

# BEAVER ACHIEVER

## How beavers create healthy ecosystems

### NATIVE GNAWERS!

Did you know...?

Beavers once lived throughout the UK, but disappeared 400 years ago due to hunting.

Thanks to conservationists and scientists, this native species was first reintroduced to our waterways in 2009, and populations have since been expanding...



### MYTH BUSTING

True or false...?  
Beavers eat fish



False! Beavers are vegetarians! They eat trees and aquatic plants.

### DO YOUR BIT FOR BEAVERS!

Some people are opposed to beaver reintroduction, because they believe they eat fish or cause flooding. One simple thing you can do is spread the word about the benefits of beaver activity!

### A KEYSTONE SPECIES

You may have heard that beavers are a **keystone species**. This means that a small number of beavers can have a BIG positive impact on their environment. But how do we know?

Researchers compared habitats without beavers to very similar habitats where beavers had been present for 6 months...



Bats benefitted bats. The Barbastelle bat is one of the UK's rarest bats, but was 4x more active in wetlands with beavers.



Wetlands created by beavers slow down flooding and also provide ideal breeding sites for insects - a bat's favourite food!



## GLOSSARY



**Native species** → A species which occurs naturally in a location, either because it evolved there or because it dispersed there itself.

**Reintroduced** → An animal which has been returned to its native range after being lost from it.

**Wetland** → A habitat which is frequently underwater - it could be a swamp, a bog, or a floodplain.

**Keystone species** → Animals which have a larger impact on their environment than would be expected from their number alone.

**Barbastelle bat** → These bats like to hunt in wet woodland, dining on moths, midges and beetles. They are incredibly rare; there are believed to be less than 5000 in the UK.

**Active** → In this study, researchers measured bat activity by counting the number of times a bat detector picked up their calls.



# QUESTIONS



1. What do beavers eat?
2. What is a native species?
3. Are beavers native to the UK? If so, when did they disappear, and why?
4. Beavers are described as a keystone species. What does this mean?
5. What did the researchers compare to understand the impact of beavers?
6. How many Barbastelle bats are believed to live in the UK?
7. What impact did beavers have on Barbastelle bats?
8. How did the researchers measure bat activity?
9. Give two reasons why wetlands created by beavers are important to ecosystems.
10. What is one thing you could do to help beavers?