

Beavers

- **Beavers** (*Castor canadensis*) are Canadian icons found throughout BC near lakes, rivers, streams, and marshes
- **BC beavers are not known to carry rabies**
- As Furbearer animals under the *BC Wildlife Act*, beavers can only be trapped using devices listed in the BC Hunting & Trapping Regulations, and in most parts of the province, only between October and April



Understanding Beavers

The beaver is the largest rodent in North America. They are easily identified by their large, orange front teeth and flat, broad tail. Beavers live in and near water and are well known for their industrious construction of dams, lodges and ponds. **It is illegal to disturb or destroy beaver dams except with permit.**



Did you know?

Beaver dams create valuable wetland habitat that benefits many other species

Beavers...

- have one litter of 3-4 babies between March and June each year
- babies remain with the family in the lodge, and usually leave by their second birthday
- feed on the inner bark of woody plants, shoots, leaves, and other aquatic plants

Common Conflicts

Beavers are attracted to sources of fresh water and young trees (5-13cm in diameter). They can come into conflict with people by damaging trees and through their dam building behavior, can flood land and cause blockages to man-made structures such as culverts.

Humane Choices

The BC SPCA does not support killing beavers for nuisance reasons.

Relocation of adult beavers should only be done outside the breeding season within the animal's home range, and as per the *BC Wildlife Act*. Killing is rarely necessary and control methods should be selected to cause the least harm to the animal's welfare. If attractants have not been removed, then more beavers may arrive, so follow-up monitoring is needed.

The BC SPCA strongly encourages non-lethal, non-contact methods. Prevention and exclusion comes first, and if necessary, eviction. Eviction should be done carefully to avoid potentially orphaning young.

Conflict Resolution

Simple structures can prevent or control flooding caused by beaver dams. These structures can be made of wood or metal, and last upwards of 20 years if well built. Compared to the costs of dam destruction or beaver removal, building these structures results in considerable savings over the long-term, ensures natural ecosystem processes, and allows beavers to move away humanely. For more information on addressing beaver conflicts, *flip page over*.



Recommended Actions & Methods

Prevention & Exclusion
Before any conflict, and
to prevent future issues

Remove potential food sources

- ✓ Wrap galvanized welded wire around trees that need protection, place out from the trunk and 80cm high
- ✓ OR: paint tree trunks with a mixture of 600mL coarse mason sand to 4L exterior latex paint

Maintain culverts and waterways

- ✓ Set up fences around culvert pipes far back enough from running water so beavers aren't motivated to set up dams
- ✓ Run flexible corrugated pipe ("pond leveler") through an existing dam to set water level as desired for human use

Eviction
If high risk of severe
structural damage

Evict the animal

- ✓ If at risk, use cage traps for relocation in home range
- ✓ Beavers can be taken to a wildlife rehabilitator for treatment if injured or orphaned
- ✓ If beaver is in critical distress, a veterinarian or wildlife rehabilitator may use barbiturates
- ✓ Follow all prevention and exclusion steps above

These are legal, regulated methods - but they are **not recommended*** as they can cause animal suffering, may be high risk to non-targets, and/or are difficult to administer; legality must also be confirmed according to local bylaws and/or regulations

- Shot to brain of trapped or free-ranging animal
- Penetrating captive bolt
- Crossbow
- Leghold snare, submerged
- Killing neck snare, land or submerged
- Spring trap (e.g. Conibear-style), land or submerged
- Manually applied blunt trauma that induces immediate unconsciousness

*email wildlifecontrol@spca.bc.ca for information on these methods

It is **illegal** to use...

- Drowning or suffocation
- Bait poisons or chloroform
- Leghold or foot snare, on land
- Carbon dioxide or carbon monoxide
- Electrocution of conscious animal
- Cervical dislocation
- Freezing (including dry ice)



A beaver exclusion device (left) and pond leveler (right)



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