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# Lynx and boars may once again roam free in Scottish Highlands

By Jonathan Brown  
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Wolves, boars and big cats might be reintroduced to the wilds of Scotland.

Conservationists are meeting near Inverness today to discuss the possibility of re-establishing these native mammals in the Highlands. The successful reintroduction of bird species, such as white-tailed sea eagles and red kites, as well as the imminent return of beavers to parts of Argyle, has seen support swing in favour of welcoming back species once persecuted to extinction.



PA

Conservationists are meeting near Inverness today to discuss the possibility of re-establishing native mammals such as boars

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Dan Pulpett, of the environmental campaign group Trees for Life, which seeks to re-establish 900 square miles of the Caledonian Forest north of the Great Glen, believes the experience of other countries which have gone down that route has proved too compelling to ignore.

"It is not just about trying to recreate the past but moving forward to re-establish healthy eco-systems in which these animals will play a crucial role," Mr Pulpett said. "There are also clear cultural and economic benefits. Lynx reintroduced in Switzerland and Germany have given tourism there a major boost."

While acknowledging that these animals could pose a danger, both to livestock and humans, he said it was a question of putting the threat in perspective. "People face threats every day that are much more dangerous, such as travelling by car, or of serious illness, but they accept them as part of life."

Some of the lost species are already gaining a tentative foothold back in their former strongholds. On the Alladale Estate, owned by MFI furniture heir Paul Lister, elk and wild boar are living happily, and he is now pressing the case for lynx, wolves and bears. The fact that boar have been living relatively happily alongside humans in southern England after escaping in the 1987 hurricane has also added support to the case.

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