

FARMERS WARNED OVER BEAVER POPULATION CONTROL

By olivia midgley, 01 Apr 2016, Scotland

A series of measures have been announced to protect beavers in Scotland



Beaver populations are increasing in Scotland

Scottish Government Ministers said they were aware of the disruption beavers had caused to farming operations across the country, as they announced a series of measures to protect the species while a decision was taken on their long-term future.

Ministers have been working closely with Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and senior animal health experts to provide advice to farmers and landowners impacted by the animals.

This includes:

- Providing information on the beaver breeding season to further address issues regarding the harm of pregnant or lactating beavers with dependent young.
- The possible use of Nature Conservation Orders, where evidence emerges welfare concerns are being ignored.

- Continuing to advise on mitigation and alternatives to lethal control wherever possible.
- When there are no other practicable options, making information available on the most humane methods of lethal control.

Environment Minister Aileen McLeod said: “We understand there are those for whom beaver activity can pose problems – particularly farmers with low-lying areas, often with highly productive farms but which are at risk of flooding or waterlogging from the damming activities of beavers.

“We are working closely with SNH, who are providing advice on mitigation and alternatives to lethal control but also guidelines regarding welfare considerations arising from the shooting of beavers, where this is the only option available.”

Ms McLeod said she was concerned about beavers being killed during the breeding season and asked land managers to take heed of advice, particularly when there was likely to be dependent young and shooting was discouraged.

She added: “The use of Nature Conservation Orders are available to us and should evidence emerge that welfare concerns for beavers are being ignored, we will look to use these powers to protect beavers in specific areas.”