

# Beavers in East Kent

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River Stour IDB**

&

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05/02/2025

## River Stour (Kent) Internal Drainage Board

- River Stour Catchment (covering Ashford, Canterbury, Sandwich, Deal and lowland marshes)
- Core District approx 12,000 hectares
- Catchment Area approx 91,000 hectares



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## Beavers

- The River Stour IDB recognises the potential benefits and supports the reintroduction of beavers – in the right locations with appropriate controls
- A member of the East Kent Beaver Advisory Group (EKBAG)
- We do have concerns:
  - Negative impacts must be acknowledged
  - Reintroductions must be properly planned and assessed
  - Affected landowners need assistance
  - RMAs/BMGs need to be funded
  - WLM structure damage

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## Tree damage



## Damming



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## Damage to WLM structures



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## Excavation/access



## Channelling



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## Burrowing



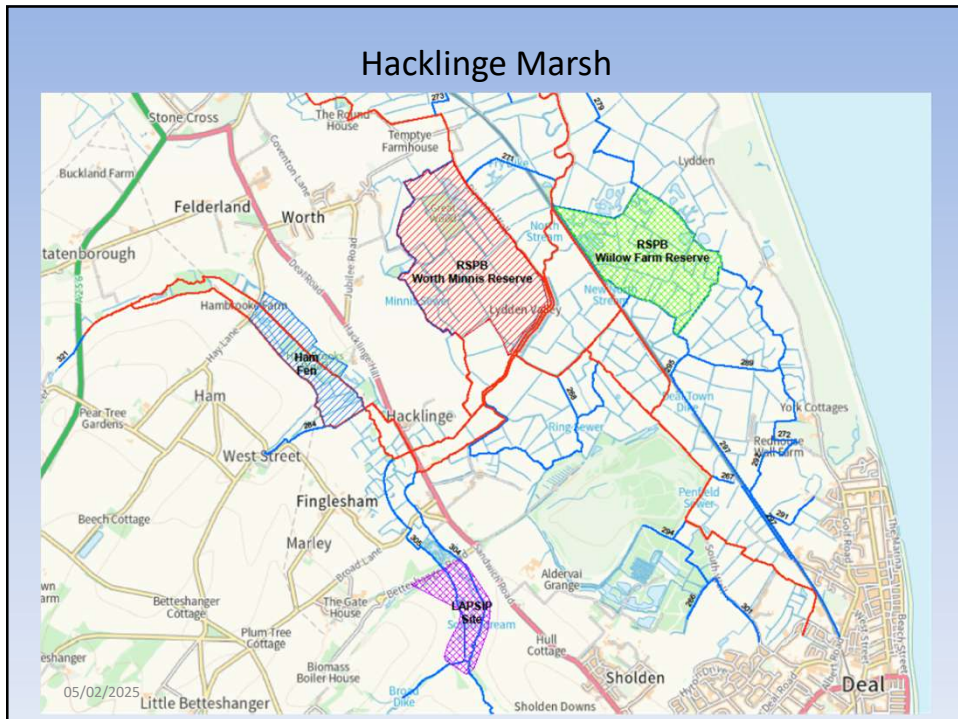
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## Burrowing in embankments



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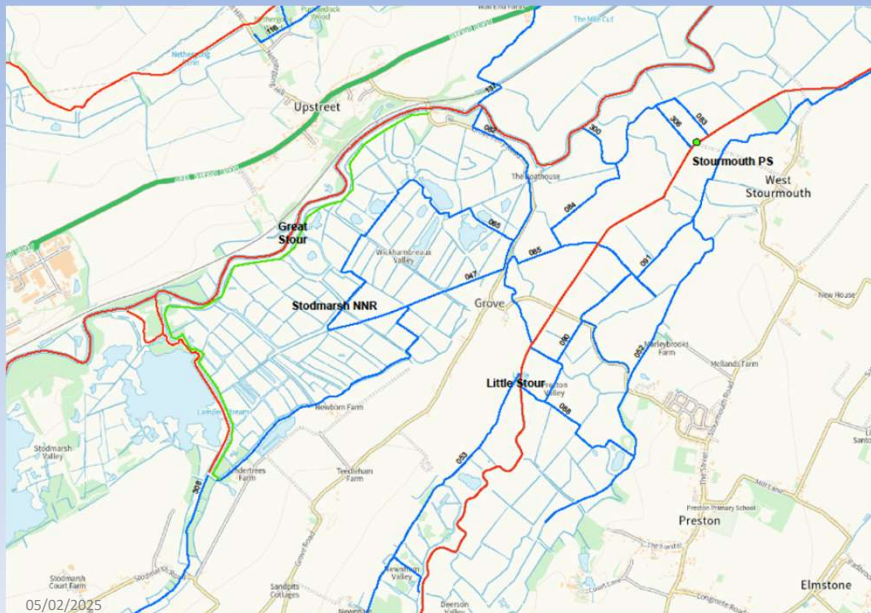


## RSPB Worth Minnis Reserve



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## Stodmarsh NNR



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## What do we need?

- RMAs (EA, IDBs, Councils) or BMGs need the ability and funds to manage negative impacts, pre-emptively.
- The EKBAG should remain as neutral as possible and should continue to work together to achieve coexistence and support.
- We need to assess likely risks and agree plans of action.
- Clear guidance and best practice techniques need to be developed and shared.
- We need the Stour Catchment to be a good news story!

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## A (Very) Brief History

- Native to Britain and once widespread
- Beavers were hunted for their fur, meat and castoreum
- Thought to be extinct by the 16<sup>th</sup> century



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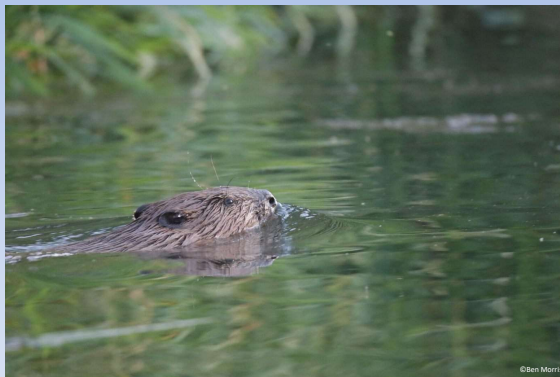
## About the Beaver



- The Eurasian beaver - *Castor fiber*
- Second largest rodent species in the world, weighing up to 30kg
- Nocturnal/Crepuscular
- Territorial – Average territory of 3km
- Semi-aquatic
- Herbivorous
- Dam and lodge architects
- Keystone species and Ecosystem Engineer

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## Legal status



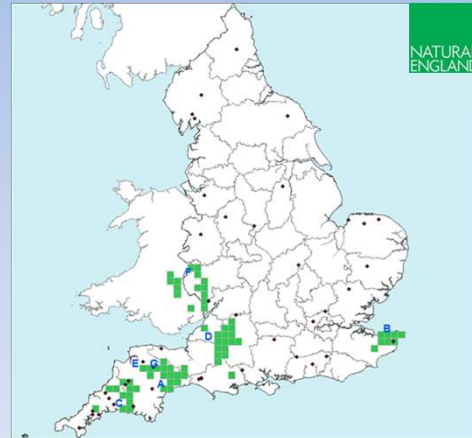
As of October 2022, beavers are recognised as a native, protected species under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations in England

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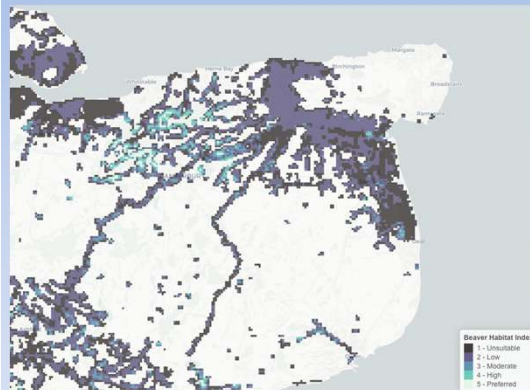
## Range and Distribution - England

- ~45 beaver enclosures in England (41 licensed by Natural England).
- Wild beaver populations:
  - A. Otter
  - B. Kent Stour
  - C. Tamar
  - D. Bristol Avon
  - E. Taw
  - F. Wye
  - G. Exe
  - H. Dorset Stour
  - I. Hampshire Avon
- Plus Purbeck, Fowey/Par, Brue, Fal, Cotswold Water Park, others?



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## Range and Distribution - Kent



<https://creww.shinyapps.io/BeaverMap/>

<https://publicat.ons.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6358002924519424>

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## Why Beavers – Habitat dynamism



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## Why Beavers – Habitat Restoration



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## Why Beavers – Habitat Connectivity



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## Why Beavers – Boost Biodiversity



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## Why Beavers - Water Management



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## Why Beavers – Climate Resilience



<https://clintondevon.com/drone-shots-show-how-beavers-are-defying-devon-drought/>

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## Available Options for Mitigation

**BC3 Crop protection fencing mesh and wire for permanent crops** - £6.34 per metre (m).

**BC4 Tree Guard Post and wire** - £132.16 per tree guard

**BC5: Expert dam management** - Up to 90% of actual cost.



**AHW9: Unharvested cereal headland** - £1,072 per hectare (ha) per year

**BFS6: 6m to 12m habitat strip next to watercourses** - £742 per hectare (ha) per year

**CAHL2: Winter bird food on arable and horticultural land** - £853 per hectare (ha) per year



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