

From: [REDACTED] (NE)
Sent: 16 June 2014 08:59
To: [REDACTED] (Defra); [REDACTED] (Defra); [REDACTED] (AHVLA); [REDACTED] (AHVLA)
Cc: [REDACTED] (NE); [REDACTED] (AHVLA); [REDACTED] (Defra); [REDACTED] (NE); [REDACTED] (AHVLA)
Subject: RE: River Otter Beaver Meeting

[REDACTED] / [REDACTED]

I did a joint visit with [REDACTED] on Friday to see [REDACTED] at Escot Park as discussed at the previous Friday's meeting and follow up telecall.

The purpose of this was to see if [REDACTED] would disclose any further information that might shed light on the source of the R Otter beavers.

Briefly, this did not yield any more information than I had already obtained on my previous visit in March. He was not being overtly defensive and did not query the purpose of the visit (i.e. in terms of linking it to a threat of prosecution), but did not offer (or appear to have) any additional information.

He did accept that, although 2009 is the only year in which he said he had seen evidence of breeding (since kits were seen) and in at least one year the death of the adult female meant there could have been no kits, breeding *could* have taken place and kits been born in:

- 2008;
- 2009 (confirmed);
- possibly 2011 (female died late June – kits, if born, might have survived);
- 2012 and
- 2013.

It was also confirmed that the only surviving wild-caught animal at Escot is the original male; the original (wild caught) female (which is the one that was found to have Em) has been replaced three times (two others having died) and the female now present is a captive bred animal originally from the enclosure at Aigas Field Centre in Scotland.

[REDACTED] was happy to cooperate with [REDACTED]'s suggestion of hair trapping in his enclosure in order to check for genetic matching with the R Otter animals or to trap in the enclosure, if necessary. Neither [REDACTED] nor [REDACTED] could remember if the original male was micro-chipped, which would of course confirm, if trapped, if the original animal is still present. [REDACTED] undertook to search his records to confirm if it was micro-chipped.

During the visit [REDACTED] mentioned a recent report (2 or 3 weeks ago) of a sighting 6 or 7 km from the current site. He did not have specific details for this. When I asked him, he wasn't sure if it was up- or downstream from the present location. Previous sightings have been reported over a length of >15km of the river and the present site is roughly in the middle of this range – so 6-7km either way would still be within the range of known sightings. However, if the present animals near Ottery St Mary are settled as a family group this could suggest that there are additional animal(s) present, over and above the three shown in the BBC footage.