

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Fact Sheet: Oregon's State Mammal



American Beaver (*Castor Canadensis*) Oregon's early economy was built on beaver pelts. During the 1800s, by feeding European and eastern American demand for beaver hats and coats, fur trappers virtually eliminated the species from many landscapes through unregulated trapping. With

proper management, however, beaver have become re-established and are now common throughout their range. In 1969, the Legislature recognized the American Beaver by naming it Oregon's state animal. Beavers enhance habitat for many other fish and wildlife species through their dam-building activities. Beaver ponds provide areas for people to fish, hunt and view wildlife. Beavers have reddish brown to black fur, webbing on their hind feet and a tail that is broad, flat, hairless and scaled.

Where does the American beaver live?

Nearly all of Oregon's waterways are home to beavers. They live in ponds, marshes and streams. Beaver are most likely to use sites that have a stream gradient of less than 6 percent, canopy cover of 25-50 percent and a bank-full width of 13-20 feet.

What conservation issues affect the American beaver?

In general, beavers are doing well in Oregon. However, in some locations they have lost habitat due to development. In other areas, beaver habitat has become less suitable due to canopy closure as riparian forests mature. The Oregon Conservation Strategy highlights wetlands and riparian areas as habitats that need our help.

How can Oregonians help the beaver?

- Plant preferred native food plants (alder, willow, maple and aspen) along streams.
- Restore riparian areas through fencing, restoring hydrology, tree planting and other methods.
- On private lands where beavers are causing damage, work towards solutions that address the problems while allowing beavers to remain at the site (for example, install Clemson Water Levelers or fence commercial trees in conjunction with planting native food plants). If you experience beaver damage on your property, contact your local ODFW office to learn how to minimize it. Although beavers contribute to watershed health, they can cause damage by blocking culverts, flooding roads and cutting down valuable trees.

Did you know?

Oregon's nickname is the Beaver State, and the American Beaver is the state animal. The reverse side of the Oregon state flag depicts a beaver. As North America's largest rodent, beaver may weigh up to 65 pounds and measure nearly 4 feet in length. Beavers can cut down a tree up to 5 1/2 feet in diameter. Beaver ponds are important habitat for juvenile coho salmon.

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