

Knowledge Organiser



BEAVER
TRUST

Quick facts

- 1** Europe's largest rodent (can weigh up to 30kg)
- 2** Live in river and streams (spend most of their time in water)
- 3** Ecosystem engineers: they build dams out of mud, sticks, stokes, logs and vegetation
- 4** Keystone species: their activity helps to support entire ecosystems
- 5** Beavers were hunted to extinction in Britain about 400 years ago (for fur, meat, medicine and perfume)
- 6** They are now being reintroduced throughout the UK

Challenges

Restoring beavers to their original locations can be a challenge - their return could affect those who live and farm the land nearby.

There may be special trees people don't want to be coppiced or wetlands created where farming takes place. These challenges can be overcome with management and collaboration.

Some benefits of beaver dams and canals:

- Dam and canal building creates a mosaic of watery habitats
- They slow, spread and store water to create a spongy landscape
- In times of drought, water is often still found in beaver ponds
- The dams reduce flood risk downstream during heavy rain
- Dams act as a filter to improve water quality in rivers and streams
- Slowing water flow encourages the growth of river plants and algae, therefore beaver ponds can absorb more carbon dioxide which helps prevent climate change
- Beavers create conditions that support abundant life along our rivers including frogs, kingfishers, snakes, dragonflies and otters.

Key features

Thick, waterproof fur

Can hold breath for up to 15 minutes under water

