



**PUBLIC PETITION NO.**

**PE01601**

**Name of petitioner**

Andy Myles

**Petition title**

European Beavers in Scotland

**Petition summary**

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to make an urgent decision about the legal status of the two populations of European beavers in Scotland, and to extend the full protection of law to the species.

**Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition**

I have campaigned with a range of environmental non-government organisations:

- (a) to re-introduce European beavers to Scotland in compliance with the international law and conventions;
- (b) extend recognition as a native species to European beavers of unknown provenance already known to exist in Scotland; and
- (c) to have the European beavers in Scotland declared a native species and given the full protection of law.

**Petition background information**

Largely due to the efforts of environmental non-government organisations over more than the last 10 years, a scheme for the trial re-introduction of European beavers has taken place in Knapdale. This trial has been in compliance with the applicable international law and conventions - and operated through a partnership including the Scottish Government nature agency, Scottish Natural Heritage. The trial results are now with the Scottish Government.

European beavers of unknown provenance are already known to exist in Scotland - with a well established population in Tayside and Angus.

The Scottish Government has been involved in discussion and public discourse concerning the beavers for many years, but no decision has been taken as to their final legal status.

2016 has seen reports of (a) the numbers in the Tayside population having reached approximately 150-250; (b) the shooting of over 20 beavers by farmers and landowners in Tayside during 2015 despite the request of the Scottish Government that non-lethal methods be used to manage the species; and (c) several of these beavers were pregnant or had recently given birth according to the autopsies carried out by the Royal

Zoological Society of Scotland (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-tayside-central-35450532>).

#### Unique web address

<http://ww3.parliament.scot/GettingInvolved/Petitions/protectingbeavers>

#### Related information for petition

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-tayside-central-35450532>

#### Do you wish your petition to be hosted on the Parliament's website to collect signatures online?

YES

#### How many signatures have you collected so far?

0

#### Closing date for collecting signatures online

20 / 03 / 2016

#### Comments to stimulate online discussion

In response to reports of the killing of pregnant and lactating European beavers in Scotland, the Scottish Government said it was "taking time to consider the issue." In the opinion of the petitioners, this prevarication is severely damaging to Scotland's reputation for the way we conserve our wildlife and natural heritage.

We have been looking at this issue within the Scottish policy community for well over 10 years, regularly taking tiny granny steps forward. The policy community, including the Scottish Government, now has vast quantities of information on the issue.

Unless the Scottish Government can tell us precisely what more information they still require to make a decision as to the precise legal status, their hesitation begins to look like nothing more than weakness when faced by a small, vocal group of Scottish landowners.

How many years are our Government going to drag out this painful affair before finally summoning up the courage to say that beavers are back in Scotland, they are here to stay, and they will have the full protection of the law like any other species? Will they declare that the beavers are not a game species? Will they declare that they are not "vermin"?