UK is in steep decline, the presence of a species which can restore species-rich wetlands and woodlands is particularly significant.

The return of the Eurasian beaver to Scotland is the first successful re-introduction of a mammal formerly extinct in the UK. LINK hopes that members of the Scottish Parliament will support this important Scottish Government measure to give beavers legal protection in Scotland, which is in line with Scotland's EU and global environmental commitments such as the Aichi targets and UN Sustainable Development Goals.

LINK believes that beavers are part of the solution for better and more sustainable land management and agrees that there is a need for effective management of beavers in certain areas. The management frameworks developed by the Scottish Government, SNH and other stakeholders form a good basis for further monitoring. LINK members support provisions in SNH's management framework which reimburse farmers for implementing mitigation measures and understand that in limited circumstances, lethal control of beavers under license may be necessary once other forms of mitigation have been fully explored.

This statement is supported by the following LINK members:

- Amphibian & Reptile Conservation
- Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group
- Buglife Scotland
- Cairngorms Campaign
- Froglife
- Marine Conservation Society
- National Trust for Scotland
- Ramblers Scotland
- Royal Zoological Society Scotland
- RSPB Scotland
- Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society

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- Scottish Badgers
- Scottish Raptor Study Group
- Scottish Wild Beaver Group
- Scottish Wild Land Group
- Scottish Wildlife Trust
- Trees for Life

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