



Q: *Won't beavers overpopulate?*

A: Beavers are limited by the amount of available habitat and food. They are also limited to areas with lakes and waterways, which is normally only a small percentage of the landscape.

Like many wildlife species, beaver populations self-regulate by starting to decrease their rate of reproduction (fewer kits born per season and fewer reproductive pairs) when occupancy reaches a certain level.

In areas where beavers are just returning to the ecosystem or where trapping or other unnatural human-caused mortality has recently ceased, populations may peak and then slowly drift down to a sustainable level.

Q: *What about relocation?*

A: As with trapping, artificial removal of beavers will only temporarily resolve conflicts as new beavers will eventually move in to fill the prime vacant habitat.

While suitable unoccupied habitats still exist in some areas, relocated animals rarely stay in the area where they are released.

MORE RESOURCES

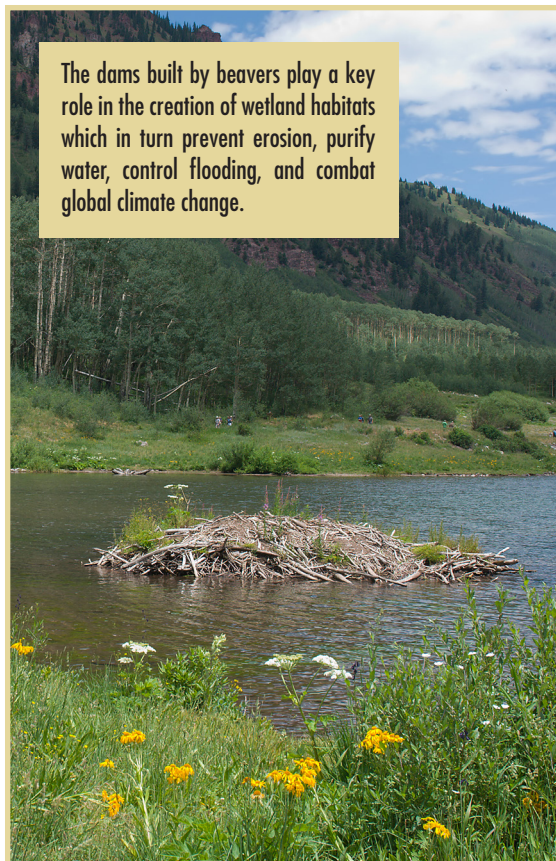
For more information about coexisting with beavers, contact the following organizations:

- Born Free USA

Get a "Coexisting with Beaver Pack" which includes designs and instructions for a beaver baffle, leveler, and deceiver, as well as a sample beaver policy for your community. Contact info@bornfreeusa.org or (916) 447-3085.

- Beavers Wetlands & Wildlife

bww@beaversww.org
www.beaversww.org



The dams built by beavers play a key role in the creation of wetland habitats which in turn prevent erosion, purify water, control flooding, and combat global climate change.

MORE INFORMATION

- Learn more about our Coexisting with Wildlife Program at www.coexistingwithwildlife.org.
- For information on reprints, downloading a free copy, or how to order more of this or our other Coexisting with Coyotes, Geese, Deer and Wildlife brochures, visit www.bornfreeusa.org/catalog or call (202) 450-3168.
- Please share this information with your friends, family, neighbors, homeowners associations, city and county councils.
- Join us by becoming a member of Born Free USA and help Keep Wildlife in the Wild. Visit www.bornfreeusa.org/membership.

KEEP WILDLIFE IN THE WILD

Born Free USA is a national animal advocacy non-profit 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to end the suffering of wild animals in captivity, rescue individual animals in need, protect wildlife in their natural habitats, and encourage compassionate conservation.



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KEEP WILDLIFE IN THE WILD®

Coexisting with
BEAVERS

COEXISTING WITH BEAVERS



PHOTO: MICHELLE KWAJAFA

BEAVERS: NATURE'S HABITAT ENGINEERS

Beavers are superb engineers — their ability to change the landscape is second only to humans. The dams built by beavers play a key role in the creation of wetland habitats which in turn prevent erosion, purify water, control flooding, and combat global climate change.

Wetlands are also among the most biologically productive natural ecosystems in the world, comparable to tropical rainforests in terms of the diversity of species they support and importance to the health of our planet.

Some American Indians called the beaver the “sacred center” of the land because the ponds and wetlands created by beavers serve as rich habitats for other mammals, fish, turtles, frogs, and ducks and other birds. Learning to live peacefully with this wild engineer is a wise and noble goal.

COEXISTING WITH BEAVERS

Because many human dwellings, neighborhoods, and towns have been built close to rivers or streams, or even on top of wetlands and in flood plains, sometimes steps are needed to modify the important habitat engineering work performed by beavers.

When conflicts arise, working with the beaver is most often the best solution. If beavers are removed from good habitat, others will normally

move into the empty habitat in a short period of time. Survivors respond with compensatory reproduction (increased litter sizes) and beavers can migrate over tens of miles. Allowing established beavers to remain while addressing the specific problem (for example, flooded roads or tree cutting) provides a long-term solution and preserves the many beaver benefits

CONTROLLING FLOODING

Where flooding is a concern “bafflers,” “deceivers” or “levelers” can be installed that control the water level without disturbing the beavers.

Bafflers — Beavers are stimulated to repair breaches in their dams by the sound, feel, and sight of running water. Beaver “bafflers” work by dispersing the flow in such a way that the beavers are not stimulated to plug them up. Bafflers have many different designs, and can be constructed of pipe or metal mesh fencing formed into culverts.

Deceivers — Beaver “deceivers” are trapezoid-shaped fences built around points of vulnerability such as easily plugged culvert openings. These fences extend outward to create an area large enough to discourage damming.

Levelers — Beaver ponds with properly installed and maintained pond “levelers” can also be effective in decreasing flooding. These devices lower the pond below the top of the dam so storm runoff is held back. Beavers will not continue to raise the height of their dam unless there is water flowing over it, so the size of the beaver pond can be controlled to prevent flooding.

Note: Contact Born Free USA for more detailed information and instructions for designing

and installing flood controlling devices (contact information on back panel).

PROTECTING TREES

Tree cutting is part of nature’s cycle, and beaver pruning stimulates willows, cottonwood, and aspen to grow bushier the following spring. Trees that drown in a beaver pond create valuable habitat for insects and birds. Large dead trees or snags make excellent nesting and hunting perches for eagles, herons, and osprey.

Sometimes human landscape desires conflict with natural processes; in such situations preservation of trees or certain trees can be achieved in several ways.



Wire Wraps — Trees can be wrapped with simple cylinders of galvanized, welded wire, placed 6–12 inches out from the trunk and standing about three feet high. Hardware cloth (1/4- to 1/2-inch mesh) will also work, but heavier galvanized wire will hold up better.

Sand and Paint — For seedling trees, strips of “4 the Birds” (a sticky gel-like product used to deter birds) mixed with sand and painted on the seedlings provides low-cost, easy-to-apply

protection. More mature trees can be painted with exterior latex paint and mason sand mixture. Mix 5oz of sand per quart of paint or 20oz of sand per gallon of paint.

Fencing — Since beavers are not good climbers, a three- to four-foot fence can also be a permanent deterrent in large areas where trees are grouped together. Chicken wire is too weak to create an effective barrier for beaver. Choose heavier and sturdier wire for fencing.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: *What about standing water, smell, and mosquitoes?*

A: Some people feel that beaver activity “ruins” the aesthetics of an area, complaining that the dead trees and “stagnant” water are unsightly or that the beaver flowage smells. As organic matter builds up in a pond, the natural process of decomposition takes place. This is natural and there is no cause for alarm. The smell is usually temporary and tends to dissipate as the weather cools or rainfall increases.

There is no evidence that the presence of beavers will increase overall mosquito populations. In fact, studies show that beaver ponds actually have fewer mosquitoes than other areas where water accumulates. The reason for this is likely due to the fact that mosquito predators such as dragonflies and fish often live in beaver ponds. Where mosquito control is a concern these natural predators can be added or encouraged.