



BEAVER

Phylum: *Chordata* Class: *Mammalia* Order: *Rodentia* Family: *Castoridae*
Castor canadensis

Description: The industrious beaver constructs a complex system of dams and canals that regulate flooding, creates marshland and prevents soil erosion

Height: 12-24 inches

Length: 24-32 inches with a tail 10-18 inches long

Weight: 25-65 pounds

Range: Streams and lakes

Distribution: North America and Europe

Life Span: 15-21 years

Status: Stable

Diet: Bark

Special Features:

- Their teeth are coated with a hard, yellowish red enamel to provide a hard, sharp edge on the front surface to prevent wear.
- A pair of beavers can gnaw through a 4 inch thick branch in 15 minutes.
- Beavers can gnaw under water because the lips close behind the front teeth and the back of the tongue seals the throat.
- The large scaly tail is flattened and can be used for propulsion or as a rudder.
- They warn each other by slapping their tails on the water.
- Hind feet are large and webbed for swimming.
- The nose and ears close when diving and a special membrane protects the eyes.
- Within the dam the beaver constructs a lodge with various underwater entrance tunnels.
- An underwater store of branches is kept near the lodge as a winter food supply.

Reproduction:

- Sexual maturity is 3 years
- They mate for life
- Mating is January-February
- Gestation is 105 days
- Number of young is up to 8 kits
- Kits have full coats of fur and are able to swim within hours of birth.
- Although weaned at 6 weeks, kits may stay in the lodge for 2 years.

