

What makes beavers so special?

Beavers are aquatic mammals uniquely suited to their environment. Transparent membranes over the eyes allow them to see underwater. When they dive, their ears and nostrils close automatically. They have fur-lined lips that close behind the front teeth, allowing them to eat and cut wood underwater. Their broad, flat tails serve as a rudder for swimming and also store fat for lean times, such as winter. They also use their tails to loudly slap the water as a warning to the other family members of a perceived threat.



Our beaver, *Castor canadensis*

Beavers have small, agile hands in the front and large, goose-like feet in the back, allowing them to grasp and manipulate branches easily and making them sure-footed on land. While they are clumsy and slow on land, they are swift and sure in the water.

Beavers produce a substance called castoreum that they rub into their fur to keep it waterproof. They typically groom each other so that they get good coverage.

Beavers mate for life and form strong family bonds, training their offspring in construction, hydrology and other beaver mysteries.

How beavers benefit the environment

Nearly half of all threatened and endangered species depend on beaver wetlands. For example, both the trumpeter swan and the wood duck were brought back from decimated populations with the resurgence of beaver activity. Beaver ponds and their side channels make cool, deep pools for fish habitat and are used in the Pacific Northwest to increase the survival rate of salmon fry.

Beaver dams create healthy ecosystems that can better withstand the consequences of extreme weather. Beaver ponds support a huge diversity of wildlife, including invertebrates, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, waterfowl and mammals, as well as a wide variety of plant life. In and around our beaver ponds, we see frogs, turtles, snakes, fish, song birds, bats, wading birds, ducks, geese, river otters, muskrats, raccoons, and deer, as well as our beaver colony. When beavers abandon a pond, whether for lack of food, predation or other factors, this rich diversity leaves as well.

In the last several years, environmental scientists, hydrologists, geologists and naturalists have gathered evidence that underscores the importance of beavers. Beavers are a keystone species, fundamental to the health of our environment.

Washington State, Montana, Utah, New Mexico, Wyoming and Nevada are innovators in beaver restoration efforts to enhance critical water supplies and restore the natural environment.



Wood Ducks

There's a beaver for that!

Beavers benefit humans in many critical ways:

- Beaver ponds impound water, allowing it to seep into the earth, recharging aquifers and increasing groundwater.
- Beaver dams slow the flow of water, which helps to prevent both floods and drought.
- Beaver ponds filter our pollution and store carbon in the form of organic sediment that settles to the bottom. Water downstream of a beaver dam is cleaner and contains less silt and other organic matter.
- Beaver wetlands capture rain and snow, diverting this water into the groundwater system.



Beaver lodge home

America is facing a many-faceted water crisis with flash floods, multi-year droughts and concern about the safety and availability of water. The solution seems obvious: more beaver ingenuity and engineering!

A truly remarkable species, *Castor canadensis* tolerates a wide variety of temperature zones, from the southern US to the wilds of Canada.

The presence, or absence, of beavers greatly affects all life.

Beavers and Humans

Beaver-human conflict is common. Humans have taken over, farmed, developed, and otherwise destroyed much of the beaver's habitat. When beavers decide to colonize a creek, river, stream or pond, they may or may not be welcome. Unfortunately, many believe that the easy and quick solution is extermination. With a little thought and a little patience, most conflict can be resolved so that beavers and humans can coexist. The laws regarding beavers are changing slowly. In many places, including North Carolina, beavers are considered a nuisance species. It is unlawful to relocate them, so when there are conflicts, often killing them is the go-to option.

Despite centuries of violence against beavers and lack of protection for beavers and wetlands, beavers share their lodges with other animals and are still curious about humans. They can recognize individuals. Beavers in distress, according to naturalists who study them, have been known to approach familiar humans for aid.

Those of us who love to see Nature in all her glory want to protect this amazing animal and all the other species who share this fascinating ecosystem.



Be part of the solution:

- Contact local, state and federal officials and demand protection for beavers and wetlands.
- Donate time and/or money to help preserve beavers and wetlands.
- Visit a beaver habitat and marvel at the engineering feats and the ingenuity of beavers. Enjoy and take in the beauty of beaver wetlands and the intricate dance of nature.

For more information,
please visit our website:

Pokeberrycreekbeaversandwetlands.com



River Otter

To Learn More

[Eager](#) by Ben Goldfarb

[Pilgrims of the Wild](#) by Grey Owl

[Beaversprite](#) by Dorothy Richards

[Lily Pond](#) by Hope Ryden

[Once They Were Hats](#) by Frances Backhouse

[The Beaver: It's Life and Impact](#) by Dietland Muller-Schwartz

and a wonderful PBS Nature show called

"Leave it to Beavers"

All Photos were taken along Pokeberry Creek, Briar Chapel,
Northern Chatham Co, NC by Ace

Friends of Pokeberry Creek Beavers and Wetlands



Great Blue Heron

We are dedicated to protecting the Pokeberry Creek wetlands and beaver colony. Our mission is to preserve and enhance this unique environment and to be an educational resource.