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**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** A.S.K. has provided our species specific tips based off of years of field experience and reported research; we are NOT in the business of wildlife damage control and are not profiting from the recommendations provided. These tips are not all-inclusive; a variety of the methods suggested should be used and alternated for the most success. You may discuss your specific issue with A.S.K.'s wildlife biologist **(877-596-7776)**, or your local *humane* wildlife damage control specialist for further details. All actions must adhere to Michigan law.

### **Beaver (*Castor canadensis*) Nuisance Tips**

By: Sophia DiPietro



#### **Did You Know?...**

- Beavers can stay submerged in the water up to 15 minutes! They have skin flaps that seal their mouths while under, providing this invaluable adaptation!
- Average lifespan: 24 years!
- Beavers create important wetlands for other species of animals. Their “impoundments” are not like ours; water can become pooled up creating ponds, however also lets water through slowly= “flowage”
- Are second only to humans in their engineering capabilities that change environments!
- Can swim 5 miles in one hour!
- Monogamous
- Largest rodent in North America; can weigh up to 60lbs, but average is 35-40lbs
- Can live by large lakes and rivers without building dams

#### **Habits**

- Herbivores; eat the inner layers of bark, submerged aquatic plants, leaves, shoots.
- Favored trees are birch, aspen, oak, poplar, apple, cottonwood, willow, cherry and maple.

- Most trees used for dam construction or food are felled within 100 feet of the main body of water the beaver is using.
- Beaver occupy a very small percentage of the overall landscape of a given area; some report as little as 3%.
- Prefer trees 2-6 inches in diameter although can cut down larger ones. It's normal for them to "girdle" the bark off while leaving the tree standing.

## Breeding & Living Patterns

- Produce just one litter/year with 3-4 kits. Typically March-June \*Can your nuisance concern wait until the kits are independent so that they aren't left orphaned?
- A colony is usually comprised of 6-8 beavers; one adult pair, 1-2 two year olds, and the kits from the most recent litter.
- The family unit takes responsibility and care for the kits, to some degree, together. The proceeding year's young stay with the family as adolescents.

**\*\*\*\*Intense trapping and removal may stimulate increased breeding and offspring production versus when beavers are allowed to occupy an area. Using the non-lethal nuisance mitigation techniques provided below may actually help to keep beaver numbers down.\*\*\*\***

- By age 2, beavers disperse from their families and may occupy their own homes as close as 6 miles or as far as 150 miles away from their original birth site.

## Problems

- We don't like the *flooding* that results from beaver impoundments or blockage of man-made structures, like road culverts. Problems may be identified both on roadways and in preserved natural areas where flooding impacts rare/endangered plants/animals and/or human trail access  
 Flooding may be perpetuated by snow melts and increased rainfall—creating crisis situations... However, dams can store water during droughts and can even slow down the flow of water from land to river systems that otherwise could be responsible for serious floods and economic damage downstream.
- We don't like the damage done to *trees*

## Nuisance Solutions

- **Tolerance:** In natural areas where beavers may merely be an annoyance, consider that they play an important ecological role in establishing and maintaining wetlands, a landscape feature that can provide home to an abundance of reptiles, amphibians, bird and fish.

**Other Benefits:** Habitat to endangered/threatened plants/animals, flood control by slowing water movement, improvement of water quality, educational value, recreation value.

## Protect the Trees!

- **Cage Trees:** It doesn't take much to protect trees from beaver damage. Use galvanized welded wire (2 inch X 2inch) encircled around/away from the trunk. The wire should be about 3 feet high.

-These make good projects for scout groups looking for nature-related activities!

- Cage cylinders around trees larger than 2-6 inches in diameter may require stakes to support the wire. Chicken wire is usually too flimsy.
- **USDA Experimental Research:** 30-70 mil coarse mason's sand

## Resources

- Flow Device Construction Help: [http://www.beaversolutions.com/self\\_help\\_dvd.asp](http://www.beaversolutions.com/self_help_dvd.asp)
- How to Build and Install Flow Devices:  
<http://wadphotos.files.wordpress.com/2010/09/how-to-build-and-install-a-flexpipe-1.pdf>
- Culvert Protection: [http://www.beaversolutions.com/culvert\\_clear\\_systems.asp](http://www.beaversolutions.com/culvert_clear_systems.asp)
- Tree Protection Details: [http://www.beaversolutions.com/tree\\_protection.asp](http://www.beaversolutions.com/tree_protection.asp)
- Pond Leveler: [http://www.beaversolutions.com/pond\\_control.asp](http://www.beaversolutions.com/pond_control.asp)
- Beaver Management Plans: [http://www.beaversolutions.com/beaver\\_management\\_plans.asp](http://www.beaversolutions.com/beaver_management_plans.asp)
- Common Beaver Problem Questions: <http://wildlifehotline.org/beavers.html>
- Beaver Story with Detailed Flow Device Help:  
[http://grandcanyontrust.org/documents/ut\\_workingBeaver2010.pdf](http://grandcanyontrust.org/documents/ut_workingBeaver2010.pdf)
- [www.martinezbeavers.org](http://www.martinezbeavers.org)
- All Species Kinship: [www.allspecieskinship.org](http://www.allspecieskinship.org)