

Correspondence beavers for EIR ref RFI6739

DWOE000351905

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 1 July 2014 22:43
To: DE MAULEY, Rupert
Subject: Beavers in the River Otter in Devon

Dear Minister,

Just to correct some of the erroneous information you seemed to have recieved from Anglers and alike that Beavers will damage fish stocks etc.

Maybe you should contact our Government here in Canada to get the real information.

We here in Canada appreciate the work done by Beavers as they improve the Fish stocks by providing nurseries for young fish within their ponds and improve flood control to the rivers. Your idea of trapping the Beaver and putting them in a zoo is pathetic and not a solution that any animal lover would approve of. Beavers do not flourish in Zoos (They need to chew continuously because of their teeth which grow continuously) and are best left in the wild were they will provide improvements to the habitat for many other animals. Try contacting our Tory PM Harper here in Ottawa or any of our Provincial Government Premiers before embarking on what looks like a completely wrong direction for the Beavers and in the long term ourselves. The Anglers in Britain obviously have no idea how Beavers improve the fish stocks and also the catch. Beavers themselves are vegetarians so they do not Eat the fish unlike Otters which I believe you protect but I can attest to the great fishing I have had in Beaver ponds created by these industrious animals Show some savy and get the real information from those who really know and stop listening to old wives tails.

You may well have to pay some compensation to some landowners for the areas that they may flood but it is better to spend money here than to pay a zoo to keep these busy animals.

Regards

[REDACTED]
Standard reply.

DWOE000352229

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 07 July 2014 16:42
To: CCU Correspondence (AHEG)
Subject: Re: Response to your Query : - Ref:DWOE000351589 - Beaver cull CU

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you very much for your response and for the information you provide. I would like to respond to some of these points. Regarding licensing. Firstly, do you have any evidence that these beavers have been released or 'allowed to escape', otherwise on what grounds are you calling this an offence? If they did escape by their own accord, how can any offence have been committed? And by this reasoning any non-native species is surely committing the same 'offence'. Therefore please can you clarify what your department's position is on non-native species? By your reasoning you should currently be capturing all the grey squirrel and parakeets in my local park as they have not been licensed to be there? Or what about migratory birds? Is it not the case that we have new species of birds coming to the UK as a consequence of climate change? Please can you clarify your policy on non-licensed species that come here of their own accord?

Regarding Echinococcus multilocularis, is it not the case that a simple stool sample can be used to determine whether this disease is present in these animals?

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]
[Sent in response to standard reply.]

To : [REDACTED]
CC :
Subject : Beavers

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your further email of 7 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,

[REDACTED]

Customer Contact Unit
Defra

MC00000352820

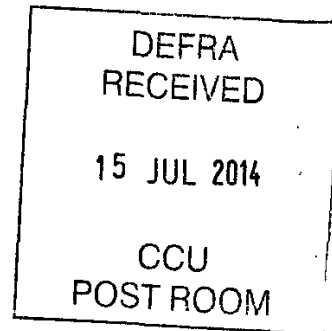
RT HON ROSIE WINTERTON
Member of Parliament for Doncaster Central



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

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



RW/AD

9 July 2014

Dr Miller

Please find enclosed an email dated 5 July which I have received from the above named constituent of mine.

As you will see from this correspondence, [REDACTED], outlines his concerns with regards to the trapping of beavers at the River Otter in Devon. I would be grateful for your observations on

the points [REDACTED] has raised with me, so that I may respond to my constituent accordingly.

I look forward to hearing from you on the understanding that I may forward a copy of your correspondence on to my constituent.

*Yours sincerely,
Rosie*

**Rt Hon Rosie Winterton
MP for Doncaster Central**

Enc.

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 05 July 2014 23:36
To: WINTERTON, Rosie
Subject: Removal of Beavers from river Otter

Dear Rosie Winterton MP,

I was wondering about your stance on the reintroduction of Beavers into the United Kingdom? Groups like the 'Anglers Trust' are working with Conservative ministers like Lord DeMauley to remove Beavers from the river Otter in Devon, via trapping, and are working to jeopardise the reintroduction of this species. Groups like the 'Anglers Trust' are using false information about the Beavers 'destroying fishing' when in reality the opposite is true. Please can you do anything in your power to try and stop this decision by DeMauley.

Your 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

Rt Hon Rosie Winterton MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Your ref: RW/AD
Our ref: MC352820/MS

21 July 2014

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

Dear Ms Winterton,

Thank you for your letter of 9 July on behalf of your constituent, ██████, of ██████ about beavers. I believe ██████ 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* (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.

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.

Ys Sincerely
Rupert de V Tanley

DW0E000351522

Dear Sirs

I am writing to you about the beavers on the River Otter in Devon.

I understand it is your intention to "remove" these innocent animals, apparently on the request of anglers. I believe the landowner is happy with their presence and they are becoming a tourist attraction, which must surely be good for the area. They are indigenous. Why on earth, then, are you acting on the misguided wishes of a few anglers?? Instead you should be educating these people that the beavers don't eat fish (although would have a perfect right if they did) and that they in fact enhance the habitat, making it more attractive to fish and other wildlife. Some just have a knee jerk reaction to anything new and this should not be accepted. Like the NFU only representing a tiny percentage of farmers, I would suspect that this association does not represent many anglers, and that most would be delighted to see beavers on the river. Please reconsider this decision.

Yours faithfully,

██████

Standard reply.

DW0E000351919

From: ██████

Date: 3 July 2014 11:45:48 BST

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

Subject: re English Beavers

Reply to: [REDACTED]

Dear Lord Mauley

I'm writing to object to the proposed move and re-homing, into captivity, a group of wild Beaver resident on the river Otter in Cornwall.

Quite frankly this is a disgusting abuse of power only mankind could exert, and one that any civilised society should deplore. So please accept this email as an official objection and register it against any such plans.

Yours Sincerely

[REDACTED]

Standard reply.

DW0E000351920

From: [REDACTED]

Date: 2 July 2014 20:35:23 BST

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

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

Subject: Devon Beavers

Dear Lord de Mauley

I am dismayed to hear that a decision has been made to remove the the Devon beavers. The same thing happened on Tayside but fortunately the Scottish Government saw sense and decided to study them instead. The Tay beavers have been a huge success. They have proved very popular and their population now stands at around 200 spread over hundreds of square miles. Very few negative impacts have been reported. The positive benefits of reintroducing this keystone species are well known and established.

We need to be speeding up progress in the direction of ecological biodiversity and the restoration of degraded habitats, not blundering on in the opposite direction which this is an example of.

Please rethink this decision. The Tay beavers have been tested for Echinococcus and returned to the wild. You could do the same. If you are coming under pressure from the NFU, could you not, just for once, take an independent stand? I know it might mean complying with the EU Habitats Directive which will upset the UKIP tendency but, honestly, what is the harm in that?

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Standard reply.

DW0E000351921 (repeated as DW0E000351935)

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Wednesday, 2 July 2014 18:02

To: DE MAULEY, Rupert

Reply to: [REDACTED]

Subject: Devon Beavers

Sir,

Please stop the trapping and possible culling of free beavers living on the River Otter in Devon and instead ensure they are healthy, and cause no problems to other riverbank users.

Please consider this the first step in a deliberate recolonising of these animals back into the UKs rivers and lakes where they belong.

Many thanks.

██████

Standard reply.

DWOE000351938

From: ██████

Date: 1 July 2014 14:14:42 BST

To: "office@northshropshireconservatives.com"

<office@northshropshireconservatives.com>

Subject: Owen Patterson

Good Day,

I am trying to reach Mr. Owen Patterson with an email but since I reside in Canada it will not go through. I was wondering since he is from your party and your area if you would be so kind as to pass this along.

Mr. Patterson I myself reside in Canada at present but still have quite a few family members still in the UK. I have been hearing some terrible news of late about you trying to get a family of beavers relocated to a zoo. This would be the first family of beavers in the area in 800 years and you want to put them in a zoo? I did check first to make sure that their facts were correct as I didn't believe them, with the vast majority of The UK being animal lovers in one way or another but no it seems so. In Canada beavers live right along side our biggest communities with no problems at all. Please rethink your decision for our benefit as much as the beavers.

Thank you,

██████

Standard reply.

DWOE000351943

From: ██████

Date: 3 July 2014 16:30:59 BST

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

Subject: the governments action to destroy our wild beavers lives, here in the river otter, devon, uk

Dear Sir

The government is going to take us back over 500 years to exterminate beavers again from their natural wild habitat, taking away all the immense enjoyment that these beavers bring to so many people, now and into the future.

Why is the government doing this horrible thing? I'm not aware of any evidence to support their decision to destroy specifically our wild beavers lives here in the river otter.

The government raises a concern of a parasitic tapeworm (EM) but this is a red herring, the government says in its own reports that the UK is free of this parasite.

The government also says they need a license - then why not give them one?

This family of beavers is living in harmony with the local people. Why not give them the chance to continue to demonstrate how we can exist in harmony together, so that others might learn from this? There has to be a way!

Please don't needlessly destroy our wild beavers lives here in the river otter.

regards

██████████

Standard reply.

MC00000352670

Dr. Sarah Wollaston M.P.
Member of Parliament for Totnes



House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

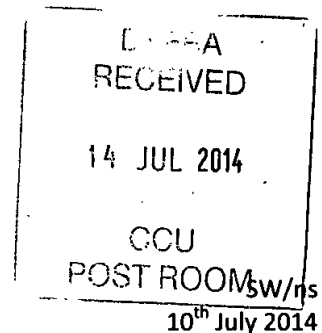
Lord de Mauley
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State
Resource Management, the Local Environment and Environmental
Science
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Letter by email: ps.lord.demauley@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Page 1 of 2

Dear Lord de Mauley,

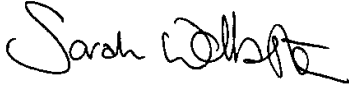
I am writing to you after being contacted by my constituent ██████████ with regard to feeling



that the beavers on the River Otter should be allowed to remain there.

I am enclosing a copy of her correspondence for your perusal and wonder if you are able to address her concerns.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Wollaston', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr Sarah Wollaston MP

Email: sarah.wollaston.mp@parliament.uk
Website: www.drsarah.org.uk
Twitter: @drwollastonmp

Parliamentary Office:
Tel : 0207 219 4064
Fax: 0207 219 5019

Constituency office:
Station Road, Totnes TQ9 5HW
Tel: 01803 868378

Dear Dr Wollaston MP

I appreciate that your government's primary concern is the health of our rivers and fish stocks. And I would like to suggest that the reintroduction of beavers into our river systems does not contradict with these aims.

Firstly, the animals' droppings can be tested to ascertain whether there is any disease risk, and if they are found to be carrying unacceptable disease they should be removed. However, if the animals are found to be disease free, they can make a valuable contribution to the health of our rivers.

The dams and pools that they create, provide habitat for insects and fish, and fish numbers are found to be far higher in rivers where beavers are present. Beavers can make an important contribution to improving the ecology and health of our river systems, and providing benefits to us by reducing flooding risks further downriver.

Many anglers who I have spoken to have expressed how magical it would be to see an elusive animal such as an otter or beaver while enjoying their angling.

I would like to ask you to speak to the relevant minister on behalf of Devon residents who would like the population of beavers on the River Otter to be allowed to remain and monitored. I understand Scotland has already monitored a population of beavers in anticipation of allowing their release. The local beavers could provide an added attraction to our area, they are native, vegetarian and would be universally welcomed back into our countryside.

With kind regards





**Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs**

Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR

T 03459 335577
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Dr Sarah Wollaston MP
House of Commons
London
SW1P 0AA

Your ref: SW/ns

Our ref: MC352670/MS

2 July 2014

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

Des Sarah,

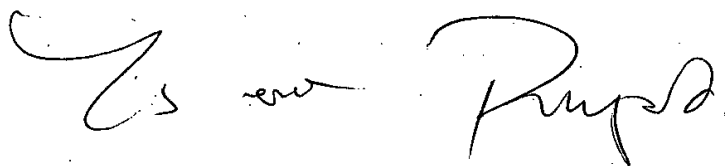
Thank you for your letter of 10 July on behalf of your constituent, [REDACTED], about beavers. I believe [REDACTED] may be referring to articles that have appeared in the media about beavers in the River Otter in Devon.

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* (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.



DWOE000352207

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 4 July 2014 23:22
To: DE MAULEY, Rupert
Subject: Beavers

The decision to capture these beavers is totally brainless and appalling.
Please see some sense and leave them alone. We are supposed to be encouraging the reintroduction of wildlife.

[Sent in response to standard reply.]

To : [REDACTED]
CC :
Subject : Beavers
Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your further email of 7 July in response to mine of the same day.

Your views have been noted.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Customer Contact Unit
Defra

DWOE000352208

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, 4 July 2014 10:37
To: DE MAULEY, Rupert
Subject: Please do not relocate Britain's wild beavers

Hello,

Please do not relocate these beavers into captivity. They are native animals and are a positive force in our environment. We must work to protect these creatures and ensure their survival, not look to get rid of them once more. Our land is not just for people. What is good for nature is good for us too.

You are in a position of power to affect meaningful change, please choose to be a force to protect these animals in their natural habitat.

Thank you.

██████████

Standard reply.

DW0E000352209

From: ██████████
Sent: Friday, 4 July 2014 10:58
To: DE MAULEY, Rupert
Subject: Save Our English Beavers

Dear Mr DeMauley

I am joining the call for the British beavers living in Devon to be saved from being captured and put in a zoo.

If disease-free these animals should be monitored and studied to ascertain whether a broader release of this keystone species should be rolled-out.

I look forward to hearing your response.

██████████

Standard reply.

DW0E000352211

From: ██████████
Sent: Friday, 4 July 2014 12:04
To: DE MAULEY, Rupert
Subject: River Otter Beavers

Dear Lord DeMauley,

I am writing to ask you to reconsider your recent decision to remove beavers from the River Otter.

If there was a will, managing the interests of other rivers whilst still allowing the beavers to remain must surely be possible?

Yours sincerely,

██████████

Standard reply.

DW0E000352216

From: [REDACTED]
Date: 6 July 2014 11:33:28 BST
To: <demauley@parliament.uk<mailto:demauley@parliament.uk>>
Subject: Wild Beavers

Dear Sir,

I was disappointed to learn that the wild beaver colony in Devon is to be removed by civil servants. Have these people nothing better to do?

Beavers are indigenous to Britain and therefore should not be persecuted. Quite why the civil servants do not focus their activities on more productive tasks such as eradicating mink is very odd and demonstrates how poorly your department is managed at our expense.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]
Standard reply.

DW0E000352217

From: [REDACTED]
Date: 6 July 2014 08:54:21 BST
To: "demauley@parliament.uk<mailto:demauley@parliament.uk>"
<demauley@parliament.uk<mailto:demauley@parliament.uk>>
Subject: Beaver trapping

Dear sir,

I am writing to show my support for the campaign against the trapping of beavers in the UK.

Beavers have been shown to be an important part of river ecosystems and would be an asset to fresh water fish stocks, and flood defences. As with any predator beavers play an important part in harmonising their ecosystem.

More than this I believe the people of Britain have the right to have beavers in their wild places.

Please do the right thing and let the beavers stay!

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]
Standard reply.

DW0E000352218

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 5 July 2014 09:43
To: DE MAULEY, Rupert
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: The River Otter Beavers...

Dear Lord de Mauley

I strongly urge you to reconsider the plans to trap the River Otter beavers. From my experience and position as a [REDACTED], my considered opinion is that your department

should be encouraging the spread of beavers. We should be reintroducing them with the aim of increasing biodiversity and enhancing the natural flood-protection services they provide. I fear the government is out of touch with the electorate and specifically sports fishermen and landowners if it continues in it's plans.

Yours faithfully

██████████

Standard reply.

DW0E000352219

From: ██████████

Date: 5 July 2014 07:15:53 BST

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

Subject: Devon Beavers

Dear Lord De Mauley,

Please cancel this ludicrous plan to capture the wild-living beavers on the River Otter, which would be an extremely conspicuous waste of public money.

In the past I carried out fieldwork in beaver habitat in ██████████ and also ██████████ that were probably created by beavers thousands of years ago.

Beavers engineer delightful, biodiverse habitats and are already stimulating tourism in Devon.

European Beavers CO-EVOLVED with native fish species. They are vegetarians. Beaver dams create healthy fish habitat, rather than fragmenting or destroying it, thereby improving water quality and promoting rather than threatening angling. They also smooth out flood peaks on rivers.

In the unlikely event that the droppings of these beavers are infected with exotic tapeworms, the animals can simply be dosed with an appropriate veterinary medicine and released again.

This situation provides an ideal opportunity to study the ecology of a new beaver colony in the wild, as preparation for eagerly anticipated planned releases in Wales and elsewhere. I am sure there are UK mammalogists who would jump at the chance of conducting such a study.

It would make far more sense for DEFRA to reassure the muddled anglers and devote its limited budget to eradicating some of the more seriously harmful Invasive Alien Species.

Yours,

██████████

Standard reply.

DW0E000352220

From: ██████████

Date: 4 July 2014 16:15:21 BST
To: "demauley@parliament.uk<mailto:demauley@parliament.uk>"
<demauley@parliament.uk<mailto:demauley@parliament.uk>>
Subject: Beaver capture

Dear Lord Demouley,

Once again I am astounded by the governments attitude towards the natural environment and it's need to make it as boring and devoid of life as possible.

As a keen angler I would be thrilled to see beavers across the whole country and do not feel I am represented at all by the angling society. You have quoted them directly (which is worrying in its self that they have so much influence over the government) for your reason to remove the beavers. There is very strong evidence that beavers increase fish populations, as well as helping with flood protection and increasing biodiversity across the whole Eco system.

I look forward to hearing a response of why the beavers should be removed from otter river that isn't in the interest of the tiny minority (as the vast amount of the public would love to see beavers back) or for an actual scientifically proved reason.

Kind regards,

██████████
Standard reply.

DWOE000352226

From: ██████████
Date: 7 July 2014 07:45:17 BST
To: "demauley@parliament.uk<mailto:demauley@parliament.uk>"
<demauley@parliament.uk<mailto:demauley@parliament.uk>>
Subject: Beaver conservation.

My Lord Demaully,

I write in defence of the beavers on the Otter river which I understand you are determined to eradicate.

I believe you may may been ill advised and I therefore urge you to review again the scientific evidence, which clearly shows that these animals are not harmful to fish stocks and have a benign effect on their environment.

Yours faithfully,

██████████
Standard reply.

DWOE000352227

From: ██████████
Sent: 07 July 2014 16:07
To: CCU Correspondence (AHEG)
Subject: RE: Response to your Query : - Ref:DWOE000351905 - Beavers

██████████
Have you contacted your counterparts in Canada. I noted several things stated in the article by supposed Fishing Association stating that Beavers are a treat to Fish stocks which is buncum.

I would have thought that Beavers could well be introduced onto some of the large country estate across the land with minimal impact on urban living.

Here in Canada Beavers are common across the whole country and governments have to deal with them continually so I again recommend you contact our Ministries for guidance in your planning. As you know Canada has Federal Framework so contacting individual provinces gives you the best sources of information as it is usually Provincial Governments who are in control of wildlife.

Regards

██████

[This responds to previous standard reply.]

To : ██████

CC :

Subject : Beavers

Dear ██████,

Thank you for your further email of 7 July in response to mine of the same day.

Your views have been noted.

Yours sincerely,

██████

Customer Contact Unit
Defra

DW0E000352228

From: ██████

Date: 7 July 2014 12:21:53 BST

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

Subject: Beavers in Devon

Dear Lord DeMauley,

I am writing to convey my disappointment that DEFRA has decided to capture the family of beavers living on the River Otter in East Devon.

The beavers will do no harm, and are a source of great delight and interest to those who live in the area, and also to tourists upon whom the local economy largely depends.

Please act to reverse the decision to capture the beavers, and thus protect the latest member of Devon's wonderful rural character.

We should celebrate the beavers' return after many centuries of absence.

Yours,

██████

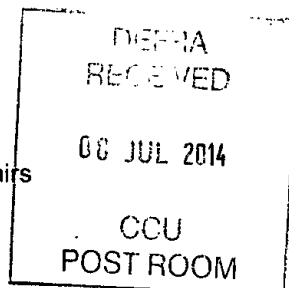
MC00000352245

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London SW1A 0AA
Telephone 0207 219 1015
Email natascha.engel.mp@parliament.uk



Constituency Office
62 Market Street, Eckington S21 4JH
Telephone 01246 439018
www.nataschaengelp.org.uk

George Eustice MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London
SW1P 3JR



Our ref: AH/ND5709

04 July 2014

Dear Mr Eustice

Beaver Removal in Devon

I have been contacted by a constituent who has raised concerns about plans to remove wild beavers from the River Otter in Devon and then place them in a zoo.

My constituent would like to know why these animals would need to be removed from their natural habitat.

Please could you let me know why the Government is planning to do this, so that I can pass this information on to my constituent.

I look forward to receiving your reply.

Yours sincerely,

Natascha Engel
Member of Parliament for North East Derbyshire



**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

Natascha Engel MP
62 Market Street
Eckington
S21 4JH

Your ref: AH/ND5709
Our ref: MC352245/MS

15 July 2014

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

Dear Ms Engel,

Thank you for your letter of 4 July to George Eustice on behalf of your constituent about beavers in the River Otter in Devon. I am replying as the Minister responsible for wildlife policy.

I believe your constituent 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.

Ys Smeich

Lord de Mauley

DW0E000352231

From: [REDACTED]

Sent:
To:
Subject:

07 July 2014 23:52
CCU Correspondence (AHEG)
Re: Response to your Query : - Ref:DWOE000351920 - Beavers

RECEIVED
08 JUL 2014

Dear [REDACTED]

I am aware of the danger of EM and I would not advocate the release of untested beavers but, like the Tay beavers the Devon beavers are a fact on the ground. The Tay beavers have been tested and are EM free, thank goodness. The same process could be applied to the Devon beavers. If they turned out to be infected I'd readily accept that they should be removed.

The 500 year absence of beavers (no one knows for sure if it is 500 years) is irrelevant in the context that the countryside evolved with beavers since the last Ice Age and that they have been successfully reintroduced into many countries after an absence of centuries. They also have the potential to reverse the steep biodiversity declines of recent decades.

Furthermore, unless Scotland votes for independence and a new Hadrian's wall or beaver- proof frontier is erected after September the game is up anyway. Beavers are already well established in their natural range in the UK, so your actions could be said to contravene the EU Habitats Directive.

The trapping trial in Tayside was a catastrophic blunder by SNH. Don't repeat it! Or perhaps I should say: go ahead. Make my day. You will regret the hornet's nest of hostile public opinion you stir up.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

[This responds to previous standard reply.]

To : [REDACTED]
CC :
Subject : Beavers

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your email of 7 July to about beavers. I have been asked to reply.

We appreciate the concerns you have and have noted what you say but unfortunately there is nothing further I can add to our previous reply.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Customer Contact Unit
Defra

DWOE000351993

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your response, which was mainly a reiteration of your department's press release. May I ask you to read this comprehensive article by George Monbiot, which deals with the potential parasite problem and sets out the advantages of retuning beavers to the environment. Please take the wishes of the public into account.

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/georgemonbiot/2014/jul/04/stop-control-freaks-capture-englands-wild-beavers>

Yours sincerely,

██████

To : ██████

CC :

Subject : Beavers

Dear ██████,

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

Your further views have been noted.

Yours sincerely,

██████

Customer Contact Unit

Defra

DWOE000352686

From: ██████

Date: 11 July 2014 13:56:45 BST

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

Subject: Beavers

Good Morning,

Can I please make my position clear that I believe that trapping then rehousing or culling the native wild Beaver would be a disastrous move on DEFRA's part. The beaver has in the past been hunted to unacceptably low figures and has only recently been able to recover numbers slightly.

Please use your common sense and decency and leave them alone to recover their numbers to an acceptable level in peace.

yours sincerely

██████

Standard reply.

DWO0000354517

██████
July 3rd 2014

Dear D Cameron

I don't suppose you will read this letter but this is just another reason why I and many other people would never support the Conservative Party again.

I truly hope that the Torys lose the next election.

Yours faithfully

██████

By Ben Spencer
Science Reporter

WHEN beavers were spotted swimming in an English river, conservationists were delighted.

For the first time in 800 years, a family was thriving in the wild – after the mammals had been hunted to extinction.

But now the beavers face a new threat to their existence... from officialdom. Ministers want them rounded up, saying they are a threat to other wildlife.

Defra, the government rural affairs department responsible for the controversial badger culls, says the family of three – two parents and a juvenile – must be taken into captivity as they might be carrying diseases.

Naturalists and wildlife enthusiasts have dismissed ministers' claims as nonsense and an online petition to leave the beavers in the wild has already gained 2,500 signatures, as well as the backing of celebrities including comedian Russell Brand.

Tom Buckley, a retired environmental scientist who discovered the beavers in the

Fury as officials order: Put wild beavers in a zoo

Just months after UK comeback, they're blamed for threatening other animals

'They are ringing all the zoos'

River Otter in Devon after noticing last October that trees had been gnawed, said: 'I am absolutely appalled. I am horrified that the Government's men are already making their gruesome preparations.'

'If Defra are really worried about these beavers, why don't they test them?'

'People here are happy with the beavers being here, they enjoy them. There is no reason to remove them.'

The plans emerged this week when Defra minister George Eustice quietly released a written statement to Parliament. Mr Eustice said: 'All decisions will be made with the welfare of the beavers in mind. There are no plans to cull beavers.'

Experts are deciding how to catch them and where to send them.

Derek Gow, a wildlife consultant, said: 'At the moment they are ringing all the zoos and asking them if they will take the beavers. Why

should three beavers be three beavers too many? This will be the first time in history that we have exterminated a native mammal twice, setting an extraordinary historical precedent.'

'What Defra should do is look at a more informative project whereby the beavers are left and studied.'

The beavers' presence in Devon is a mystery. There are several captive breeding programmes in the

UK, including at nearby Ottery St Mary, but none of the animals is unaccounted for. Experts believe they are most likely to have escaped from a private collection.

A Defra spokesman said: 'Depending on the source of the animals, they could be carrying a disease not currently present in the UK. In addition, 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.'

But Peter Burgess, conservation manager at the Devon Wildlife Trust, said: 'We have got a huge amount to learn about what these beavers could do for us.'

'We do not want to see reintroduction of species happen in this way but now they are here and on the river, we want them to remain.'

b.spencer@dailymail.com



Danger? One of the family of beavers living in the River Otter in Devon

DW0E000354416

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 17 July 2014 12:24
To: TRUSS, Elizabeth
Subject: Beavers in the River Otter

Dear Elizabeth Truss,

I am writing to express my concern about the planned capture of wild beavers living in the River Otter, which as Secretary of State for DEFRA, I believe you are ultimately responsible for. While I appreciate that no licenses have been issued permitting deliberate reintroductions of beavers in this area, I feel that there is no good reason to remove them and that allowing them to remain in the wild, closely monitored, would be a more forward-thinking approach.

Of the reasons given by DEFRA spokespersons for the capture, one is the risk of disease, specifically *Echinococcus multilocularis*. While this is a possibility, the risk is low. Furthermore, it would be possible (and I would recommend) to test for EM in the field, using tests such as the one recently published by Knapp et al. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.vetpar.2013.12.023> or other tests as described in the 'WHO Manual on Echinococcosis'.

The other reason cited was the fact that beavers have been absent for a long time and we don't know what impact they will have. However, numerous studies have found that the impact of beavers is positive in many ways - presence of beavers leads to larger fish, more waterbirds and potentially reduce lowland flooding. The Angling Trust seems particularly vocal in its objections to beavers, which seems incomprehensible to me given the weight of evidence suggesting beavers benefit fish populations, and none (of which I am aware) that they harm fish.

Furthermore, the fact that they have been confirmed breeding in what amounts to their 'natural range' (since they are an extirpated native species) suggests that they should be classified as 'Established' in Britain and afforded the appropriate protection under European laws.

Finally, beavers are a native species, albeit one which has been absent for the past 500 years. They are part of our ecology and heritage. Reports suggest that the majority of local people support the presence of beavers, and the Scottish Beaver Trial has also proved very popular, demonstrating that people do appreciate the opportunity to see native wildlife.

While it is unfortunate that this population was established without the appropriate licences, now that it is there it seems to me that a better solution would be to let it remain, watch and monitor it (for disease and hydrological impacts) and only capture them if it can be demonstrated they are having a negative impact. If no negative impacts are found, or these are mitigated by benefits, then let them be and celebrate the return of one of England's native species.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

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From: PS/Lord de Mauley (Secretariat)
Sent: 30 June 2014 09:01
To: [REDACTED] (Defra)
Cc: [REDACTED] (Defra)
Subject: FW: Beavers in Devon

[REDACTED]

Some assistance offered in the beaver situation. Would you consider and let me/[REDACTED] know if this is something you may want to take up. Thanks,

[REDACTED]

Lord de Mauley's Private Office

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

T: [REDACTED]
M: [REDACTED]

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone.
From: GALE, Roger <GALERJ@parliament.uk>
Sent: Saturday, 28 June 2014 17:36
To: DE MAULEY, Rupert
Subject: Fwd: Beavers in Devon

Dear Rupert,

[REDACTED], who is the driving force behind the Wildwood British Wildlife Park in my constituency, is every bit as expert as he claims and worthy of considerable attention.

He could well be of considerable assistance to you and you might well, when you have time, wish to see him. I would be delighted to introduce you personally.

With very best wishes
Roger
I
Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: "[REDACTED], Wildwood Trust" <[REDACTED]>>
Date: 27 June 2014 11:40:51 BST
To:
Cc: <GALERJ@parliament.uk<<mailto:GALERJ@parliament.uk>>>
Subject: Beavers in Devon

The Rt Hon. The Lord de Mauley

My Lord:

Regarding Beavers living wild in Devon.

I advised Richard Benyon on a similar situation last year and would welcome the chance to reiterate what I said then and how the situation was quickly resolved and without negative media interest, keeping the local landowners and community very happy.

This issue is unlikely to go away and any action to remove the beavers could become an embarrassing farce, as it did in Scotland, and role on to the next election.

My MP, Sir Roger Gale, will vouch for me as an expert in this field and an honest actor in such issues.

I have 15 years' experience of managing beavers and access to the best veterinary and animal management experts in the country. I hope I could advise you to adopt a simple programme of testing and monitoring that can easily resolve this issue and ensure no negative publicity.

While I sympathise with the concerns of some in the angling and farming community, much of which is born from a lack of experience, I do feel that this is countered by the strength of feeling of many experts and leaders in the wildlife conservation community who will not support any action to remove the beaver, and that concern would grow as the likely outcome could be very messy.

The reason why so many ecologists support beavers so strongly is due to their amazing ability to make our streams and rivers create wildlife habitat and play a significant role saving species like water voles and other river based wildlife. Beavers, in time, can also make a significant contribution to flood prevention and meeting our Water Framework Directive targets, all at no cost to the taxpayer!

Yours faithfully,

A small black rectangular box used to redact a signature.

Chief Executive
Wildwood Trust
