

Beaver Removal and Control



Beavers are usually classified as a pest species due to their habits of building dams. The most common complaints include the following:

- Area flooded due to beaver dam
- Creek destroyed by beaver activity
- Trees destroyed by beaver activity

For these reasons, many people wish to have this nuisance animal trapped and removed. Most beaver trapping methods are lethal, although there are some live traps available.



BEAVER BIOLOGY: The American Beaver, *Castor canadensis*, is the largest rodent in North America, and the second largest in the world. They can reach up to 45 inches long and 70 pounds. Beavers mate for life, and mating occurs in the winter. A litter of 1-4 young is born in May. The young are born with fur

and open eyes, and are ready to swim within 24 hours. They reach independence in about two years and set out to find their own territory.

BEAVER BEHAVIOR: Beavers form family units of around eight members, and mark their territory with urine-marked mud puddles. They are primarily nocturnal, and gnaw down trees and twigs, and bring them back to the home den. They store twigs for feeding. They are good engineers, and build dams in streams to make a pond. They build a lodge within this pond, in which they live. They will also build canals in order to travel and transport wood. When in danger, they may slap their tails on the water as a warning signal to other beavers. They primarily eat bark and the soft wood under the bark, called cambium.

NUISANCE CONCERNS: The main problem is that they flood areas with their dams. This can cause a number of problems, such as timber loss, flooding of property, or flooding of roadways. Some people complain about tree destruction, but this is a minor problem compared to the flooding problems.

BEAVER DISEASES: No important diseases are commonly transmitted to people by this animal. But rare cases exist. Aside from rabies, a virus found in many wild mammals, beavers have been known to spread giardia, a protozoan parasite that causes gastrointestinal distress. Other mammals, including humans, can get giardia, otherwise known by the name of Beaver Fever. Giardia lives in any water and can be present in people even if symptoms of the disease do not manifest.

HOW DO I GET RID OF BEAVERS? Usually the only means is trapping and removal. One could also shoot the beaver, I suppose. When it comes to trapping, there are both lethal traps, such as conibear style body grip traps, and very large cage-type clamshell traps as seen below. Neither of these is really a do-it-yourself type of trap - the sets are complex and subtle. Experience matters when dealing with this large member of the rodent family.