

Report under The Conservation of Habitats and  
Species Regulations 2017 (as amended),  
Regulation 9A

**2019-2024**

Conservation status assessment for the species:

**S1337 - Beaver**

**(*Castor fiber*)**

**England**



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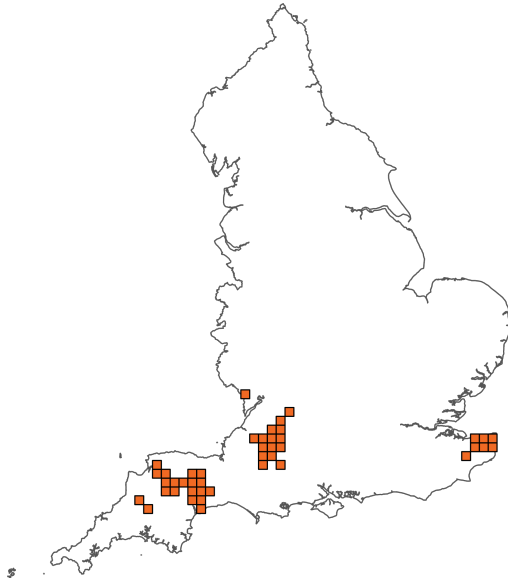
### **Important note - Please read**

- The information in this document represents the England Report under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), Regulation 9A, for the period 2019-2024.
- It is based on supporting information provided by Natural England, which is documented separately.
- The Habitats Regulations reporting 2019-2024 Approach Document provides details on how this supporting information contributed to the UK Report and the fields that were completed for each parameter.
- Maps showing the distribution and range of the species are included.
- Explanatory notes (where provided) are included at the end. These provide additional audit trail information to that included within the assessments. Further underpinning explanatory notes are available in the related country reports.
- Some of the reporting fields have been left blank because either: (i) there was insufficient information to complete the field; (ii) completion of the field was not obligatory; and/or (iii) the field was not relevant to this species (section 12 National Site Network coverage for Annex II species).

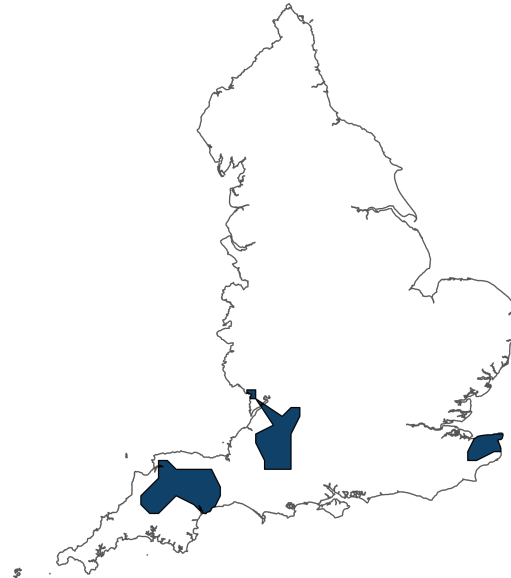
Further details on the approach to the Habitats Regulations Reporting 2019-2024 are available on the [JNCC website](#).

## Assessment Summary: Beaver

### Distribution Map



### Range Map



**Figure 1:** England distribution and range map for S1337 - Beaver (*Castor fiber*). Coastline boundary derived from the Oil and Gas Authority's OGA and Lloyd's Register SNS Regional Geological Maps (Open Source). Open Government Licence v3 (OGL). Contains data © 2017 Oil and Gas Authority. The 10km grid square distribution map is based on available species records within the current reporting period.

**Table 1:** Table summarising the conservation status for S1337 - Beaver (*Castor fiber*). Overall conservation status for species is based on assessments of range, population, habitat for the species, and future prospects.

### Overall Conservation Status (see section 11)

**Unfavourable-bad (U2)**

### Breakdown of Overall Conservation Status

**Range** (see section 5)

**Unfavourable-bad (U2)**

**Population** (see section 6)

**Unfavourable-bad (U2)**

**Habitat for the species** (see section 7)

**Favourable (FV)**

**Future prospects** (see section 10)

**Favourable (FV)**

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## National Level

### 1. General information

1.1 Country	England
1.2 Species code	S1337
1.3 Species scientific name	<i>Castor fiber</i>
1.4 Alternative species scientific name	
1.5 Common name	Beaver
Annex(es)	II, IV

### 2. Maps

2.1 Sensitive species	No
2.2 Year or period	2019-2024
2.3 Distribution map	Yes
2.4 Distribution map; Method used	Complete survey or a statistically robust estimate

#### 2.5 Additional information

No additional information

### 3. Information related to Annex V Species

3.1 Is the species taken in the wild / exploited?

3.2 What measures have been taken?

a) Regulations regarding access to property

b) Temporary or local prohibition on the taking of specimens in the wild and exploitation

c) Regulation of the periods and/or methods of taking specimens

d) Application of hunting and fishing rules which take account of the conservation of such populations

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**e) Establishment of a system of licences for taking specimens or of quotas**

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**f) Regulation of the purchase, sale, offering for sale, keeping for sale, or transport for sale of specimens**

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**g) Breeding in captivity of animal species as well as artificial propagation of plant species**

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**Other measures**

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**Other measures description**

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### **3.3: Hunting bag or quantity taken in the wild for Mammals and Acipenseridae (Fish)**

#### **a) Unit**

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**Table 2:** Quantity taken from the wild during the reporting period (see 3.3a for units). For species with defined hunting seasons, Season 1 refers to 2018/2019 (autumn 2018 to spring 2019), and Season 6 to 2023/2024. For species without hunting seasons, data are reported by calendar year: Year 1 is 2019, and Year 6 is 2024.

	Season/ year 1	Season/ year 2	Season/ year 3	Season/ year 4	Season/ year 5	Season/ year 6
<b>b) Minimum</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>c) Maximum</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>d) Unknown</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-

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#### **3.4: Hunting bag or quantity taken in the wild; Method used**

#### **3.5: Additional information**

No additional information

## Biogeographical Level

### 4. Biogeographical and marine regions

4.1 Biogeographical or marine region where the species occurs ATL

#### 4.2 Sources of information

See section 14 References

### 5. Range

5.1 Surface area (km<sup>2</sup>) 6,645.44

5.2 Short-term trend; Period 2019-2024

5.3 Short-term trend; Direction Uncertain

5.4 Short-term trend;  
Magnitude

a) Estimated minimum

b) Estimated maximum

c) Pre-defined range

d) Unknown

e) Type of estimate

f) Rate of decrease

5.5 Short-term trend; Method used Insufficient or no data available

5.6 Long-term trend; Period

5.7 Long-term trend; Direction

5.8 Long-term trend;  
Magnitude

a) Minimum

b) Maximum

c) Rate of decrease

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## 5.9 Long-term trend; Method used

### 5.10 Favourable Reference Range (FRR)

#### a) Area (km<sup>2</sup>)

b) Pre-defined increment	Current range is between 51% and 100% smaller than the FRR
c) Unknown	No
d) Method used	Model-based approach
e) Quality of information	low

### 5.11 Change and reason for change in surface area of range

a) Change No

#### b) Genuine change

c) Improved knowledge or more accurate data

d) Different method

e) No information

f) Other reason

g) Main reason

### 5.12 Additional information

No additional information

## 6. Population

6.1 Year or period 2019-2024

### 6.2 Population size (in reporting unit)

a) Unit number of individuals

b) Minimum 312

c) Maximum 715

<b>d) Best single value</b>	494
<b>6.3 Type of estimate</b>	Best estimate
<b>6.4 Quality of extrapolation to reporting unit</b>	low
<b>6.5 Additional population size (using population unit other than reporting unit)</b>	
<b>a) Unit</b>	
<b>b) Minimum</b>	
<b>c) Maximum</b>	
<b>d) Best single value</b>	
<b>e) Type of estimate</b>	
<b>6.6 Population size; Method used</b>	Based mainly on expert opinion with very limited data
<b>6.7 Short-term trend; Period</b>	2013-2024
<b>6.8 Short-term trend; Direction</b>	Uncertain
<b>6.9 Short-term trend; Magnitude</b>	
<b>a) Estimated minimum</b>	
<b>b) Estimated maximum</b>	
<b>c) Pre-defined range</b>	
<b>d) Unknown</b>	Yes
<b>e) Type of estimate</b>	
<b>f) Rate of decrease</b>	
<b>6.10 Short-term trend; Method used</b>	Insufficient or no data available
<b>6.11 Long-term trend; Period</b>	
<b>6.12 Long-term trend; Direction</b>	
<b>6.13 Long-term trend; Magnitude</b>	

a) Minimum

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b) Maximum

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c) Confidence interval

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d) Rate of decrease

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**6.14 Long-term trend; Method used**

**6.15 Favourable Reference Population (FRP)**

ai) Population size 19,760

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aii) Unit number of individuals

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b) Pre-defined increment

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c) Unknown No

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d) Method used Model-based approach

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e) Quality of information low

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**6.16 Change and reason for change in population size**

a) Change No

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b) Genuine change

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c) Improved knowledge or more accurate data

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d) Different method

---

e) No information

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f) Other reason

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g) Main reason

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**6.17 Additional information**

No additional information

**6.18 Age structure, mortality and reproduction deviation** Yes, strongly deviating from normal

## 7. Habitat for the species

### 7.1 Sufficiency of area and quality of occupied habitat (for long-term survival)

a) Is area of occupied habitat sufficient? No

b) Is quality of occupied habitat sufficient? Yes

c) If No or Unknown, is there a sufficiently large area of unoccupied habitat of suitable quality? Yes

### 7.2 Sufficiency of area and quality of occupied habitat; Method used

a) Sufficiency of area of occupied habitat; Method used Based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data

b) Sufficiency of quality of occupied habitat; Method used Based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data

7.3 Short-term trend; Period 2015-2019

7.4 Short-term trend; Direction Unknown

7.5 Short-term trend; Method used Based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data

7.6 Long-term trend; Period

7.7 Long-term trend; Direction

7.8 Long-term trend; Method used

### 7.9 Additional information

No additional information

## 8. Main pressures

### 8.1 Characterisation of pressures

**Table 3:** Pressures affecting the species, including timing and importance/impact ranking. Pressures are defined as factors acting currently and/or during the reporting period (2019–2024). Rankings are: High (direct/immediate influence and/or large spatial extent) and Medium (moderate direct/immediate influence, mainly indirect and/or regional extent).

Pressure	Timing	Ranking
PE01: Roads, paths, railroads and related infrastructure	Ongoing and likely to be in the future	Medium (M)
PG11: Illegal shooting/killing	Only in future	Medium (M)
PK01: Mixed source pollution to surface and ground waters (limnic and terrestrial)	Ongoing and likely to be in the future	Medium (M)
PL01: Abstraction from groundwater, surface water or mixed water (mixed or unknown drivers)	Ongoing and likely to be in the future	Medium (M)
PL02: Drainage (mixed or unknown drivers)	Ongoing and likely to be in the future	Medium (M)
PL05: Modification of hydrological flow (mixed or unknown drivers)	Ongoing and likely to be in the future	Medium (M)
PL06: Physical alteration of water bodies (mixed or unknown drivers)	Ongoing and likely to be in the future	Medium (M)
PM02: Flooding	Ongoing and likely to be in the future	Medium (M)

## 8.2 Sources of information

See section 14 References

## 8.3 Additional information

No additional information

# 9. Conservation measures

## 9.1: Status of measures

**a) Are measures needed?**

Yes

**b) Indicate the status of measures**

Measures identified and taken

<b>9.2 Main purpose of the measures taken</b>	Increase the population size and/or improve population dynamics (related to 'Population')
<b>9.3 Location of the measures taken</b>	Both inside and outside National Site Network
<b>9.4 Response to measures</b>	Long-term results (after 2036)

## 9.5 List of main conservation measures

**Table 4:** Key conservation measures addressing current pressures and/or anticipated threats during the next two reporting periods (2025–2036). Measures are ranked by importance/impact: High (direct/immediate influence and/or large spatial extent) and Medium (moderate direct/immediate influence, mainly indirect and/or regional extent).

Conservation measure	Ranking
MS01: Reinforce populations of species from the directives	High (H)
MS02: Reintroduce species from the directives	High (H)
MK02: Reduce impact of multi-purpose hydrological changes	High (H)
MK03: Restoration of habitats impacted by multi-purpose hydrological changes	High (H)
MF04: Reduce/eliminate pollution to surface or ground waters from commercial, residential and recreational areas and activities, and from industrial activities and structures	Medium (M)
ME01: Reduce impact of transport operation and infrastructure	Medium (M)
MA13: Manage agricultural drainage and water abstraction (incl. the restoration of drained or hydrologically altered habitats)	Medium (M)
MA10: Reduce/eliminate point or diffuse source pollution to surface or ground waters (including marine) from agricultural activities	Medium (M)

## 9.6 Additional information

No additional information

# 10. Future prospects

## 10.1a Future trends of parameters

### ai) Range

	Very Positive - increasing >1% (more than one percent) per year on average
<b>bi) Population</b>	Very Positive - increasing >1% (more than one percent) per year on average
<b>ci) Habitat for the species</b>	Overall stable

### 10.1b Future prospects of parameters

<b>aii) Range</b>	Good
<b>bii) Population</b>	Good
<b>cii) Habitat for the species</b>	Good

### 10.2 Additional information

No additional information

## 11. Conclusions

<b>11.1 Range</b>	Unfavourable-bad (U2)
<b>11.2 Population</b>	Unfavourable-bad (U2)
<b>11.3 Habitat for the species</b>	Favourable (FV)
<b>11.4 Future prospects</b>	Favourable (FV)
<b>11.5 Overall assessment of Conservation Status</b>	Unfavourable-bad (U2)
<b>11.6 Overall trend in Conservation Status</b>	Unknown

### 11.7 Change and reason for change in conservation status

This field is not reported as the period 2019-2024 marks the first instance in which conservation status has been assessed at the national level, meaning no comparisons to previous reports can be drawn.

### 11.7 Change and reason for change in conservation status trend

This field is not reported as the period 2019-2024 marks the first instance in which conservation status has been assessed at the national level, meaning no comparisons to previous reports can be drawn.

### **11.8 Additional information**

No additional information

## **12. UK National Site Network (pSCIs, SCIs, SACs) coverage for Annex II species**

### **12.1 Population size inside the pSCIs, SCIs and SACs network**

a) Unit

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b) Minimum

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c) Maximum

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d) Best single value

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### **12.2 Type of estimate**

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**12.3 Population size inside the network; Method used**

**12.4 Short-term trend of population size within the network; Direction**

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**12.5 Short-term trend of population size within the network; Method used**

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**12.6 Short-term trend of habitat for the species inside the pSCIs, SCIs and SACs network; Direction**

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**12.7 Short-term trend of habitat for the species inside the pSCIs, SCIs and SACs network; Method used**

### **12.8 Additional information**

No additional information

## **13. Complementary information**

### **13.1 Justification of percentage thresholds for trends**

No justification information

### **13.2 Trans-boundary assessment**

No trans-boundary assessment information

### **13.2 Other relevant information**

No other relevant information

## 14. References

### Biogeographical and marine regions

#### 4.2 Sources of information

- Busher, P., Wolff, J., & Sherman, P. 2007. Social organization and monogamy in the beaver. *Rodent societies*, 280-290. <https://doi.org/10.7208/9780226905389-026>
- Campbell-Palmer, R., Needham, R., Morris, B., Brazier, R.E., & Puttock, A.K., 2024. Assessment of wild living beaver populations in East Kent. NECR559. Natural England. <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6358002924519424>
- Campbell-Palmer, R., Puttock, A., Leow-Dyke, A., Needham, R. and Brazier, R.E. 2018. Initial survey of beaver activity on the Wye River, England, 2019. Unpublished report prepared for Natural England and Environment Agency
- Campbell-Palmer, R., Puttock, A.K., Needham, R., Holden, M., and Brazier, R.E. 2024. Wild beaver population assessment on the River Exe and River Taw, NECR548. Natural England. <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6103323107917824>
- DEFRA 2025. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wild-release-and-management-of-beavers-in-england/wild-release-and-management-of-beavers-in-england>
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- Rosell, F. and Parker, H. 1995. *Beaver Management: Present Practice and Norway's Future Needs*. Porsgrunn: Telemark University College
- Rosell, F., & Campbell-Palmer, R. 2022. *Beavers: ecology, behaviour, conservation, and management*. Oxford University Press.

### Main pressures

#### 8.2 Sources of information

No sources of information

## 15. Explanatory Notes

Field label	Note
1.5: Common name	<p>This is the first time the Eurasian Beaver has been included in Habitat Regulations 9A or Article 17 reporting for England. Beavers were driven to extinction within England around the 16th century, however interest in reintroducing beavers increased from the 1990s with beavers being brought to England from Europe and kept in fenced naturalistic enclosures. Escapes from these enclosures alongside illegal releases resulted in several wild living populations of beavers in England. Beavers were legally protected in England in 2022 by being listed on schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. In February 2025, the Government introduced policy to allow wild releases of beavers in England under licence from Natural England (Defra 2025).</p>
6.6: Population size; Method used	<p>The selected population unit is the number of individual beavers. Beavers live in family groups that defend a shared territory (Rosell and Campbell-Palmer, 2022). While the term colony is often used to describe a beaver social group, it does not align with strict sociobiological definitions (Busher et al. 2007). Within a family group, there is typically an adult breeding pair, offspring from the current breeding season, and juveniles from the previous year's litter, however family group structures can vary (Rosell and Campbell-Palmer, 2022).</p> <p>The most effective method for surveying beaver populations is identifying clusters of field signs. Certain signs, such as lodges or scent mounds, indicate the presence of an established territory and its boundaries. To estimate the number of individuals, the most commonly used approach is to multiply the number of established territories by the average number of beavers per family. Family group size in Eurasian beavers varies across studies, but an average of 3.8 individuals per group (range: 2.4–5.5) has been adopted here based on a review of 13</p>

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studies (Rosell and Parker 1995). This method accounts for non-breeding territories and solitary territory holders.

Population density and habitat quality are key factors influencing beaver family composition and size (Busher, 2007). Consequently, populations at different growth stages, such as newly established versus expanding populations, will have varying average group sizes. Due to a lack of data on beaver family sizes in England, confidence in this estimate remains low. Future research on family group sizes in English beaver populations is essential to improve population estimates based on territory numbers.

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#### 11.4: Future prospects

The reintroduction of beavers into the wild was officially permitted in England as of February 2025. Given this development, the future prospects for beaver populations and their range expansion appear promising. With ongoing reinforcement of existing populations and the release of new groups, beavers are expected to establish and thrive in suitable habitats across the country

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#### 9.6: Additional information

The wild release of beavers in England was only recently permitted (February 2025), meaning that while conservation measures have begun, their impact will take time to become evident. The primary goal of these measures is to expand both beaver range and population. However, as only one can be selected for reporting, 'population' has been chosen, based on the principle that a healthy, robust population will naturally lead to range expansion.

Key conservation efforts include the reintroduction of new populations and the reinforcement of existing ones to promote expansion, connect isolated populations, and enhance overall resilience. Additional measures focus on improving hydrological conditions, reducing pollution, and mitigating road traffic accidents to support beaver conservation.

6.7: Short-term trend; Period	This is the first time the Eurasian Beaver has been included in Habitat Regulations 9A or Article 17 reporting for England and there are no previous reporting rounds available for comparison to assess population trends. Populations are still largely in the establishment phase.
2.5: Additional information	Surveys have been conducted on known, established wild beaver populations. However, land access restrictions have limited survey coverage, potentially resulting in some missed locations. These surveys focus solely on confirmed established populations, and sporadic records from other locations have not been included, including licensed wild releases in spring 2025. Verified sightings data from the NBN have also been incorporated. Additionally, beavers have been released into enclosures across England, with occasional escapes and subsequent sightings recorded. However, these records have been excluded, as they are not considered representative of established wild populations. The join up between the populations across the Severn estuary is an artifact of the range mapping. The estuary is considered to present a barrier to dispersal at this point.
5.3: Short-term trend; Direction	This is the first time the Eurasian Beaver has been included in Habitat Regulations 9A or Article 17 reporting. With populations still largely in the establishment phase, there are limited data available to assess changes in range during this reporting period. However, following the Government's announcement in February 2025 permitting the release of beavers into the wild and existing wild populations to remain, their range is expected to expand.
5.10: Favourable Reference Range (FRR)	Given that beavers are semi-aquatic and their distribution is closely tied to watercourses and waterbodies, the number of River Waterbody catchments occupied by family groups was deemed an appropriate unit for describing their range and distribution in the FCS definition (Morris and Mousely 2021). The favourable range has been estimated at 2,950 catchments, however it is not possible to convert this into a precise area in square kilometers and subsequently an operator has been selected instead. There is suitable

	<p>habitat across the breadth of England (Morris and Mousely 2021), therefore the favourable reference range should be the majority of England.</p>
5.11: Change and reason for change in surface area of range	<p>This is the first time the Eurasian Beaver has been included in Habitat Regulations 9A or Article 17 reporting. With populations still largely in the establishment phase, and only preliminary surveys having been carried out, there are limited data available to assess changes in range during this reporting period.</p>
6.16: Change and reason for change in population size	<p>This is the first time the Eurasian Beaver has been included in Habitat Regulations 9A or Article 17 reporting for England. With populations still largely in the establishment phase, and only preliminary surveys having been carried out, there are limited data available to assess changes in population during this reporting period.</p>
6.17: Additional information	<p>The best estimate is 494 individuals in England. The figure is taken from surveys and expert opinion. Favourable Conservation Status figures are given in the published FCS for beaver (Morris and Mousely 2021), however the unit in the FCS definition is 'family groups' which is not an available unit in Habs regs reporting. Instead number of individuals has been used and it has been assumed, given the known family structure of beavers, that each family group contains 3.8 individuals (see section 6.6). Therefore <math>5200 \times 3.8 = 19760</math>. Section 6.16, this cannot be completed as this is the first time England has reported for beaver.</p>
6.18: Age structure, mortality and reproduction	<p>Existing wild beaver populations have primarily originated from unauthorised releases or escapes from enclosures, resulting in no or limited natural recruitment into these populations.</p>
7.1: Sufficiency of area and quality of occupied habitat	<p>Beaver populations are currently limited to small, isolated areas. However, from habitat modelling, there is estimated to be approximately a maximum of 13,000 km<sup>2</sup> of suitable habitat within England (Morris and Mousely 2021), but it is important to note that this is the maximum potential habitat area as local factors will restrict access to water and vegetation and render the habitat unsuitable. Similarly, flow conditions in some of the watercourses will render the</p>

	<p>habitat unsuitable for beaver at certain times or suitable habitat may not be in blocks of sufficient size to provide sustainable support for a beaver family group.</p>
7.4: Short-term trend; Direction	<p>This is the first time the Eurasian Beaver has been included in Habitat Regulations 9A or Article 17 reporting for England, so an assessment of changes in habitat cannot be undertaken.</p>
10.1: Future trends and prospects of parameters	<p>Following the Government's recent announcement (Defra 2025) permitting the release of beavers into the wild and allowing existing wild populations to remain, the conservation status of beavers is expected to improve significantly in terms of both population and range over the next two reporting periods. No significant changes are anticipated for habitat; however, as beavers actively modify their environment to suit their needs, assessing this parameter remains challenging. As a result, habitat has been classified as 'stable'</p>
6.15: Favourable Reference Population (FRP)	<p>Favourable population is taken from Morris and Mousely (2021), however the unit used in the FCS definition is 5200 'family units' which is not an available unit in the reporting spreadsheet. Using the same approach as for determining the population (see 6.6), 5200 has been multiplied by 3.8 (the average number of beavers in a family unit: Rosell and Parker (1995)) to determine the number of individuals that would constitute a favourable population - 19,760. The quality of this information is low.</p>