Norfolk's First Free-Living Beavers in Centuries Show Signs of Pregnancy at Pensthorpe

New footage captured at Pensthorpe appears to show one of Norfolk's first free-living beavers in centuries displaying strong signs of pregnancy, in what could become a hugely significant milestone for both the reserve and wider conservation ambitions within the county.

The footage, which shows visible physical signs associated with pregnancy, has generated cautious excitement amongst the team and conservation specialists involved in ongoing discussions surrounding the future role of beavers within Norfolk.

The update follows many months of behind-the-scenes collaboration between Pensthorpe, leading scientists, ecologists, conservation organisations, specialists and wider stakeholders exploring how beavers could be responsibly supported within the county longer term.

Whilst the footage itself is exciting, Pensthorpe says the bigger story is the extensive conservation work, research and partnership discussions quietly taking place behind the scenes.

Richard Spowage, Reserve Manager said:
"For us, our beavers are not simply a visitor attraction or a social media moment. They are an important native species which deserve a stable, properly considered and scientifically led future.
For many months now, we have been working closely with ecologists, conservation bodies, specialists and stakeholders to explore how Pensthorpe can responsibly support not only our current beavers, but potentially the wider future of beavers within Norfolk.

This is a long, complex and collaborative process, but one we care deeply about getting right."

Beavers were once native to Norfolk and wider Britain before being hunted to extinction hundreds of years ago. In recent years, carefully managed projects across parts of the UK have demonstrated the important role beavers can play in wetland restoration, biodiversity recovery, natural flood management and habitat creation.

Pensthorpe says any future ambitions surrounding beavers within Norfolk must be carefully planned, evidence-led and developed collaboratively with the appropriate experts and organisations.

Spowage added:

"We have deliberately been relatively quiet publicly whilst this work has been progressing because we felt it was important to focus on listening, learning and collaborating properly with the right people.

Seeing these encouraging signs after so much careful work happening quietly behind the scenes feels incredibly special for the whole team.
Moments like this are exactly why long-term conservation work matters."

Pensthorpe says it hopes to continue working closely with partners and stakeholders over the coming months and will share further updates as appropriate.

Find out more

Visitors interested in learning more about Pensthorpe's free-living beavers, the monitoring work taking place on the reserve and frequently asked questions about the project can visit:

Pensthorpe's Beaver Information Page

The page includes the background to the discovery, updates on monitoring and conservation work, and answers to common questions about the beavers' presence within Norfolk.

Notes to Editors

Pensthorpe is one of the UK's leading nature reserves and visitor attractions, located near Fakenham in Norfolk. Set across 700 acres of internationally important habitats, the reserve combines conservation, habitat restoration and wildlife monitoring with inspiring visitor experiences that connect people with nature.

Alongside its conservation work, Pensthorpe welcomes thousands of visitors each year to explore its stunning seasonal gardens, award-winning outdoor play areas, extensive nature trails, six wildlife hides, internationally renowned bird aviaries, café, gift shop and year-round programme of family-friendly events and activities.

Further information about Pensthorpe's free-living beavers, including previous updates and frequently asked questions, can be found at: https://pensthorpe.com/beavers-at-pensthorpe/

Media Enquiries

For media enquiries, interview requests, images or further information, please contact:

marketing@pensthorpe.com