

REPORT FOR PHD STUDENTSHIP PARTNERS: SUMMARY OF OUTPUTS

STUDENT: ROGER AUSTER

STUDENTSHIP DATES: JANUARY 2018 – JUNE 2021

INSTITUTION: UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

SUPERVISORS: PROF. RICHARD BRAZIER AND PROF. STEWART BARR

OVERVIEW

This document provides a summary of outputs resulting from a PhD Studentship investigating the 'Human Dimensions of Reintroducing Eurasian Beaver (*Castor fiber*) into England'.

The studentship was funded by University of Exeter, Devon Wildlife Trust, Plymouth City Council, and Cornwall Wildlife Trust. Additional funding was received from the Natural Environment Research Council for the nationwide survey paper, and the studentship received non-monetary support from the South West Partnership for Environmental and Economic Prosperity (SWEEP).

In brief, the PhD studentship led to:

- Lead-authorship of six academic papers (four published and two in peer review).
- Co-authorship of one academic paper.
- Lead authorship of two reports for the Poole Farm project.
- Co-authorship of two reports.

All published outputs are available for the PhD studentship partners via [Dropbox](#)*. Access to the folder is granted for:

- University of Exeter: Prof. Richard Brazier, Prof. Stewart Barr
- Devon Wildlife Trust: Mark Elliott, Jake Chant
- Plymouth City Council: Chris Avent, Jerry Griffiths, Joe Bestwick
- Cornwall Wildlife Trust: Cheryl Marriott, Tom Shelley, Chris Jones
- SWEEP: Rebecca Abrahams, Dawn Scott

Roger would like to express personal thanks to all funders, partners, and supervisors for their support and contributions towards this work.

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* <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/7c286hdch0pt8m9/AAAw5xJYugQHNSmqBSJFuS00a?dl=0>

1. ACADEMIC PAPERS

1.1. AS LEAD AUTHOR

- Auster, R.E., Puttock, A., & Brazier, R. 2020. Unravelling perceptions of Eurasian beaver reintroduction in Great Britain. *Area*, 52(2), 364–375. <https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12576>
- Auster, R.E., Barr, S., & Brazier, R. 2020. Wildlife Tourism in Reintroduction Projects: Exploring Social and Economic Benefits of Beaver in Local Settings. *Journal for Nature Conservation*, 58, 125920. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jnc.2020.125920>
- Auster, R.E., Barr, S., & Brazier, R. 2020. Improving engagement in managing reintroduction conflicts: learning from beaver reintroduction. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09640568.2020.1837089>
- Auster, R.E., Barr, S., & Brazier, R. 2020. Alternative perspectives of the angling community on Eurasian beaver (*Castor fiber*) reintroduction in the River Otter Beaver Trial. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, 64(7), 1252-1270. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09640568.2020.1816933>

IN PEER REVIEW

- Auster, R.E., Barr, S. & Brazier, R. 2021. Renewed Coexistence: Learning from Steering Group Stakeholders on a Beaver Reintroduction Project in England. *In Review*.
- Auster, R.E., Barr, S. & Brazier, R. 2021. Beavers and Flood Alleviation: Human Perspectives from Downstream Communities. *In Review*.

1.2. AS CO-AUTHOR

- Brazier, R.E., Puttock, A.K., Graham, H.A., Auster, R.E., Davies, K. & Brown, C. 2020. Beaver: Nature's ecosystem engineers. *WIREs Water*, 8(1), e1494. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wat2.1494>

2. REPORTS

2.1. AS LEAD AUTHOR

- Auster, R. 2019. *Results Report: 'Pre-Beaver' Exploratory Questionnaire, Proposed Beaver Project at Poole Farm, Plymouth*. University of Exeter.
- Auster, R. 2021. *Interim Report: Poole Farm Volunteer Motivations and Experiences, A Monitoring 'Baseline': 'Pre-beaver' and 'Pre-Green Minds'*. University of Exeter.

2.2. AS CO-AUTHOR

- Brazier, R. E., Elliott, M., Andison, E., Auster, R. E., Bridgewater, S., Burgess, P., Chant, J., Graham, H. A., Knott, E., Puttock, A. K., Sansum, P., & Vowles, A. 2020. *River Otter Beaver Trial: Science and Evidence Report*. River Otter Beaver Trial.
<https://www.exeter.ac.uk/crew/research/beavertrial/>
 - *Appendices to the 'River Otter Beaver Trial' Science & Evidence Report authored by the student:*
 - *An Investigation into Fishing and its Economic Activity in the River Otter Catchment, and Reported Impacts of Eurasian Beaver (Castor fiber) Presence on Fishing, Prior to Spring 2019*
 - *Beavers, a Rural Community and Ecotourism: A Case Study on the River Otter, England*
 - *Beavers, Agriculture, and Land/Property-Owners Conflict Impacted by Beavers on the River Otter*
 - *Engagement Events and Attitudinal Change*
 - *Flooding, Beavers and a Community in the River Otter Catchment*
 - *Respondent Reasons for Answers Given in 2017 Nationwide Questionnaire*
- Brazier, R.E., Puttock, A., Auster, R.E., Graham, H.A., Davies, K.H., Brown, C.M.L., Howe, C. & Andison, E. 2020. *The Eurasian Beaver in England: Future Evidence Needs, Focus on Water Related Themes*. Natural England, University of Exeter, and Environment Agency.

3. PARTNERSHIP GROUP MEMBERSHIPS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

The student was a member of:

- River Otter Beaver Trial Science & Evidence Forum
- Plymouth City Council and Green Minds Beaver Project Board

The student contributed towards the:

- River Otter Beaver Trial Steering Group
- South West Partnership for Environment and Economic Prosperity (SWEEP)

4. MISCELLANEOUS

4.1. PRESENTATIONS

- Short Course on 'Partnering with Beaver in River Restoration', Professional Certificate in River Restoration (Portland State University) and River Restoration Northwest (USA): 'People and Beaver' Module Co-Presenter alongside Alexa Whipple (Methow Beaver Project). May 2021.
- South West Partnership for Environmental and Economic Prosperity (SWEEP) Delivery Group: Presentation on 'Wildlife Tourism...' paper. March 2021.
- Undergraduate 'Practical Skills in Conservation' module, University of Lincoln: Presentation on 'Improving Engagement...' paper. March 2021.
- MSc Ecotourism and Rural Development Course, Durrell Institute, University of Kent: Presentation on 'Wildlife Tourism...' paper. March 2021.
- 'BeaverCON' International Conference, Baltimore USA: Talk on 'Unravelling perceptions...' paper. March 2020.
- East Budleigh Flood Resilience Plan Launch Event, East Budleigh Parish Council: Release of the River Otter Beaver Trial Science & Evidence Report to the East Budleigh community. January 2020.
- Slapton Research Seminar, Field Studies Council: Talk on public attitudes towards beaver reintroduction. November 2019.
- 'CLESSCon' Departmental Conference, University of Exeter: Poster presentation. November 2019.
- Embercombe Beaver Training Course: Public attitudes workshop. May 2019.
- Centre for Geography, Environment and Society, University of Exeter Cornwall Campus: Joint talk with fellow University of Exeter researchers on Science and Evidence behind beaver reintroduction in Great Britain. January 2019.

4.2. AWARD/BLOG POST

- Mammal Society: Student of the Month, March 2020. Available at: <https://www.mammal.org.uk/2020/03/beaver-reintroduction/>

4.3. TEACHING ACTIVITIES

- Marking, Postgraduate Teaching Assistant, University of Exeter: Year 2 *Human Geography Berlin Field Trip, Essay and Research Report*, University of Exeter. June 2020.
- Workshop Facilitator, Postgraduate Teaching Assistant, University of Exeter: Year 2 *Physical and Human Geography Naples Field Trip*. May 2020.
- Workshop Facilitator, Postgraduate Teaching Assistant, University of Exeter: Year 2 *Geographies of Justice - Research Methodologies in Action*. October 2019.
- Workshop Facilitator, Postgraduate Teaching Assistant, University of Exeter: Year 1 *Research Methods for Geographers*. November 2018.

5. FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As well as the project funders, partners, and supervisors, Roger would like to acknowledge the following individuals, organisations, and groups (in no particular order):

- The 2910 research participants (total) for their contributions and trust, as well as the individuals who took part in study piloting.
- River Otter Beaver Trial Science & Evidence Forum members for comments, feedback, and research support throughout the Trial.
- The Beaver+ Research Group (Dr. A. Puttock, H. Graham, C. Brown, G. Bradbury, K. Davies, N. Ellis, M. Holden), and the Brazier Research Group at the University of Exeter for encouragement and support throughout.
- All the organisations, individuals, and media outlets who shared the invitation to participate in the nationwide attitudinal survey.
- East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty for sharing the footpath count data detailed in the tourism study.
- River Otter Beaver Trial Fisheries Forum, River Otter Fisheries Association, and the River Otter Fishing Syndicates for their input and invitation sharing for the angler perception study and investigation into fishing economics in the River Otter catchment.
- Forestry England and the Parish Councils, Community Newsletters, and Community Facebook Groups in Ladock, Sinnington and Lydbrook for sharing the invitation to participate in the 'Beavers and Flood Alleviation' study.
- Environment Agency (especially E. Andison) and East Budleigh Parish Council for comments and data relating to flooding and fishing in the River Otter catchment.
- Plymouth Beaver Project Board and the Green Minds team for input relating to the ongoing research at Poole Farm, as well as the Poole Farm volunteers and Plymouth residents who participated in the baseline research.
- Prof. R McDonald and Dr. S. Crowley for supervising the exploratory interview study prior to the PhD, as well as Dr. N. Sainsbury and Dr. A. Nuno for their input.
- All my family and friends (especially W. Elliott and Prof C. Sox) for their encouragement and support throughout the project.