

## BEAVERS OF KNAPDALE

The beavers were reintroduced to Mid Argyll, in 2009.

The beaver is a native animal in Scotland but it became extinct in Britain in the 16th century caused by human hunting. Their fur, meat and scent glands were especially sought after.

Over 20 years ago in 2009. 16 beavers came from Norway and since then their number have grown to around 30.

By building lodges and dams, they create wetlands, which creates more life for different fish, eels, insects, bird etc.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Beavers can hold their breath for 15 minutes
- They store logs and twigs underwater for winter
- Beaver eat their poop again to get all the nutrients out of their food.
- Beaverdams clean and filter pollutants out of the water
- The beavers create wetlands which store carbon due to the increase in settling organic sediment
- Beaver dams slow down water flow, by spreading the water over a greater area, which produces positive outcomes in terms of flood risk.
- The beaver is one of the largest living rodents on the planet.
- Their teeth get their orange color from an iron-rich enamel



*Learn more about*

## Nature's engineer

**THE BEAVER**

[www.heartofargyllwildlife.org](http://www.heartofargyllwildlife.org)



They live in families which contains, of a monogamous pair. The female beaver can carry up to four kits, which are born in summer after a three to four month gestation. The kits will leave their parents lodge after about 2-3 years. Within this time the beaver kits have learned how to construct lodges and dams from their parents.

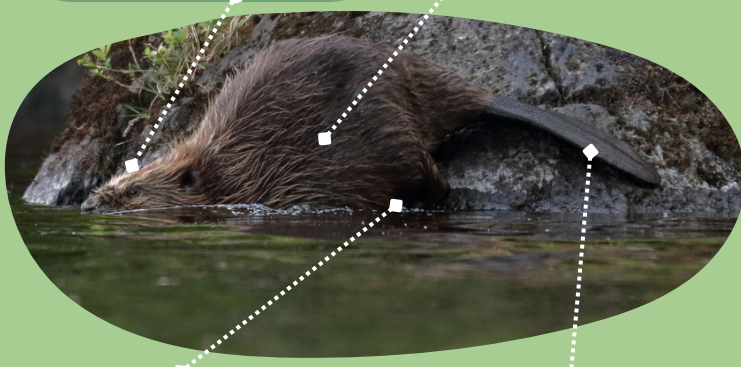
As the beaver dips underwater their nose and ears are valvular, meaning they shut to keep water out. Beavers have a translucent third eyelid which protects their eyes when underwater, while still allowing sight.

A combination of a thick fat layer under the skin and dense, oily fur outside keeps their bodies well insulated in cold water.



Beavers' long orange teeth never stop growing but are continually worn down by their constant gnawing. Their teeth are self-sharpening and can cleave a willow the size of a person's finger in a single bite!

They are herbivores which means they eat tree bark, fresh leaves, grasses and lily pads. If you're lucky you might find sticks with bite marks on, from the beavers teeth.



The beavers' homes are called lodges. Inside the lodge they are protected against bad weather and predators. They are built above water level and made of branches, mud and clay. Beaver's homes are pretty sophisticated. they are built with a room to sleep in and an area, where they can dry their fur.

The lodge is insulated by thick walls, and ventilated by a small air hole in the roof called a "chimney."

They have fivefingered, clawed 'hands' with opposable thumbs, which they can use to grab wood and build their dams and lodges. Their back feet have webbing between the toes to aid in swimming, and have specialised cleaning claws for grooming their coat.

The beavers' flat scaly tail has several uses. It acts as a rudder when swimming, a prop when sitting or standing on land, and a fat store for wintertime. Beavers also use their tails to startle predators and communicate danger to other beavers, by slapping it on the water's surface.



When the beavers leave dead standing trees, different wood boring insects such as beetles and sawflies will come and eat the dead tree. Then woodlice and millipedes will come and eat the dead wood. In the end fungi, bacteria and lichens will eat what is left. Woodpeckers and badgers will also use the dead trees, since they are attracted to the insects living inside the dead tree.

Typically, the floor is covered in wood shavings to absorb excess moisture and provide bedding.

The lodge can only be accessed by underwater tunnels which helps evade land-based predators.



They sleep in the day and go out in the night, to eat build dams, ect.

When beavers cut down trees it brings sunlight into the forest ground, which creates a new living space for other plants, by making different browse levels and providing accessible food for a greater range of animals

