

Norfolk's First Wild Beaver Kits in 500 Years Confirmed at Pensthorpe

Two wild beaver kits have been confirmed at Pensthorpe, marking an extraordinary milestone in the return of a native species absent from Norfolk for centuries.

What began with the mysterious appearance of a single free-living beaver on the River Wensum last year has now become a family, with new camera trap footage confirming **two kits living alongside Norfolk's established wild beaver pair.**

In November 2025, Pensthorpe confirmed the first free-living beaver recorded in Norfolk for several hundred years. Initially believed to be a solitary animal, continued monitoring later revealed a second beaver, with the pair displaying grooming behaviour and occupying an established lodge within Pensthorpe's restored wetlands.

Recent footage had also shown one of the adults displaying strong physical signs consistent with pregnancy. Now, the appearance of two kits has confirmed that the pair have successfully bred in the wild.

Richard Spowage, Reserve Manager at Pensthorpe, said:

"When that first beaver appeared last year, none of us really thought it would lead us to this announcement, just .

We went from thinking we had one animal passing through, to discovering a settled pair, and now we have two kits growing up wild here in Norfolk.

For a native species that has been absent from this landscape for centuries, it's an incredibly special moment."

Pensthorpe has **not released any beavers** and the origin of the adult pair remains unknown. The animals are entirely free-living and have independently established themselves within a secluded area of the reserve.

The announcement follows months of careful monitoring and collaboration with scientists, ecologists, conservation organisations, specialists and wider stakeholders as Pensthorpe explores how the existing animals, and potentially the wider future of beavers in Norfolk, can be responsibly supported.

Richard added:

“As exciting as seeing the kits is, this is much bigger than a single wildlife moment.

We’ve deliberately been relatively quiet while work has taken place behind the scenes, focusing on listening, learning and working with the right people. Our priority is ensuring the future of these animals is carefully considered, collaborative and scientifically led.”

Beavers were once native to Britain before being hunted to extinction centuries ago. Today, their return is increasingly recognised as an important part of nature recovery, with beavers capable of creating and restoring wetland habitats, supporting biodiversity and influencing natural water management.

Pensthorpe will continue monitoring the family remotely through camera traps while ensuring the animals remain undisturbed.

The beavers occupy a remote and inaccessible area of the reserve and are **not being promoted as a visitor attraction**. Sightings remain extremely unlikely and the exact location of their lodge will not be disclosed for welfare reasons.

Five centuries after they disappeared, a new generation of wild beavers is growing up in 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, Pensthorpe combines conservation and habitat restoration with gardens, wildlife, nature trails, award-winning outdoor play, a café and gift shop.

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Images are available for editorial use. **Raw camera trap footage showing the wild beaver kits is available to media on request.**

Media Enquiries

For media enquiries, interviews, images, raw camera trap footage or further information:

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