



Ymddiriedolaethau Natur
Cymru
Wildlife Trusts
Wales

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release (02 October 2025)

Historic Moment For Beavers in Wales

The Wildlife Trusts in Wales highly commend the Welsh Government's decision to officially recognise European beavers (*Castor fiber*) as a native species and award them full legal protection.

The announcement by the Deputy First Minister, Huw Irranca-Davies, that the Welsh Government will extend European Protected Species status to beavers is wonderful news for this remarkable mammal, whose natural behaviour can help restore and manage rivers and freshwater habitats for the benefit of wildlife and people. Their protection will make it illegal to deliberately harm beavers or damage their habitats.

A survey by the University of Exeter in 2023 found that 88.70% of respondents in Wales supported beavers returning to the wild and 83.72% wanted them to have 'strong legal protection' so this move will be supported by the vast majority of people in Wales.

Through the Welsh Beaver Project, the Wildlife Trusts in Wales have been working for 20 years to successfully restore wild beavers to the Welsh landscape and this decision marks the most significant step to date in achieving that vision. The Wildlife Trusts have pioneered the reintroduction of beavers and they achieved protected status in Scotland in 2019 and England in 2022, so this welcome move aligns legislation in Wales with the rest of Britain.

The Wildlife Trusts in Wales also look forward to joining the proposed Wales Beaver Forum: we are keen to help ensure that sufficient support for landholders and beaver managers is in place to guarantee that timely management can occur so that we enjoy all the benefits beavers bring, such as improving river water quality, stabilising water flows, storing carbon and helping other wildlife, whilst avoiding any major adverse impacts to land-use or infrastructure.

Through the *Living With Beavers In The Dyfi Catchment Project*, the Welsh Beaver Project is currently developing a volunteer Beaver Management Network. This is funded by the Nature Networks Fund (round two), which is delivered by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, on behalf of the Welsh Government and in partnership with Natural Resources Wales.

Alicia Leow-Dyke, Welsh Beaver Project Officer, said:

“To fully realise the benefits of beavers, while also supporting land managers by addressing any local challenges, it is essential to have legal protections in place alongside an effective management framework. This announcement marks a huge milestone in the re-establishment of wild beavers to Wales.”

Joyce Watson MS, Senedd Species Champion for Beavers, said:

“I was delighted by the Minister’s strong response to my debate. He confirmed that the government plans to bring forward legislation to give protected status to beavers in Wales.

As Beaver Champion for Wales, I recently joined the Welsh Beaver Project team at Cors Dyfi near Machynlleth, where an enclosure supports a family of beavers. At a time when our rivers are under threat, beavers could be critical to improving water quality and reducing flood risks. They are amazing eco-engineers – re-establishing sustainable populations could breathe new life into our water systems, for the benefit of wildlife and people.

Beavers have been extinct in Wales since Tudor times, yet consultation shows tremendous public support for their reintroduction – Wales is eager for beavers!”

ENDS

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Notes to editors:

- **Yr Ymddiriedolaeth Natur** www.wildlifetrusts.org

Ceir 46 Ymddiriedolaeth Natur ar hyd a lled y DU, Ynysoedd Manaw ac Aldernay. Rydym yn gweithio dros amgylchedd sy'n cynnig cyfoeth o fywyd gwyllt i bawb. Gyda 800,000 aelod, y ni yw'r sefydliad gwirfoddol mwyaf yn y DU sy'n ymroddedig i gadwraeth yr amrywiaeth llawn o gynefinoedd a rhywogaethau yn y DU, boed yng nghefn gwlad, y ddinas neu'r môr. Mae 134,000 o'n haelodau'n perthyn i'r adran lau, sef y Clwb Gwylio. Rydym yn rheoli 2,200 o warchodfeydd natur sydd yn ymestyn dros fwy nag 80,000 hectar; rydym yn sefyll dros natur; rydym yn ysbrydoli pobl ynghylch y byd naturiol ac rydym yn meithrin byw cynaliadwy.

- **The Wildlife Trusts** www.wildlifetrusts.org

There are 46 local Wildlife Trusts across the whole of the UK, the Isle of Man and Alderney. We are working for an environment rich in wildlife for everyone. With 800,000 members, we are the largest UK voluntary organisation dedicated to conserving the full range of the UK's habitats and species, whether they be in the countryside, in cities or at sea. 134,000 of our members belong to our junior branch, Wildlife Watch. We manage 2,200 nature reserves covering more than 80,000 hectares; we stand up for wildlife; we inspire people about the natural world and we foster sustainable living.

- **Ymddiriedolaeth Natur Gogledd Cymru** www.northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk

Ein gweledigaeth yw amgylchedd cyfoethocach o ran byd natur i bawb. Y ni yw'r brif elusen yng ngogledd Cymru sy'n gwbl ymroddedig i gadwraeth pob cynefin a phob rhywogaeth. Gydag aelodaeth o fwy na 6,000 o bobl, rydym yn ymgyrchu dros amddiffyn bywyd gwyllt a buddsoddi yn y dyfodol drwy helpu pobl o bob oedran i werthfawrogi a deall bywyd gwyllt yn well. Rydym yn edrych ar ôl 36 o warchodfeydd natur sy'n cynnwys dros 750 hectar. **Am ragor o wybodaeth ynghylch Ymddiriedolaeth Natur Gogledd Cymru ffoniwch 01248 351541 neu e-bostiwch info@northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk**

- **North Wales Wildlife Trust** www.northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk

Our vision is 'an environment richer in wildlife for everyone'. We are the leading charity in North Wales dedicated exclusively to conserving all our habitats and species, with a membership of more than 6,000 people. We campaign for the protection of wildlife and invest in the future by helping people of all ages to gain a greater appreciation and understanding of wildlife. We care for 36 nature reserves spanning over 750 hectares. **For further information about North Wales Wildlife Trust please phone 01248 351541 or e-mail info@northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk**

- **Prosiect Afancod Cymru**

Mae Prosiect Afancod Cymru wedi bod yn ymchwilio i ddichonoldeb dod ag afancod yn ôl i'r gwyllt yng Nghymru ers 2005. Mae'r gwaith hwn yn cael ei arwain gan Ymddiriedolaeth Bywyd Gwyllt Gogledd Cymru ar ran pob un o'r pum Ymddiriedolaeth Bywyd Gwyllt yng Nghymru fel rhan o'n strategaeth Tirweddau Byw ac rydym nawr yn gobeithio ymgymryd ag ailgyflwyniad rheoledig i Gymru.

- **Welsh Beaver Project**

The Welsh Beaver Project has been investigating the feasibility of bringing beavers back to the wild in Wales since 2005. This work is being led by North Wales Wildlife Trust on behalf of all five Wildlife Trusts in Wales as part of our Living Landscapes strategy and we now hope to undertake a managed reintroduction to Wales.