Get wild with Ratty!

The Restoring Ratty project is bringing the water vole *(Arvicola amphibius)* back to Kielder after an absence of more than 20 years. Since 2017, releases of water voles have taken place in the streams to the north and west of Kielder Water including at Kielder Campsite at the far end of this walk, with the project scheduled to finish in 2021. Over a five year period around 3,000 voles will have been released into Kielder Water & Forest Park and surrounding areas.

The Restoring Ratty project has reintroduced an iconic species, thought to be the UK’s fastest declining mammal, to Kielder Water & Forest Park. Habitat loss, inappropriate wetland management and, principally, the introduction of the North American mink *(Neovison vison)* have all contributed to huge and continued water vole population losses since the 1960s. Populations fell by over 90% in the 1990s alone. The species has disappeared from 94% of sites where it was once prevalent. Kielder once had a thriving population and local residents can remember seeing water voles in the past.

How to get there
The walk starts from Kielder Castle. The main car park is nearby.
OS grid ref NY 631 934
Postcode for sat navs: NE48 1ER

Go wild with the app!
You can follow this walk using the Viewranger app. It includes GPS directions, information and audio clips on what to look out for:
www.viewranger.com
Make sure you download before you visit.
Restoring Ratty Trail

An easy 1¼ mile / 2 km walk along footpaths and tracks (the shortcut back to the start is not suitable for wheelchairs or buggies).

This well waymarked walk takes you from Kielder Castle to Kielder Campsite along streams where you may be able to spot signs of water voles. Pick up a ‘Restoring Ratty Rubbing Trail Pack’ from Kielder Castle and you will be able to find out more about water voles by doing brass rubbings along the way.

The water vole has chestnut-brown fur, a blunt rounded nose, small ears and a furry tail. You are more likely to hear than see them – listen out for a ‘plop’ as they escape into the water.

Be a Ratty detective – keep a look out for their footprints in mud at the side of streams.