



A winter wonderland scene from the upper River Ehen  
Photo: John Rickard



Green Tiger Beetle  
Photo: Simon Webb

### It's a small world..

Thanks to amazing monitoring work by specialist naturalist Steve Hewitt, we now have a much better understanding of the invertebrate world in Ennerdale. In contrast to the winter scene above, the spring & summer seasons are the focus for Steve's work and detail on his findings were provided in the spring newsletter. There is further work to do in 2024 to build on this fascinating baseline of information and habitats for future surveys include woodland, mire, montane, scrub and river shingles. There are some great images of invertebrates taken by Steve and the team and his report is now available on the Wild Ennerdale website on the 'Monitoring' tab.

### Beaver Update

We have been processing the feedback we have received so far and identified a major obstacle to our plans for a partially enclosed beaver release. The proposed barrier across the River Liza would need a 100mm bar spacing to securely keep beavers in. Bar spacing would need to be twice this width to avoid deterring salmon and trout which migrate to spawning grounds in the tributaries of the River Liza. The Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act prohibits any activities that may impact fish movements. While we are disappointed with this set-back, we acknowledge that restricting other natural processes, to bring beavers into the valley, would be contrary to the ethos of Wild Ennerdale. For now, we are unable to proceed with the development of a licence application for the release of beavers into a partial enclosure.

Free-living beavers have always been the long-term ambition for our beaver project and a release directly into the wild may be an alternative option for Ennerdale. The government is currently considering its approach to wild releases in England and we await clarity on this. This option has additional complexities. It requires further feasibility work to consider the wider implications of free-living beavers. This will help inform whether we apply to release free-living beavers if this option becomes available. There will be opportunities for feedback and discussion, with an emphasis on impacts for local landowners. If you have any comments or concerns about this change in direction, please contact Hayley Dauben, Species Reintroduction Project Officer at: [hayley.dauben@forestryengland.uk](mailto:hayley.dauben@forestryengland.uk) or 07425 732513.



River Liza channel  
Photo: Wild Ennerdale



## Forestry Update

Tree felling and extraction started last year in response to an outbreak of Phytophthora larch disease. The majority of this work was completed in early Summer 2023. One small area remains which we hope to fell over winter 2023/24 and extract next year when the ground is drier. Timber despatch from the lakeshore forest road should be complete by the end of November. Timber despatch from the rest of the forest will continue through the winter. A number of suspect diseased larch have been picked up in Ennerdale by the summer England wide helicopter survey carried out by Forest Research. Forestry England are waiting for confirmation of lab tests before developing a plan in response.



## Volunteer Update

The volunteer team continue to support nature recovery in the valley through various weekly activities. Come rain or shine, they are out delivering tasks across the combined partnership landholding. Tree maintenance, removal of plastic tree shelters and fence repairs/checks have been key areas of work in the autumn. Thinning of birch has also taken place at Mireside to help keep open glades for butterflies. There's also been focused work on cutting and treating Rhododendron to prevent the expansion of this invasive species. We now have a much better understanding of the presence & location of Rhododendron through new mapping which enables us to target our management efforts.

Some of the volunteers have also been checking for the presence of mink in the valley. Various locations have these pads on site around the valley and are checked regularly for prints. The pads consist of a soft clay like material which show animal prints and these, along with cameras on site, will determine whether or not mink are present. This then helps inform future plans for viability of water-vole release, as mink would be a predator. Mink are not native (introduced in the twentieth century for fur farming) and hence water-vole have not evolved to have the same coping mechanisms they would naturally have with other predators. Water-vole are now classed as endangered and under threat of extinction both through habitat loss and predation. If you see any rhododendron in remote parts of the valley, or if you see any mink, please get in touch. This QR code or <https://arcg.is/D18X90> takes you to an invasive species database where you can record your sightings.



Mink monitoring pad  
Photo: Julian Berkeley



## Engagement and Advocacy

It's been a busy year for engagement and interest in Wild Ennerdale. We have hosted an average of four visits/events per month, including organisations at local, regional and national level. Some of the visiting groups include: Forestry & Land Scotland, Natural England, Defra, North York Moors National Park, England Woodland Biodiversity Group, Cumbria Wildlife Trust along with some school and university groups. We were also pleased to be invited over to a Northumberland National Park Authority event in September with farmer Richard Maxwell for a launch of a collaborative partnership project to recover nature along Hadrian's Wall. In addition, we have put time in to meet for talks to local interest groups and engaged with student research requests. All these events are useful for knowledge sharing, advocacy and learning.

Natural England staff visit  
Photo: Elle Barnard



**Wild Ennerdale** is a partnership of people and organisations led by the Forestry England, National Trust, United Utilities and Natural England. The Wild Ennerdale Partners are allowing the landscape to evolve naturally with reducing human intervention and invite you to explore this unique valley and experience its special sense of wildness. [wildennerdale.co.uk](https://wildennerdale.co.uk)

