

# Quantifying and Understanding the Killing of Reintroduced Beavers in Scotland.

## *Background*

Native to Scotland, beavers were made extinct in the 16th century for their lucrative fur and oil. In recent years, Scotland has led a campaign to bring them back, catalysing the 2009 rewilding effort of three Eurasian Beaver colonies in Knapdale, Argyll. Surprisingly, rumour indicates beavers pre-existing the project as early as 2006 due to a possible escape from a private collection or more explosively, an intentional release, within the Tay Catchment.

The unmonitored population within the Tay has resulted in flooding, bank erosion and tree damage for the local populace, with local landowners bearing the brunt of this damage. This has been exacerbated by the granting of Protective Status for beavers in May 2019, preventing individuals from killing or trapping beavers and destroying dams without a license, further destabilising the relationship between landowners, policy makers and the beavers themselves.



## *Aims*

To quantify the number of reintroduced beavers that have been killed post protective status and understand the underlying causes that drive this illegal activity.

## *Methods*

To identify properties to survey, we utilised NatureScots 2019 Licensing Summary to create a catchment area with high instances of beaver activity; River's Earn, Ericht, Tay and Isla. After we created a 0.5 mile radius around these rivers to help identify properties that could make a living of the land i.e farms and golf courses. Once completed, we then coded each property and randomly generated a set of 60/489 properties to initially survey. With 120 of the total 489 properties surveyed or visited.



## *Results*

Our findings suggest that protective status does not deter illegal killing of beavers or dam destruction and two main themes emerged on why undertake illegal activity would be undertaken.

1. Fincial loss: destruction of land, loss of investments
2. Distrust of athouritries to remove beavers/dams

## *Next Steps*

Our next steps would be to asertain if there is any statistically significant difference in beaver killings and dam destuction post May 2019.