

Correspondence beavers for EIR ref RFI6739

DWOE000348703

Dear Sir/Madam,

UK. Robin Cull, in all but name

Please see link below.

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/may/18/bird-killing-call-robin-starling-mallard-splits-conservationists>

In a worrying development from Natural England, it seems now we have so many Robins in the country that we can now afford to dispense with some. It is true we do now have a very healthy populations of them but this is no reason why we should be giving everyone an excuse to do with them what they like; people don't need excuses. Why were they even discussing this in the first place?

Why is we have these Robin increases at all? This is where you get the explaining bit comes in. It's all down to displacement. Just as when you remove a cupful of water from a bucket, you're not left with a cup-sized hole in the remaining water, when you lose 80% of your bird species down to the gross mismanagement which has happened over the years, those species that are least affected by what's thrown at them will actually increase in order to fill the void left behind by the loss of so many others. This of course is considerably less alarming than what's actually caused this increase to occur in the first place and this is what they should be discussing. Not, oh, we've got a glut of these, let's now relax what few wildlife protection laws we have in this country.

Please also view the link. Thank you.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/wildlife/10845202/Rivers-rare-beavers-face-cull-threat.html> Yet another government led cull. How about humane trapping and administering medication?

Yours sincerely,

██████

Dear ██████

Thank you for your email of 28 May about recent press articles regarding robins and beavers.

██████

You also provided a link to a Telegraph article about beavers in the River Otter in Devon. As the article concludes, there are no plans whatsoever to cull beavers. We are currently working out plans for the best way forward and any decision will be made with the welfare of the beavers in mind.

Yours sincerely

██████

Defra – Customer Contact Unit

PO00000348135

Angling Trust letter and response, already in public domain.

DWOE000348296

Dear Sir or Madam,

What in gods name do you think you're doing?! Those beavers are the first of their kind in Britain since the lord knows when. They were extinct here and now they're not! What's wrong with that? That's like saying that there's been a live dinosaur found cryogenically frozen and you saying let's kill this species that was thought to be extinct! Let one little family of beavers live. That's like you arriving on mars and then you're entire family being shot! Think of that won't you!

Sent from [REDACTED] (who also wrote to the head of DEFRA about the badger cull and didn't get a reply and who doubts he will from you morons this time)

To : [REDACTED]
CC :
Subject : Beavers

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 22 May about beavers.

I believe you may be referring to articles that have appeared in the media about beavers in the River Otter in Devon. As those articles conclude, there are no plans whatsoever to cull beavers.

Beavers have not been an established part of our wildlife for the last 500 years. Our landscape and habitats have changed since then and we need to assess the impact they could have. Releasing species which are not ordinarily present in Great Britain without a licence is an offence. We are also aware of one particular parasite, the tapeworm *Echinococcus multilocularis* (EM), which can infect beavers. This parasite could pose a serious risk to human health. The UK is officially EM disease-free and loss of this status would have public health implications.

We are currently working out plans for the best way forward, given the potential risks associated with the beavers. Any decision will be made with the welfare of the beavers in mind.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
Defra – Customer Contact Unit

DWO0000348597

Handwritten – printed out.

[REDACTED]

Dear Sir

Have you thought of changing DEFRA's name to the Dept. for the Removal of Animals? I say this in despair as I hear of another planned cull of gulls and beavers.

What gives you the right to decide to 'remove' anything that gets in the way of 'the economy'. BAE with their super trained engineers can surely find a way to invent bird scarers to keep gulls away from air strips?

Beavers have their part to play in land management. And the poor badgers – some of whom died slow deaths – will still be blamed for TB because farmers are unwilling to look at better animal husbandry. eg. closed herds with no potential for cross contamination.

It's deeply depressing that very few in Government are prepared to look at the bigger picture and will go for the cheap 'quick fix' option.

Current farming practice is often disgusting not the organic model. Indeed of great concern was the revelation that a lorry carrying 6,500 'live' chickens had crashed on the M62 last week, killing one third, leaving another portion maimed and the rest having to be rounded up.

This cannot be acceptable at all and I would ask you to investigate the circumstances of this particular cargo as it strikes one as an animal welfare breach.

Your job is to ensure high standards of environmental and animal welfare. Please would you pursue kinder options + not rule in favour of farmers outright. Work for the benefit of all animals and humans or the Environment will be changed forever.

I look forward to your response.

Yours,

██████████

Dear ██████████

Wildlife issues

Thank you for your recent letter about gull and beaver culls, TB and badgers, and the recent crash involving a lorry carrying chickens. I have been asked to reply.

██████████

Regarding your enquiry about a beaver cull, I believe you may be referring to articles that have appeared in the media about beavers in the River Otter in Devon. As those articles conclude, there are no plans whatsoever to cull beavers.

Beavers have not been an established part of our wildlife for the last 500 years. Our landscape and habitats have changed since then and we need to assess the impact they could have. Releasing species which are not ordinarily present in Great Britain without a licence is an offence. We are also aware of one particular parasite, the tapeworm *Echinococcus multilocularis* (EM), which can infect beavers. This parasite could pose a serious risk to human health. The UK is officially EM disease-free and loss of this status would have public health implications.

We are currently working out plans for the best way forward, given the potential risks associated with the beavers. Any decision will be made with the welfare of the beavers in mind.

██████████

Yours sincerely,

██████████

Defra - Customer Contact Unit

DW0E000352104

From: ██████████

Sent: 03 July 2014 11:23

Cc: ██████████

Subject: Don't lock up the Beavers

Dear Mr Eustice,

I am a life-long Conservative and donor to the party.

I am shocked and horrified by your plans to round up the Otter River beavers. You are going in precisely the wrong direction. We need to restore our countryside to a more natural state and de-industrialise it. Leave the beavers where they are.

I am sure you read this poem at School – the last verse has lived with me ever since.

Inversnaid

THIS darksome burn, horseback brown,
His rollrock highroad roaring down,
In coop and in comb the fleece of his foam
Flutes and low to the lake falls home.

A windpuff-bonnet of fawn-fróth
Turns and twindles over the broth
Of a pool so pitchblack, féll-frówning,
It rounds and rounds Despair to drowning.

Degged with dew, dappled with dew
Are the groins of the braes that the brook treads through,
Wiry heathpacks, flitches of fern,
And the beadbony ash that sits over the burn.

What would the world be, once bereft
Of wet and of wildness? Let them be left,
O let them be left, wildness and wet;
Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet.

Let them be left.

Best regards,

██████████

STANDARD REPLY:

To : ██████████
CC :
Subject : Beavers

Dear ██████████,

Thank you for your email of 3 July to George Eustice MP about beavers. I have been asked to reply.

I believe you may be referring to articles that have appeared in the media about beavers in the River Otter in Devon.

As the articles have reported, there are no plans to cull the beavers. We intend to recapture and rehome them and are currently working out plans for the best way to do so. All decisions will be made with the welfare of the beavers in mind.

Beavers have not been an established part of our wildlife for the last 500 years. Our landscape and habitats have changed since then and we need to assess the impact their presence would have now. For this reason, releasing a species which is not ordinarily present in Great Britain without a licence, or allowing it to escape, is an offence. Beavers can act as intermediate hosts for *Echinococcus multilocularis* (EM), the dog and fox tapeworm. This parasite can be transmitted to humans where it can cause multiple cysts to occur throughout internal organs, including the brain. Whilst Defra's risk assessment concluded there was a low risk of introduction of EM from beavers, the disease status of the animals living in the wild in Devon is unknown.

The UK is officially EM disease-free and as a consequence is permitted to require tapeworm treatment of the thousands of dogs entering the UK annually. If this status was to be lost we would not be permitted to continue to require such treatment and, if EM became established in UK wildlife eradication would prove impossible. The impact on public health of such a disease becoming established is considerable.

Yours sincerely,

██████████
Customer Contact Unit
Defra

DW0E000352107

From: ██████████

Sent: 03 July 2014 11:03
To: EUSTICE, George
Subject: Devon river

Hello

There is a petition suggesting that the government will be removing wild life that has returned to a river.

"A family of three wild beavers is living in the River Otter, Devon. When the beavers were spotted earlier this year it was the first sighting of its kind in 500 years, but the Government is planning to round them up and put them in a zoo.

Environment Minister George Eustice told Parliament: "We intend to recapture and rehome the wild beavers in Devon and are currently working out plans for the best way to do so."

Please provide the government's reasoning as to why this decision has been made?
Who's interests are more important than wild life?

Regards



Standard reply.

DWOE000353059

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 16 July 2014 22:49
To: CCU Correspondence (AHEG)
Subject: Re: Response to your Query - Ref:DWOE000352220 - Beavers
Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for your reply, however I still strongly disagree with the removal of the beavers.

The first point you make that beavers have not been part of our land scape for 500 years is a very short sighted. Before they were hunted to extinction 500 years ago, they were here for 40 million years. Unless I am mistaken it takes a lot longer for ecosystems, plants and animals to evolve than 500 short years, and as a corner stone species is actually vital to the health of river ecosystems.

With regards to your second point on the zoonotic disease Echinococcus Multilocularis, I agree we should check and make sure the beavers do not have it. But that does not mean they have to be removed, if they are checked and found to be clear they should be left in the river Otter.

Although the beavers will be rehomed and not harmed which is good, I am still concerned about the overall health of the ecosystem which be will be left worse off without the beavers.

The current government and governments before it have left the UK with with one of the worst environmental records in the world. It is not just the beavers I am concerned about but the over all attitude to the environment from the government. Recently the UK government has been lobbying on behalf of huge chemical companies to stop the EU ban on Neonicotinoids, despite clear scientific evidence that it is harmful to the environment. In fact its own evidence for continuing to use neonicotinoids was so flawed no journal would accept it. Not only that but the lead author then went on to join Syngenta, the chemical company who has a huge vested interest in neonicotinoids. This is a huge worry for me because the people who are in charge of this country are clearly only influenced by a few powerful lobbyists looking for short term gains rather than actual voters.

Kind regards,
[REDACTED]

DEFRA
RECEIVED

On 15 Jul 2014, at 10:49, ccu.correspondence@defra.gsi.gov.uk wrote

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 4 July to Lord de Mauley about beavers. I have been asked to reply.

I believe you may be referring to articles that have appeared in the media about beavers in the River Otter in Devon.

Beavers have not been an established part of our wildlife for the last 500 years. Our landscape and habitats have changed since then and we need to assess the impact they could have, whether on the River Otter or elsewhere.

In addition, depending on the origin of the animals they could be a source of a zoonotic disease Echinococcus multilocularis which is not currently present in the wild. We have the opportunity to take precautionary action now and test the beavers to make sure they do not hold the disease. The UK is officially EM disease-free and as a consequence is permitted to require tapeworm treatment of the thousands of dogs entering the UK annually. If this status was to be lost we would not be permitted to continue to require such treatment and, if EM became established in UK wildlife eradication would prove impossible. The impact on public health of such a disease becoming established is considerable.

As the articles have reported, there are no plans to cull the beavers. Once captured and tested, we intend to rehome them in a suitable location, and all decisions will be made with the welfare of the beavers in mind.

Yours sincerely,

Customer Contact Unit
Defra

To :
CC :
Subject : Beavers

Dear
Thank you for your further email of 16 July about beavers. I have been asked to reply.

Whilst it is true that beavers have been judged to have a positive impact on some locations outside of the UK, it would not be safe to assume that they will do so likewise here in the UK. In addition to no two circumstances being identical the British landscape has changed immeasurably since they were last present here in the 16th century. During this period they have continued to be present elsewhere in Europe. We take a precautionary approach to considering the release of species into the wild to ensure that they do not have any detrimental effect on the environment and that the location is suitable for the animals' long term survival and welfare.

Because the origins of the beavers on the River Otter are uncertain they may host parasite *Echinococcus multilocularis* (EM). It is necessary to undertake a medical examination of the animals to confirm the presence or absence of the parasites as it exists in cysts and the larval form in beavers and is not passed in their faeces. It is, therefore, necessary to capture the animals and transfer them to a suitable facility for testing. We intend to do this in a way which best addresses the welfare interests of the animals, for example ensure that any young are captured with their parents to ensure their survival whilst they remain reliant.

Once tested, and if proven to be free of the parasite, we intend to re-home the animals in a suitable location.

Yours sincerely,
Customer Contact Unit
Defra

INV0000350586

THE RT HON HUGO SWIRE MP

(East Devon)



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

DEFRA
RECEIVED

19 JUN 2014

CCU
POST ROOM

Lord de Mauley, TD
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR

12 June 2014

Our Ref: HS69256

Dear Report -

As I am sure you are aware, a small population of beavers have appeared along the lower reaches of the Otter – a river that runs through my constituency. The affected landowner and local community are reportedly happy for the beavers to remain in situ whilst the beavers themselves seem content.

The Devon Wildlife Trust (DWT) has recently written to me to express their concerns about Defra's plans to capture the beavers and test them for *Echinococcus multilocularis* but, crucially, not return them to where they were originally found. Instead, I understand that Defra advocates following a time-consuming licencing process which, the DWT maintains, would probably lead to the beavers dying in captivity. The DWP argues that this would be a tragedy for number of reasons, not least because the beavers in the wild could be used for research and as a tool for wetland management.

Representatives from the DWT and I would welcome the opportunity meet with you to discuss this matter further. I should be grateful if your office could contact my researcher [REDACTED] ([REDACTED] / 020 7219 [REDACTED]), to discuss potential meeting dates.

Yours sincerely,
Hugo Swire

Westminster Tel: 020 7219 8173 Fax: 020 7219 1895 Email: hugo.swire.mp@parliament.uk
www.hugoswire.org.uk

DW0E000348793

Dear Sir

Any chance you could inform the angling lobbyists that a) beavers don't eat fish and b) the ponds they create are the best nurseries possible for trout and salmon, not to mention huge variety of other flora and fauna. I can't believe the abysmal level of ignorance that anglers show about the effect of beavers on their favorite activity (dragging hooked fish out of the water). Perhaps they will wake up when the results of the Tay river and Knapdale introductions become known. Unfortunately this will take a few more years and in the mean time they will probably persuade DEFRA to kill the Devon beavers.

Kind regards

██████

To : ██████

CC :

Subject : Beavers

Dear ██████

Thank you for your email of 22 May about beavers.

Wildlife management is a devolved matter so I can only answer with respect to the situation in England.

Beavers have not been an established part of our wildlife for the last 500 years. Our landscape and habitats have changed since then and we need to assess the impact they could have. Releasing species which are not ordinarily present in Great Britain without a licence is an offence. We are also aware of one particular parasite, the tapeworm *Echinococcus multilocularis* (EM), which can infect beavers. This parasite could pose a serious risk to human health. The UK is officially EM disease-free and loss of this status would have public health implications.

With regard to beavers in Devon, I believe you may be referring to articles that have appeared in the media about beavers in the River Otter in Devon. As those articles conclude, there are no plans whatsoever to cull beavers. We are currently working out plans for the best way forward, given the potential risks associated with the beavers. Any decision will be made with the welfare of the beavers in mind.

Yours sincerely

██████

Customer Contact Unit
Defra

DW0E000352929

From: ██████

Sent: Monday, 14 July 2014 01:38
To: DE MAULEY, Rupert
Subject: Not your usual Devon beaver email

Dear Lord DeMauley

As both a zoologist/doctor and a fisherman, I find the EA's proposed capture/removal of the beaver's from the otter to be a classic submission to lobbying by certain myopic interest groups, rather than being based on any scientific credulity. The potential for *E. multicularis* transmission is spurious and risible in this case, for the slight chance of such would be easily counteracted by the proposed trapping of the 3 animals and treating (even in absence of evidence of infection) with a helminthicide and then re-releasing.

Has there been an independent environmental impact assessment regarding this species at this location?

I'm sure you've heard many arguments regarding "native species", improvement of habitat by often naive "Greens" etc, so I won't tire you with repetition. But to hear arguments from some fishermen (and farmers) that anadromous salmonids/ petromyzontids and catadromous anguillilids would have their migration routes blocked is clearly farcical, given Scandinavia, Canada etc have the largest populations of all such species – the reasons for decline certainly lie elsewhere, but that is another issue.....

EA appear to have a discordant policy, given the Highlands' beaver scheme, and rapidly bow to local groups, with those having the greatest economic/political muscle prevailing – I remember the highly vocal barrage of lobbying regarding white-tailed sea eagle reintroduction by gamekeepers and farmers.

Please beware false arguments employing pseudoscientific nomenclature and see such as a cover for a rather different agenda. Political expediency (a la Bismark!) often puts short-term political gain over long-term benefit.
best regards



Standard reply.

DW0E000352930

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 12 July 2014 17:29
To: DE MAULEY, Rupert
Subject: Beavers in Devon

Dear Lord DeMauley

Beavers in Devon

We understand that DEFRA intends to trap and rehome in a zoo, or alternatively kill, the beavers which are currently living on the river Otter in East Devon.

The justifications used for this plan have been:

1. They may carry infectious disease which does not currently occur in the UK. This can be ascertained by analysis of their faeces; however there are no plans to carry out this basic test.
2. They may negatively affect the local ecosystem. All studies of the effects of beavers in other countries have found that they have no effect until they build dams and create ponds. This activity then greatly increases aquatic life, including native and migratory fish populations. You will no doubt be aware that beavers were once an important part of the UK ecosystem, before being hunted to extinction.

The reasons above clearly do not stand up to scrutiny; moreover, the landowner where the animals live has stated that he does not object in principle to their presence.

1

This appears to be a case of the government ignoring inconvenient science and supporting commercial pressure groups, in this case primarily the Anglers' Association, as it is famously doing with regard to the bovine TB issue.

We ask you most strongly to cancel this proposed action by DEFRA, initiate tests for possible diseases, then monitor the situation.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

To : [REDACTED]
CC :
Subject : Beavers

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 12 July to Lord de Mauley about beavers in the River Otter in Devon. I have been asked to reply.

I believe you may be referring to articles that have appeared in the media.

Beavers have not been an established part of our wildlife for the last 500 years. Our landscape and habitats have changed since then and we need to assess the impact they could have, whether on the River Otter or elsewhere.

In addition, depending on the origin of the animals they could be a source of a zoonotic disease *Echinococcus multilocularis* (EM) which is not currently present in the wild. We have the opportunity to take precautionary action now and test the beavers to make sure they do not hold the disease. The UK is officially EM disease-free and as a consequence is permitted to require tapeworm treatment of the thousands of dogs entering the UK annually. If this status was to be lost we would not be permitted to continue to require such treatment and, if EM became established in UK wildlife eradication would prove impossible. The impact on public health of such a disease becoming established is considerable.

It is necessary to undertake a medical examination of the animals to confirm the presence or absence of the parasites as it exists in cysts and the larval form in beavers and is not passed in their faeces. It is, therefore, necessary to capture the animals and transfer them to a suitable facility for testing. We intend to do this in a way which best addresses the welfare interests of the animals, for example by ensuring that any young are captured with their parents to ensure their survival whilst they remain reliant.

Once tested, and if proven to be free of the parasite, we intend to re-home the animals in a suitable location. As the articles have reported, there are no plans to cull the beavers.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Customer Contact Unit
Defra

DW0E000352932

From: [REDACTED]

Date: 14 July 2014 21:06:48 BST

To: "demauley@parliament.uk<mailto:demauley@parliament.uk>"

<demauley@parliament.uk<mailto:demauley@parliament.uk>>

Subject: Stop the eviction!

Dear Mr. De Mauley,

Please could you instruct DEFRA to stop their plans for removing the three beavers that have set up home in Devon - despite what DEFRA say, they pose no threat to other wildlife, and have been welcomed by the landowner, and the majority of the local population. The Scottish beaver re-introduction has been a great success, and has been shown to have great environmental benefits.

The beavers should be studied in their current environment, and if the studies show both the beavers and environment prosper, then they should be allowed to stay.

Many Thanks,

[REDACTED]

Standard reply.

DWOE000352436

Thank you [REDACTED] for your prompt reply
I comment on your four points :

1. Beavers were certainly present here in Wales in the 1600s when George Owen mentioned them throughout Pembrokeshire. The houses, woods, and wetlands that Owen described with the beavers are for the most part still here.
2. Our habitats and landscapes have not in fact changed significantly in the last 400 years, land use is very much the same apart from the wetlands no longer having beavers in them, and that a lot of wetlands have been drained so that we now have a flooding problem caused by too rapid run offs. The re-introduction study has already been done by Gurnell et al 2008 and there is a plethora of beaver studies and trials. I don't know how many more you are waiting for but you had better be quick, beavers will have spread from Scotland very soon. Beavers were not exterminated because they were not wanted, rather the reverse.
3. The legal status of the Beaver is in transition. It is a breeding species in Britain already and is ordinarily resident here. Unlike David Camerons cat which was picked up three miles from No 10, the beaver is a British indigenous species. It is not at all clear that releasing beavers is more of a Section 14 offence than releasing invasive alien cats. Conversely, as a resident indigenous species, it is not at all clear that Defra can trap beavers without a licence. I would suggest that you seek better legal advice on this. The listing of the Beaver needs updating to reflect reality, and some legal opinion is that reality trumps Defra's failure to update the listing. The legal opinion behind that reasoning being that there has to be a legal definition of breeding, it is not an arbitrary decision based on someones opinion of how many pairs, or how many times a species breeds, it is a clear-cut event. The beaver is currently breeding in Scotland and England and that is not open to a different legal interpretation.
4. The EM risk is a valid point, but can only apply to imported continental individuals. The Devon parents may be Bavarian in origin and it would be valid to capture them for veterinary checking, and I understand that a technique is now available for diagnosing EM in live Beavers. In the event that they are EM-free, they should be returned to the wild. Similarly, any juveniles that have been born in the wild cannot be EM vectors and there is no valid reason to interfere with them or to catch them. The EM argument does not justify the trapping of wild-born British beavers.

There is a growing body of public opinion against Defra trapping the Devon beavers and it would be well for Defra to be very clear about the legal position and arguments. At present the decision appears whimsical.

Kind regards
[REDACTED]

Standard reply.

DWOE000352441

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 July 2014 10:39

To: Helpline, Defra (CCU); g_Environment_agency; g_Sepa

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: Beavering away...

It was with consternation and indignation I recently learned that some

irrational imbeciles want to remove those Beavers in Devons river Otter.

Were they North American Beavers, I would concur, for then they should be

repatriated. BUT, not Eurasian Beavers which should be an integral part of

the ecology. Not only that, but both do play an integral part in the
ecology

and enhance the environment and are, despite predominantly being dam

builders seldom if ever a problem in North America, for enumerable species

of salmonoids. But those in Eurasia are less prone to building dams and as

and when they do, not on the grand scale so it should not be a problem for

brown and /or sea trout, nor Atlantic Salmon. The real problem being fish

'farming' but no one will address that, because they're heads and brains
are

akin to that which falls to the bottom of the lochs and their vitreol is
the

same, but politicians and journalists are two cheeks of the same backside
as

are fish farmers and the law.

And were one duly worried about damns then the North Tynes Kielder dam

should be removed, it having flooded and destroyed the redds thereof.
Ditto,

the Tays tributary, the Garry, which all but destroyed the river and its
redds

too.

What ever the beavers do or are alleged to have done, it is nothing in

comparison to human folly. But some woodenheads can't see the wood for

the trees!

Notably anglers. If they were truly concerned, they should do as I did and

after 35 years, gave up my beloved sport, freshwater game angling. This,

despite having returned them for decades, environmental, ecological, animal

welfare issues, so much so, I even gave up eating fish too...unlike some

idiots, I do hope I practice what I preach. I don't in all honesty, know
which

I miss more, fishing or eating them!

Standard reply.

DW0E000353568

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, 18 July 2014 15:21
To: DE MAULEY, Rupert
Subject: Beavers

Der Lord DeMauley,

Such fantastic news that we have a native species living on our local river, for once a success story. I now urge you to use your influence to support there survival in our county. We have a rare and wonderful opportunity to do something to help halt the demise of wild animals in britain and we have to all do our part to leave a legacy to our children. We are custodians of the land and only we can make those decisions for our children and the environment that they will inherit to protect themselves.

Please give us something to be proud of, and leave us with something of intrinsic value rather than selling off everything in the name of commerce.

Thank you

[REDACTED]

Standard reply for correspondence:



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

CCU 7th Floor
Nobel House
Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR

T 03459 335577
helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/defra

[REDACTED]

Our ref: DWOE353568

24 July 2014

Dear [REDACTED],

Beavers

Thank you for your email of 18 July to Lord De Mauley about beavers in Devon. I have been asked to reply.

I believe you may be referring to articles that have appeared in the media about beavers in the River Otter in Devon.

Beavers have not been an established part of our wildlife for the last 500 years. Our landscape and habitats have changed since then and we need to assess the impact they could have, whether on the River Otter or elsewhere.

In addition, depending on the origin of the animals they could be a source of a zoonotic disease *Echinococcus multilocularis* which is not currently present in the wild.

We have the opportunity to take precautionary action now and test the beavers to make sure they do not hold the disease. The UK is officially EM disease-free and as a consequence is permitted to require tapeworm treatment of the thousands of dogs entering the UK annually. If this status was to be lost we would not be permitted to continue to require such treatment and, if EM became established in UK wildlife eradication would prove impossible. The impact on public health of such a disease becoming established is considerable.

As the articles have reported, there are no plans to cull the beavers. Once captured and tested, we intend to rehome them in a suitable location, and all decisions will be made with the welfare of the beavers in mind.

Yours sincerely,

██████████

Defra - Customer Contact Unit

DW0E000353569

From: ██████████
Date: 18 July 2014 18:13:17 BST
To: "demauley@parliament.uk<mailto:demauley@parliament.uk>"
<demauley@parliament.uk<mailto:demauley@parliament.uk>>
Subject: Devon Beevers

Dear Lord Demauley,

I understand that you have decided to remove or kill the beavers living on the Otter in E Devon. I live in Exeter a few miles away and I am most unhappy with what you are doing. I and my family welcome beavers to Devon, we are proud of Devon boasting beavers and I am persuaded that they can live in our county as a returned species. We humans have wiped out far too much of the environment we are fortunate to have inherited and the beavers are a sign of hope and a source of pleasure. There will always be naysayers in a case like this but surely 60 million humans can cope with a handful of these remarkable animals. You have the opportunity to go down in history as the politician who favoured something which ought to be part of our natural heritage please reverse your policy and leave them alone. They can be monitored, of course but many Europeans and others seem to survive having beavers around and they live officially and harmlessly in Scotland. They will protect from flash flooding, improve fish stocks and all sorts of birds, mammals and invertebrates, attract visitors and make us all feel better. Here is an opportunity to celebrate the species not extinguish them a second time. Thank you for listening.

Sincerely,

██████████

Standard reply.

DW0E000353571

From: ██████████

Sent: Friday, 18 July 2014 15:02
To: DE MAULEY, Rupert
Subject: Devon Beavers

Dear Lord DeMauley

Please consider very carefully any decisions to be made regarding the removal or culling of wild beavers in the River Otter in Devon.

Any species which has managed to reintroduce itself and thrive in this country, especially a species which was once native here before being hunted to extinction, should be encouraged and protected not persecuted.

Studies have shown that beavers are fantastic land/river management animals and will not have a detrimental impact on fishing or other river activities and could even be a valuable resource to an area, helping to prevent flooding and creating landscapes that help to protect our native plants and animals.

Please do not allow people and groups with a vested interest in removing these animals to sway any decisions you make - we have a duty to protect our natural world and hand our future generations a land rich in flora and fauna which benefits all species - not just our own selfish one!

Kind regards
[REDACTED]

Standard reply.

DW0E000353572

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 18 July 2014 15:02
To: DE MAULEY, Rupert
Subject: Devon Beavers

Dear Lord DeMauley

Please consider very carefully any decisions to be made regarding the removal or culling of wild beavers in the River Otter in Devon.

Any species which has managed to reintroduce itself and thrive in this country, especially a species which was once native here before being hunted to extinction, should be encouraged and protected not persecuted.

Studies have shown that beavers are fantastic land/river management animals and will not have a detrimental impact on fishing or other river activities and could even be a valuable resource to an area, helping to prevent flooding and creating landscapes that help to protect our native plants and animals.

Please do not allow people and groups with a vested interest in removing these animals to sway any decisions you make - we have a duty to protect our natural world and hand our future generations a land rich in flora and fauna which benefits all species - not just our own selfish one!

Kind regards
[REDACTED]

Standard reply.

DW0E000353572

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, 21 July 2014 09:27
To: DE MAULEY, Rupert
Subject: Leave the River Otter beavers alone

Dear Lord DeMauley,

I am writing to you to register my opposition to DEFRA's plans to trap and rehome the wild beavers on the River Otter in Devon. Trapping and sticking them in a zoo would cause them stress and possibly death. As somebody who grew up in Canada, I fail to comprehend why DEFRA would even consider doing such a thing. The beaver is a hugely important part of the river eco-system. They do not change or damage fishing stocks, even though the anglers are desperate to say this. There is no scientific evidence to support this.

I think DEFRA should consider their track record with the badger cull, before you go ahead with this shameful policy.

Many thanks,

Standard reply.

DW0E000353573

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 18 July 2014 15:04
To: DE MAULEY, Rupert
Subject: River Otter Beavers

Dear Mr DeMauley,

I understand that you have a vendetta against the beavers in the River Otter and are considering sending in DEFRA to capture and house them.

I assume that most people misunderstand beavers. That can be the only reason angling groups are scared of them. In fact beavers help with fish stocks. Beavers do not eat fish because they are herbivores. Biodiversity is something that you as the Under Secretary of State for the Natural Environment and Science should be supporting not taking a stand against.

I quote your words from a speech you made to the launch of the Nature Check report by Wildlife and Countryside link:

"Our environment and wildlife are important for many reasons. They are loved by us for their intrinsic value and, of course, nature is also important because of the huge range of benefits and services which it provides. For example, helping clean our water and air, providing us with food, and contributing to our wellbeing".

So, sending a European Protected Species like beavers to the zoo or killing if they can't be housed doesn't sound like it fits in with the words you spoke and is in breach of the Habitats Directive.

A broad alliance of wildlife groups led by the Charities: Devon Wildlife Trust & Wildwood Trust are campaigning for a change in policy to test the beavers to ensure they have no parasites and to monitor and mitigate any affects the beavers have to local landowners and river users. Why has this policy been rejected by ministers? It is the most sensible approach.

Also why do pressure groups carry so much weight. Surely nature comes first, then humans. I say this because we killed all the beavers during Henry VIII's reign so we owe the beavers not the humans with fishing licenses.

Please think about this issue carefully and the precedent a ruling like caging the beavers will set. Nature needs our help now.

Regards,

Standard reply.

DW0E000353574

From: [REDACTED]
Date: 18 July 2014 19:33:31 BST
To: "demauley@parliament.uk<mailto:demauley@parliament.uk>"
<demauley@parliament.uk<mailto:demauley@parliament.uk>>
Subject: Save the Beaver

Dear Lord de Mauley

Please leave the River Otter beavers in their natural state and don't put them in a zoo. Please read compelling arguments on the 38 degree website.

Yours
[REDACTED]

Standard reply.

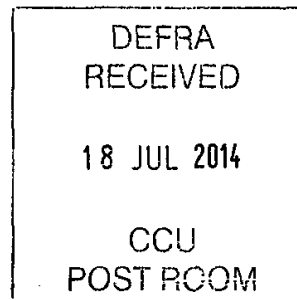
MC00000353263



Mrs Sarah Newton MP
Member of Parliament for Truro & Falmouth
18 Lemon Street, Truro, TR1 2LZ

Tel: 01872 274760 E-mail: sarah.newton.mp@parliament.uk
Web: www.sarahnewton.org.uk Twitter: @SarahNewtonMP

George Eustice MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Defra
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London
SW1P 3JR



10 July 2014

Dear *George,*

Re: [REDACTED]
I am writing on behalf of my constituent, the above [REDACTED].

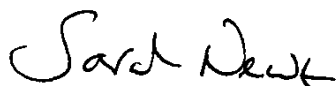
As you can see from the enclosed correspondence [REDACTED] expresses concern regarding plans

to rehome wild beavers recently discovered living in Devon.

I would be most grateful if Ms Larke's concerns could be closely considered and would appreciate your comments on the points she raises.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter, I look forward to hearing further from you in due course.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Sarah Newton MP

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 05 July 2014 11:18
To: NEWTON, Sarah
Subject: beavers of Devon
Categories: For Cmting, FW to [REDACTED]

Dear Sarah

I have just heard that the Defra Minister, Lord de Mauley, wishes to capture and possibly kill the population of beavers in Devon. I believe it is on the grounds that they change the river landscape and there is a possibility of disease.

This letter is to ask you to ask Defra to reverse this decision on the following grounds:-

- the disease in question is very rare and can be detected by testing spraint (droppings), so that this potential problem can be assessed much more easily and cheaply via a faeces test.
- beavers are a native keystone species and wherever they are present they improve both the local biodiversity and quantity of fish present in the local habitats.
- 86% of people in public opinion polls are for the beavers and very pleased that they are beginning to re-establish after a 500 year absence
- it is against the provisions of the Habitat Directives to cause harm to this native mammal which is protected, hence the government would lose any legal challenge to this decision.

It does begin to look like a losing strategy from your Party. Please ask Defra not to do this, but to allow some natural regeneration which would increase the yield for fishermen in the area and enhance the native populations of birds, insects, all water life as well as increase potential tourism in the area.

Please let me know any actions you take in response to this issue.

Sincerely





Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR

T 03459 335577
helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/defra

Sarah Newton MP
18 Lemon Street
Truro
TR1 2LZ

Our ref: MC353263/KW

July 2014

From Lord de Mauley

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Natural Environment and Science

Thank you for your letter of 10 July to George Eustice on behalf of your constituent, [REDACTED] of [REDACTED], about beavers. I am replying as the Minister responsible for wildlife management policy.

I believe [REDACTED] is referring to articles that have appeared in the media about beavers in the River Otter in Devon.

Depending on the origin of the animals they could be a source of a zoonotic disease, *Echinococcus multilocularis* (EM), which is not currently present in the wild. We have the opportunity to take precautionary action now and test the beavers to make sure they do not hold the disease. The UK is officially EM disease-free and as a consequence is permitted to require tapeworm treatment of the thousands of dogs entering the UK annually. If this status was to be lost we would not be permitted to continue to require such treatment, and, if EM became established in UK wildlife, eradication would prove impossible. The impact on public health of such a disease becoming established is considerable.

It is necessary to undertake a medical examination of the animals to confirm the presence or absence of the parasites as it exists in cysts and the larval form in beavers and is not passed in their faeces. It is, therefore, necessary to capture the animals and transfer them to a suitable facility for testing. We intend to do this in a way which best addresses the welfare interests of the animals, for example by ensuring that any young are captured with their parents to ensure their survival whilst they remain reliant.

Once tested, and if proven to be free of the parasite, we intend to re-home the animals in a suitable location. As the articles have reported, there are no plans to cull the beavers. All decisions will be made with the welfare of the beavers in mind.

Beavers have not been an established part of our wildlife for the last 500 years. Our landscape and habitats have changed since then and we need to assess the impact

they could have, whether on the River Otter or elsewhere. The International Union for Conservation of Nature has specific guidelines, which countries planning or undertaking re-introductions should follow, to address the needs of other wildlife and ecosystem services and also the needs of the animals in question. Any consideration of the animals' re-release will follow those guidelines.

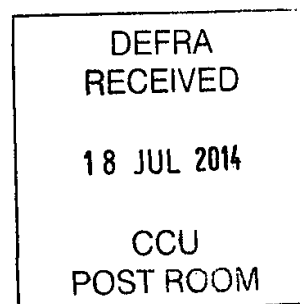
MC00000353269



NEIL PARISH

Member of Parliament for Tiverton & Honiton

Lord de Mauley
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR



16th July 2014

Dear Minister,

Re: [REDACTED]

I am writing on behalf of my constituent, [REDACTED], regarding his concerns about beavers in Devon.

I have enclosed a copy of the email for your information and would appreciate receiving your response to [REDACTED] concerns.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Neil Parish MP

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 12 July 2014 17:24
To: PARISH, Neil
Subject: Beavers in Devon

Dear Mr. Parish
Beavers in Devon

We understand that DEFRA intends to trap and rehome in a zoo, or alternatively kill, the beavers which are currently living on the river Otter in East Devon.

The justifications used for this plan have been:

1. They may carry infectious disease which does not currently occur in the UK. This can be ascertained by analysis of their faeces; however there are no plans to carry out this basic test.
2. They may negatively affect the local ecosystem. All studies of the effects of beavers in other countries have found that they have no effect until they build dams and create ponds. This activity then greatly increases aquatic life, including native and migratory fish populations. You will no doubt be aware that beavers were once an important part of the UK ecosystem, before being hunted to extinction.

The reasons above clearly do not stand up to scrutiny; moreover, the landowner where the animals live has stated that he does not object in principle to their presence.

This appears to be a case of the government ignoring inconvenient science and supporting commercial pressure groups, in this case primarily the Anglers' Association, as it is famously doing with regard to the bovine TB issue.

We ask you most strongly to resist this proposed action by DEFRA.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]



**Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs**

Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR

T 03459 335577
helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/defra

Neil Parish MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Our ref: MC353269/KW

28 July 2014

From Lord de Mauley
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Natural Environment and Science

Dear Neil,

Thank you for your letter of 16 July on behalf of your constituent, [REDACTED], about beavers.

I believe [REDACTED] is referring to articles that have appeared in the media about beavers in

the River Otter in Devon.

Depending on the origin of the animals they could be a source of a zoonotic disease, *Echinococcus multilocularis* (EM), which is not currently present in the wild. We have the opportunity to take precautionary action now and test the beavers to make sure they do not hold the disease. The UK is officially EM disease-free and as a consequence is permitted to require tapeworm treatment of the thousands of dogs entering the UK annually. If this status was to be lost we would not be permitted to continue to require such treatment, and, if EM became established in UK wildlife, eradication would prove impossible. The impact on public health of such a disease becoming established is considerable.

It is necessary to undertake a medical examination of the animals to confirm the presence or absence of the parasites as it exists in cysts and the larval form in beavers and is not passed in their faeces. It is, therefore, necessary to capture the animals and transfer them to a suitable facility for testing. We intend to do this in a way which best addresses the welfare interests of the animals, for example by ensuring that any young are captured with their parents to ensure their survival whilst they remain reliant.

Once tested, and if proven to be free of the parasite, we intend to re-home the animals in a suitable location. As the articles have reported, there are no plans to cull the beavers. All decisions will be made with the welfare of the beavers in mind.



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE

Beavers have not been an established part of our wildlife for the last 500 years. Our landscape and habitats have changed since then and we need to assess the impact they could have, whether on the River Otter or elsewhere. The International Union for Conservation of Nature has specific guidelines, which countries planning or undertaking re-introductions should follow, to address the needs of other wildlife and ecosystem services and also the needs of the animals in question. Any consideration of the animals' re-release will follow those guidelines.

Yours sincerely
Rupert
