



# News Release

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## **Wildlife Trust welcomes public backing for its ambitious plans to bring beavers back to county.**

Just two weeks after launching an online survey to gauge public support for its ambitious plan to introduce beavers to its Idle Valley Nature Reserve off North Road Retford, Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust has been inundated with responses. Almost 1400 people have completed the survey with 94% of respondents backing the charity's plans.

Many respondents have shared their delight at the prospect of beavers' returning to the Nottinghamshire landscape - highlighting the tremendous benefits beavers bring for other species as well as their excitement at the possibility of catching a glimpse of beavers at the spectacular nature reserve. Positive comments within the survey responses so far include:

- *'One of the most positive steps for nature conservation in Nottinghamshire! The beaver is such a great engineer of the landscape.'*
- *'I love visiting Idle Valley, it is a great place for walking my dog and photography so I am very excited about the reintroduction of the beavers.'*
- *'I think it is wonderful that we are giving Beavers a chance to thrive again. As a species, humans take away SO MUCH from the natural world - it warms my heart that we are giving something back.'*

Commenting on the level of response the Wildlife Trust's Head of Nature Recovery (North) Janice Bradley said: "The response has been tremendous and we're especially delighted to have received such a strong positive local response from across Bassetlaw. To have over 90% backing for our proposals makes the months of preparation, survey work and liaison with stakeholders so worthwhile."

Whilst the overwhelming majority of people are excited and welcome the return of the beaver, a small minority (3%) raised concerns and a further 3% were keen to have more information before they could decide. Concerns range from fears that the site was unsuitable for beavers and worries that existing habitat could be damaged or that the animals could have a negative impact on fish stocks, that beavers could escape or in some way exacerbate local flooding issues.



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In response to the concerns Janice added: “We recognise that many people care passionately about the Idle Valley Nature Reserve and its wildlife and I can assure them that the main driver for this project is our determination to enhance habitats for a range of species across the reserve, particularly the waders and wildfowl for which the site is designated as a SSSI. Having carefully considered the long-term impacts, it’s clear that the introduction of beavers, alongside other measures, including the expansion of our conservation grazing programme and installation of water level controls, will be hugely beneficial, for the wildfowl and waders that the reserve is so important for and for other wildlife.”

In response to concerns about beavers escaping and causing issues in the wider landscape Janice said: “National experts consider the site as being perfect for beavers and they will have plenty of space – so with the added security of fencing there is no risk of them escaping. Our beaver zone will be securely fenced off from the River Idle so the beavers will not be able to get into the river and cause any additional flood risk. Beavers are herbivores and don’t predate fish, so they pose no threat to fish stocks, however, their activities in the 55ha enclosure will improve habitats for fish, aquatic invertebrates, amphibians and wetland mammals such as the threatened water vole – which is why we are so keen to bring them back.”

Anyone wishing to take part in the survey or to donate towards the appeal to bring beavers back to Nottinghamshire at Idle Valley Nature Reserve should visit [nottinghamshirewildlife.org/beavers](http://nottinghamshirewildlife.org/beavers)

*-Ends-*

*For further information or to request interviews please contact Erin McDaid on 07734 573862 [emcdaid@nottswt.co.uk](mailto:emcdaid@nottswt.co.uk) or Rachel Rutherford on 07519 633236 [rutherford@nottswt.co.uk](mailto:rutherford@nottswt.co.uk)*

### **Notes for Editors**

1)The Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, a registered charity, manages dozens of nature reserves throughout the county. It advises local authorities, community groups and landowners on nature conservation issues, and makes a major input into decision-making on planning matters and other issues.

2) Idle Valley Nature Reserve covers 375 hectares alongside the west bank of the River Idle. A former working sand and gravel quarry, the majority of the reserve is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest because it supports an exceptional diversity of breeding, wintering and passage birds.

3) The Trust is part of a nation-wide network of local Trusts which work to protect wildlife in town and country - The Wildlife Trusts. The Wildlife Trusts now boast almost 800,000 members. For more information please see our website: [www.nottinghamshirewildlife.org](http://www.nottinghamshirewildlife.org)