

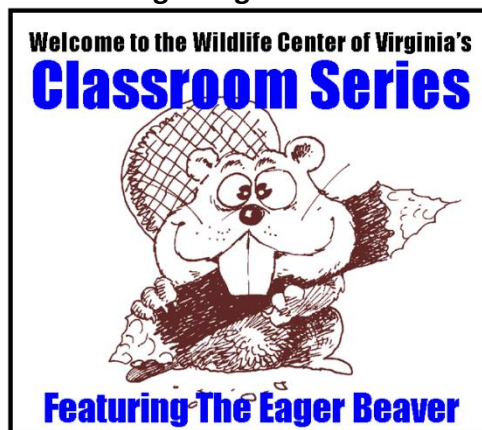


Wildlife Center Classroom Series: The Eager Beaver

Wednesday, November 11, 2015



Congowings:



Congowings:

Welcome to the Wildlife Center of Virginia's Classroom Series. Idioms such as "busy as a beaver" and "eager beaver" are synonymous with being industrious and hardworking. And that is certainly true of the animal we will explore today . . . the beaver.



Congowings:

The beaver is the largest rodent found in North America. They are the second largest rodent in the world. The Capybara of South America is the largest rodent in the world.

Comment From rejoyce

Afternoon everyone!!

Comment From CarolinaGirl

Whew! Made it home and have my lunch in hand! Ready to learn about beavers!



Congowings:

Hello Rejoyce and CarolinaGirl. Glad you both were able to make it.



Congowings:

Is everyone familiar with the Capybara?

Comment From Dave in Missouri

No!



Congowings:

I had a feeling some might not be familiar - so here is a photo of one.



Congowings



Capybara of South America. Photo property of Ryan E. Poplin.

Comment From David in VA

After a quick Google search, Yup

Comment From sue in Maine

yes: IEAS has a capybara

Comment From sue in Maine

Handsome fellow

Comment From rejoyce

We are eager beavers -- waiting for your information, Congo!



Congowings



Photo above shows Wildlife Center's beaver patient #15-1914. Photo property of WCV.



Congowings:

You all will recognize this 'little' guy . . .



Congowings:

Photo above shows Wildlife Center's beaver patient #15-1914 - featured on Critter Cam 1 this afternoon. On August 28, an officer with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries captured a juvenile male beaver who was reportedly injured near the North River Dam in Rockingham County. The beaver was transported to the Wildlife Center and was admitted as patient #15-1914.

Current beaver patient #15-1914:

<http://wildlifecenter.org/critter-corner/current-patients/beaver-15-1914>

Comment From sue in Maine

1914 is just too cute!

Comment From rejoyce

So cute!!!!

Comment From Dave in Missouri

Oh yeah!



Congowings:

Upon presentation, the beaver was exceptionally calm and showed possible signs of impaired vision. The beaver was in good body condition – weighing approximately 9 kg – but had lacerations on his back, abdomen, and tail, indicating that the animal suffered physical trauma.



Congowings:

For more information on current beaver patient #15-1914:

<http://wildlifecenter.org/critter-corner/current-patients/beaver-15-1914>

Comment From Lydia in PA

Our poor Beav

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

Are the capy's and beav's related (or than being big rodents)?



Congowings:

From what I read, no they aren't. Not even the two species are genetically compatible.

Comment From rejoyce

Thank goodness he made it to the center!



Congowings:

There are two species of beaver; the North American beaver (*Castor canadensis*) and the European beaver (*Castor fiber*). They are similar in appearance and behavior, but are not genetically compatible. The North American beaver has 40 chromosomes, while the Eurasian beaver has 48. There was an attempt in Russia to hybridize the two species, but after more than 27 attempts the result was one stillborn kit.

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

Delighted you are our professor today, Congowings. I remember the Beav's admission information.



Congowings:

Hi Brenda. I'm glad I can be here today.

Comment From Gwen in CA

Hi everyone, I made it!



Congowings:

Glad you made it Gwen!

Comment From Lydia in PA

me reading yesterday before class and learned that American Indians called the beaver the "sacred center" of the land because beavers creates such rich, watery habitat for other mammals, fish, turtles, frogs, birds and ducks. (Wetlands and Wildlife)



Congowings:

Very interesting Lydia. Thanks for sharing that.

Comment From Frankfromchicago

Do not beavers create habitat for many animals by creating dams?



Congowings:

Yes, they do, Frankfromchicago.

Comment From rejoyce

Are there lots of beavers in VA?



Congowings:

They are not endangered, but their numbers are not what they used to be. I'm unsure of the population numbers in Virginia.



Congowings:

Recent studies suggest the beaver population in the wild is approximately 12 million in North America - a large decrease from the estimated 60 million in 1988. Beavers have been hunted for its fur, its glands for medicine and because of their natural destructive tendencies. Today, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), beavers are not considered endangered. They are widespread, common in many parts of their range, and their populations are stable.



Congowings:

Valued for their pelts, castoreum and meat, beavers were once hunted almost to extinction. Beaver hats were once the height of fashion, and castoreum was used in medicine, food and perfumes.



Congowings:

Castoreum is a chemical compound that mostly comes from a beaver's castor sac. Both male and female beavers have a pair of scent glands, called castors, at the base of their tails. This musk-like substance is used to mark their territory. It has the consistency of molasses and has a musky vanilla odor. This is not to be confused with castor oil (home remedy for constipation) which is from the oil of the castor bean.

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

Interesting that both called Beavers, yet so genetically dissimilar that can't be crossed.

Comment From rejoyce

I have never seen one in the wild. I'd love to, though!

Comment From rejoyce

What is the biggest threat to beavers today?



Congowings:

Loss of habitat is a concern.



Congowings:

Natural prey of beavers include wolves, bears, lynx and wolverine. Otters have been known to get into the lodge and kill their young if left unattended. The adult beavers usually stay with their young to protect them.

Comment From Lydia in PA

Did not know about castor sac. Is that where castor oil comes from?



Congowings:

No, castor oil is from the bean.

Comment From Lydia in PA

oh good!

Comment From Lydia in PA

Frank, you are right on. Also read from Wetlands and Wildlife that "Beavers prefer to dam streams in shallow valleys, where the flooded area becomes productive wetlands. These cradles of life support biodiversity that rivals tropical rain forests. Almost half of endangered and threatened species in North America rely upon wetlands. Freshwater wetlands have been rated as the world's most valuable land-based ecosystem."



Congowings:

Depending on the source, the average lifespan of a beaver in the wild is 10-20 years, but they can live up to 24 years in the wild.

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

So huge decline from 60 million to 12 million but still not "endangered"? Worrisome!



Congowings:

The decline in numbers is alarming isn't it? But I think there are more protections in place for them now.

Comment From Lydia in PA

Agree Jersey Shore Amy---it is worrisome



Congowings:

Beavers can be found in the forests of North America, Europe, and Asia.

Comment From Cathy in Poquoson

Almost late, but I'm here!



Congowings:

Glad you were able to make it Cathy!

Comment From CarolinaGirl

Unfortunately every spring 2 or 3 are hit by cars and killed near our river/dam/lake.



Congowings:

They are slow moving on land.



Congowings:

Adult beavers are approximately 3 feet long and can weigh as much as 60 lbs. The length of the tail is usually 7.5-12 inches according to National Geographic. Females are generally slightly larger than males of the same age.



Congowings:

They have thick insulating fur, 5-toed webbed feet and flattened, scale-covered tails. Their hands are also 5-fingered with sharp pointed claws which are used for digging into the mud banks or tearing up vegetation.



Congowings



The back feet of a beaver shown in the photo above of beaver patient #15-1914. Photo property of WCV.

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

I think Wilson is faster than the Beav.



Congowings:

lol You think so?



Congowings:

They have powerful jaws and strong orange teeth. Their webbed feet and flattened tail make them excellent swimmers, but they are slow on land.

Comment From Lydia in PA

Woe with all of that digging equipment beavers have on their body, no wonder it is said that the Beavers ability to change the landscape is second only to humans



Congowings:

Beavers have two layers of fur. They have a dense insulating layer close to the body (underfur) which is about 3/4 of an inch long. The outer layer - guard hairs - measure approximately 2.5 inches long. Air is trapped between the two layers to protect the beaver from the cold water when they are swimming under water.

Comment From Regina, IL

Good afternoon all at WCV, Congowings & En/CN/BN. Thank you Critter Nation for sponsoring the Cams today and thank you to all the Veterans and Congo we are very privileged to have you as our teacher today.



Congowings:

Thank you all for having me. ;-) Nice to see you Regina.

Comment From cwerb ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡

oh NO. I am very late.



Congowings:

Just 17 minutes -



Congowings:

The fur is further waterproofed by rubbing an oil produced by the castor gland into it. Beavers spend a lot of time grooming their fur when out of the water so as to maintain its protective ability. They have a special "comb claw" on the second toe of each hind foot that is used as a curry comb during grooming.

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

How much does our patient weigh?



Congowings:

This is a young beaver - so most likely around 20-25 pounds. I'll have to ask Amanda for a weight on the beaver for you.

Comment From Dave in Missouri

Cool!

Comment From Lydia in PA

LOL a comb claw! They even carry their own grooming supplies with them



Congowings:

Any guesses as to the largest recorded beaver weight?

Comment From David in VA

36 lb

Comment From Dave in Missouri

85lbs

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

82 pounds!

Comment From Pat, NJ

55 lbs.

Comment From BarbG

100 pounds

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

80 LB?



Congowings:

BarbG is pretty close!



Congowings:

The largest recorded beaver found in Wisconsin was 110 pounds (50 kg).



Congowings:

That's a BIG beaver!

Comment From David in VA

WOW!!!

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

Holy cow!!!

Comment From Dave in Missouri

Wow!

Comment From Pat, NJ

WOWzer

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

Male or Female?



Congowings:

I'm not sure. But if I was going to guess, I would think a female since they are slightly larger.

Comment From BarbG

I am trying to imagine a beaver that size

Comment From rejoyce

Huge!!

Comment From Lydia in PA

my gosh! 110 pounds!!!!

Comment From cwerb 🙄❤️🙄❤️🙄🙄❤️🙄❤️🙄❤️🙄❤️🙄

Mr. B combs his hair in the pool video.

Comment From Lydia in PA

Big as a bear!



Congowings:

Cwerb, we will have to show that video later.

Comment From Cathy in Poquoson

110 lbs! WOW!

Comment From Dave in Missouri

Beaver heading to the water!

Comment From BarbG

Beav getting in his pool now

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

She must have been Queen of her Lodge. :)

Comment From Pat, NJ

Bucky out for a dip in the pool

Comment From David in VA

Mr. B is having a swim right now.

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

And in the pool he goes, right on cue!

Comment From rejoyce

Big as my grandkids!!!!

Comment From sue in Maine

our WCV Mr B is up and in his pool



Congowings:

You all did know we planned that right? ;-)

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

Mr. B. has joined us--in his tub.

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

Randy needs to give you points for that, Congo.



Congowings:

The beaver's multi-functional leathery tail is approximately 6 inches wide and can grow up to 15 inches long. On land the beaver can use its tail for balance when sitting - acting like a prop so it can sit upright. The tail can also be used as a counterbalance - which helps while carrying heavy supplies in his teeth. In the water the beavers use their broad, stiff tails like rudders to steer under water. They also use their tails as a warning to others - slapping the water to warn others of danger or a warning to keep away.

Beavers will slap the water with force as an alarm signal to other beavers in the area that a predator is approaching.



Congowings



WCV beaver patient #15-1914's tail. Photo property of WCV.

Comment From rejoyce

Do they spend more time in land or in the water?



Congowings:

They don't spend as much time in the water as you would think - since they are usually in their lodge.

Comment From cwerb ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡
webbed feet!

Comment From Lydia in PA

I do not see Mr. B in his tub. maybe my cam is frozen Brenda



Congowings:

He was in the tub. Not sure if that is him on the right side of it right now.

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

Mr. B. isn't moving right now, but he's in the water.

Comment From Pat, NJ

Look far right Lydia

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

He's at far right, blowing bubbles underwater. :)

Comment From CarolinaGirl

I am sure he was told to get up and do something between 1 and 2 o'clock!

Comment From Lydia in PA

Refreshed and NOW I see Mr Beav in his tub

Comment From Cathy in Poquoson

Speaking of our Mr. Beaver, doesn't he have a family somewhere? I thought beaver families stayed together for many years rather than kicking out the teenagers like WCV thinks may have happened?



Congowings:

Yes, they do. We will talk about that later, Cathy.

Comment From Jakermo♥

Correct, he is in the Right end.

Comment From sue in Maine

Mr B is being very still at the moment in his pool



Congowings:

And unlike the cartoons you might see - the tail is not a tool for either transporting or applying mud to the dam or lodge. They do that with their front legs and hands. It is not used as a club to fight off enemies. They defend themselves mainly by biting and scratching.

Comment From Lydia in PA

Yep and I see the bubble..LOL



Congowings:

This is a nice photo of the beaver's teeth. ;-)

Comment From Lydia in PA

Oh those front teeth do most of the cutting, right--wood cutting?



Congowings:

Yes, they are the beaver's chainsaw.

Comment From Cathy in Poquoson

Oh my, hope Dr Dave doesn't have to get out the dremmel...

Comment From Jakermo♥

I thought that was so interesting that the iron is what makes their teeth orange.

Comment From Dave in Missouri

Awesome picture Congowings!

Comment From VA Kris

Ouch. It hurts just to look at those

Comment From Pat, NJ

He needs some of those whitening strips.

Comment From Jakermo♥

OMG! IS that our beaver?



Congowings:

Yes, that is the beaver on the camera.

Comment From sue in Maine

if something happens to those front teeth is the beaver's life quality impaired?



Congowings:

Yes, that would cause all kinds of hardships. They would not be able to survive.

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

I believe Mr. B is about to have a visit from housekeeping. He's gone back to the igloo.

Comment From Jakermo♥

He's hiding from the EW's.

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

I see he likes his browse, but has the Beav been spotted doing a bit of gnawing on the bigger branches?



Congowings:

I haven't seen him eating myself, but remember - they are nocturnal and eat mostly during the night.

Comment From Lydia in PA

Wow, Beavers not only carry their own combs, they have built in chainsaws too. Lots of equipment in that beaver body

Comment From rejoyce

Are they able to close their mouths all the way with teeth like that?



Congowings:

Yes, they can close their mouths. In fact, they can close most everything. More on that a little later.

Comment From Pat, NJ

It's amazing how they can stay so long while gnawing thru wood.

Comment From Lydia in PA

Well Sue in Maine If no front teeth the poor Beaver would not be able to saw wood...and i imagine not eat as well since they eats lots of tree stuff

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

Forgot about them being nocturnal! We need one of those special night vision cams. :)



Congowings:

Their cheeks close behind their incisors so they can grasp and tow branches underwater.



Congowings:

The beaver has an excellent sense of hearing, smell, and touch. The ears have valvular flaps which close tightly when they are swimming - preventing water from entering the auditory canal. The beaver's sight is rather poor, but they do have a set of transparent eyelids which allow them to see under water.

Comment From David in VA

That's a pretty smart design

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

Wow, very well equipped!

Comment From MH in SC

My parents lived in Maine for several years, and they always had beaver dams around their lake. Locals did not like that much....I thought was cool when seeing them working and how large the mound was above the water line.



Congowings:

Hi MH in SC. Lucky you. Would love to watch them work around their lodge like that.

Comment From Pat, NJ

If the teeth are growing continually I wonder what needs to happen that would cause any permanent loss.



Congowings:

Like us, an injury that would knock their tooth out and damage the tooth bed.

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

Wait, don't eagles have a transparent eyelid too?



Congowings:

Yes they do. Anyone remember what it is called?

Comment From cwerb ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡

nictating membrane!!



Congowings:

Wow. I didn't even finish typing that, lol.

Comment From David in VA

Nictating?

Comment From Pat, NJ

nictating

Comment From CarolinaGirl

nictating membrane

Comment From cwerb ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡

I'm good.

Comment From Lydia in PA

yeppcwerb beat be to it

Comment From rejoyce

Nictating membrane

Comment From Lydia in PA

That is too bad MH in SC. The locals must not have had the knowledge to realized how many wonderful things beavers were doing for the environment

Comment From Pat, NJ

Brownie points for cwerb.



Congowings:

How fast can a beaver swim?



Congowings:

Beavers may move with an ungainly waddle on land but in the water they are very graceful. They use their large, webbed rear feet like swimming fins, and their paddle-shaped tails like rudders.

Comment From sue in Maine

20 miles an hr



Congowings:

The beaver is mainly a nocturnal animal and spends quite a bit of time eating and building during the night when predators are less likely to be around. They are prolific builders at night which is where the saying, "As busy as a beaver" comes from.



Congowings Beaver-Active! Sleep Patterns in the Winter (Archipelago Films 1:44):

<https://youtu.be/lca5Cqth-nM>



Congowings:

Beavers don't mind the cold and are active all winter, swimming and foraging in their ponds even when a layer of ice covers the surface.

Comment From Jakermo♥

Oh, that is so cool.

Comment From Lydia in PA

Geesh! 26 hour day! added 2 hours to a day....wow!

Comment From Jakermo♥

Oh, so Mr Beaver is up at night. Well, I won't worry so much if he seems to sleep during the day.

Comment From VQW

Beavers have created quite a mess up here lately. They blocked a drainage pipe, causing a culvert to collapse just as a septic tank emptying truck was crossing it. Talk about a mess!

Comment From dj

I remember from family outings hearing a beaver whack his tail on the water as a warning to stay away.

Comment From CarolinaGirl

Busy as a beaver!!

Comment From MH in SC

Wow that is cool video.

Comment From David in VA

Funny sounding critters

Comment From Pat, NJ

How dey do dat!!!!

Comment From BarbG

fascinating

Comment From rejoyce

Love that nose!!!

Comment From Jakermo♥

I love the sounds they make. I wonder if Mr Beaver makes sounds to the rehabbers?



Congowings:

I'm not sure. Question for Amanda! ;-)



Congowings:

Beavers are herbivores and eat mainly during the night. They eat bark, twigs, roots, buds of deciduous trees, leaves and aquatic plants like water lilies. Some of their favorites include maple, birch, poplar and aspen. The entire beaver colony will gather food before winter and make a cache of their favorites in deep water near the lodge.



Congowings

Fooled by Nature - Beaver Dams (Animal Planet 3:07):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Na2HYq11yuM>

Comment From cwerb ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡

timmmbbbbbbbbeeerrrrrrr!!!!!!!!!!!!

Comment From Lydia in PA

But wow--they help the trees! Read that since tree cutting is part of nature's cycle, the beaver pruning stimulates willows, cottonwood and aspen to regrow bushier than ever the next spring.

Comment From Cathy in Poquoson

Cool videos, Congo!

Comment From Lydia in PA

Awesome video! They are so smart! wow they are amazing. wow! Look at those trees go down! and they have their own refrigerator.

Comment From David in VA

Very cool

Comment From Pat, NJ

Ain't wildlife something?



Congowings:

Because they are so thoroughly adapted to an aquatic lifestyle, they do not have the ability to climb trees. In order to get the food that is out of their reach, they chew around the base of the tree until it falls.

Comment From MH in SC

Cool, and they are very intelligent.

Comment From Lydia in PA

I guess Beavers are pretty smart. In one article I read it said a man named Dr. Donald Griffin, the father of animal cognition, was quoted as saying "When we think of the kinds of animal behavior that suggest conscious thinking, the beaver comes naturally to mind."

Comment From David in VA

I was surprised to read they are primarily vegetarian.

Comment From rejoyce

Gosh those teeth are something else!!

Comment From VA Kris

You know, I never thought of wood as being all that nutritious

Comment From Heidin in NH

Beaver is somewhat fussy. Has taken dozens of hardwood saplings from my lake property and left the pine ones.



Congowings:

I found this particularly interesting . . .

The beaver has a large appendix and a special gland that works with the stomach to pre-digest food. After the food passes through a moist green pellet is formed and discharged through the cloaca. The beaver then eats the pellet and it is then expelled as excrement. This process called coprophagy gives maximum nutritional benefit for the beaver.

Comment From cwerb ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡
you have a thing for pellets, Congo..

Comment From dj
I didn't realize that they actually ate trees!

Comment From Lydia in PA
Fascinating

Comment From rejoyce
They eat pellets??!!



Congowings:
Apparently so, Rejoyce.

Comment From Brenda from Virginia
Beavers don't waste anything apparently.



Congowings:
Beavers can be found in the forests of North America, Europe, and Asia - usually on slow moving streams, lakes, rivers or ponds. American beavers can be found throughout North American, but stay away from the deserts or the far northern areas of Canada. Eurasian beavers live in small numbers throughout Germany, France, Poland, southern Scandinavia and central Russia.

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy
Heidin- maybe they don't like the pines because of the sap?



Congowings:
Beavers need water to survive and look for areas where water is available or can be accessed by changing the environment. Beavers can alter their environment to suit their needs by building dams to maintain a constant water level for lodge construction and easy access to underwater food supply.

Comment From Heidi in NH
Could be, Jersey Shore Amy. Also no nourishing leaves.



Congowings:

A beaver will fell a particular tree for a particular reason; a larger mature tree will be felled to form the basis of a dam. A young, second growth tree will be felled for food. Beavers will also fell broad-leaved trees to encourage re growth (food) closer their reach. When they fell a tree they waste nothing, systematically eating the bark and buds before cutting up branches and sections of the trunk to carry for use in dams or lodges.

Comment From dj

that's where they get into trouble. Changing the local environment. Some people don't like that.



Congowings



Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

Can you imagine in a beaver paired up with the cubs in their yard? They would point and say "that tree, down, that one, down too, please."

Comment From MH in SC

Congo...how many babies does a beaver usu have over winter?



Congowings:

I will cover that in just a few minutes. Thank you for bringing that up, MH in SC.



Congowings:

Beavers build dome-shaped houses called 'lodges' from grasses, woven sticks, branches and moss plastered with mud. Lodges are positioned in open water for protection from predators and have underwater entrance holes, including an underwater backdoor. They can be built barely above the water level on banks of ponds or on lake shores. The lodges can be up to 8

feet wide and 3 feet high inside. Beavers have been known to share their lodges with families of muskrats.

Comment From rejoyce

Gives you a whole new appreciation for the saying "busy as a beaver."



Congowings:

Together beaver colonies create dams of wood and mud to provide still, deep water in order to protect against predators such as wolves, coyotes, bears or eagles, and also so they can float food and building material to their homes. Once the dams are completed and ponds formed, beavers will work on building their homes called lodges in the middle.

Comment From CarolinaGirl

Beavers are amazing. Creek that runs behind my house is Beaver Dam Creek. There is a large marshy, barren area in one area or it so we think we know how, many years ago, the creek got its name!

Comment From Lydia in PA

But a lot of it grows back better than before dj and also beavers form great wetlands for other wildlife. But yes, some folks just don't appreciate wildlife. The almighty human being must be in control



Congowings:

The dome shaped lodges, like the dams, are constructed with branches and mud. Lodges have underwater entrances, making entry tough for most other animals. There are usually two dens within the lodge, one is for drying off after entering from the water and another, drier one, is where the family of up to four adults and six to eight young live and socialize.

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

Oh, so they will share with muskrats! Very cool.



Congowings:

Dams are built to make ponds or enhance the depth of the pond to make winter access easier. Beavers build dams for a myriad of reasons, and one is so that the lake behind it will grow deep enough to ensure it doesn't freeze all the way through during the winter. This bit of temperature control is especially crucial because beavers anchor a food cache to the bottom of the lake to serve as sustenance during the cold months. (Dept. of Environment and Conservation, Canada)



Congowings:

Dams are created by weaving branches together, felling trees by cutting them down with their teeth, and waterproofing the construction with mud. Beavers also dig canals to bring water from large bodies of water to their feeding area.



Congowings:

Beavers are exceptional architects and even take water flow into consideration when building. They construct straight dams on trickling waters and curved dams in raging rapids. The dams are used as protection from predators and as shelter throughout the winter. If a predator destroys part of the dam, the beaver can fix it overnight.

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

I used to think the dams were their lodges!



Congowings How Beavers Build a Lodge (BBCWorldwide 3:51):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VuMRDZbrdXc>

Comment From Dave in Missouri

Lol, walking on two feet!

Comment From VA Kris

Wow. Look at them walking on their hind feet! Now that's impressive.

Comment From Lydia in PA

No one can ever call a beaver lazy, thats for sure! I love the fact that they use everything and nothing goes to waste.

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

Beavers are very very smart!

Comment From Lydia in PA

Aweeee love the babies in the vid

Comment From rejoyce

Those beaver babies are adorable!

Comment From CarolinaGirl

Ooooo... imagine cutting those large teeth! Tree limbs for teething tings!!

Comment From Lydia in PA

Amazingly intricate! Love the vids



Congowings:

Any guess as to the largest beaver dam known in existence?

Comment From Dave in Missouri

Honey, can you dive down to the fridge and get me something to eat!

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

Dam or lodge?



Congowings:

The dam.

Comment From VA Kris

Thirty miles long



Congowings:

Is this Cwerb posting?

Comment From BarbG

half mile

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

50 feet?

Comment From VQW

Visible by satellite

Comment From Lydia in PA

It is in Canada, right?



Congowings:

Yes.

Comment From rejoyce

Oh my goodness!!

Comment From David in VA

That's a biggun...

Comment From cwerb ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡

that is quite a bit more than even I would have guessed.

Comment From Dave in Missouri

Wow, that is amazing!



Congowings:

And now for breeding information . . .



Congowings:

Beavers are usually monogamous; mating for life beginning in their third year. A young male seeking a mate will begin constructing a dam for a future lodge.



Congowings:

Anyone know what their young are called?

Comment From VQW

Kits

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

Kits!

Comment From BarbG

kits

Comment From VA Kris

Kits

Comment From dj

video said kits

Comment From rejoyce

kits



Congowings:

You all WERE listening! ;-)

Comment From Pat, NJ

Just like foxes

Comment From David in VA

I bet it's kits

Comment From Dave in Missouri

little guys?



Congowings:

An entire beaver family will live in a single dam/lodge —mom, dad, young kids, and yearlings. Yearlings can also serve as babysitters to the newly born kits.

Comment From cwerb ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡

do beavers have a brood pouch?



Congowings:

Well, let's see. Are they live births? Or does the beaver have to incubate? :-)

Comment From MH in SC

Oh cwerb...you in trouble

Comment From VQW

And their favorite candy? Kit-kat bark



Congowings:

groan . . .

Comment From VA Kris

Don't you wonder how the mothers nurse babies w/ teeth that big?



Congowings:

Hope they are gentle . . .

Comment From Lydia in PA

and the parents mate for life ... love it

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

Awww, my daughter will love hearing that beavers babysit their siblings!

Comment From Pat, NJ

Live, no incubation.

Comment From cwerb ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡

I never heard of beaver eggs, so...



Congowings:

You answered your question. ;-)



Congowings:

Mating season runs from January to March. American beavers have a gestation period of around 105-107 days. They give birth in the spring to 1-4 four young called kits. Beavers only produce one litter per year which consists of an average of three kits. The kits weigh between 9-21 ounces at birth and can swim 24 hours after birth. Living in large family groups, both parents care for the kits. They are usually weaned in around two weeks and will leave the lodge to make their own way at around 2 years of age.

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

(You are not making your goal of 1 hours, but no complaints here)



Congowings:

I know . . . Not much more though. I think I will make the 1 1/2 hour mark. ;-)



Congowings

Cute baby beaver (Billings Gazette 3:08): <https://youtu.be/qocjR0QUZYw>

Comment From Diane in Waterloo, ON

Beaver front paws look very similar to human hands, minus the thumbs.

Comment From Dave in Missouri

Awe, how cool was that!

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

She's adorable!

Comment From Lydia in PA

Oh it is soooo cute! The baby beaver

Comment From BarbG

adorable

Comment From VA Kris

Love that tail.

Comment From Heidi in NH

Delightful, adorable video

Comment From Pat, NJ

Okay, now I want a baby beaver to add to my bear cub, eaglet, baby ellie, baby lion cub, and of course, baby leopard.

Comment From MH in SC

So when the boys reach about 3 years old, they go out building to attract a mate....

Comment From cwerb ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡

she was brought back from the hereafter! that's pretty cool!

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

How hard will it be to find suitable territory for our Beav next year? Needs a good beaver spot, yet not overlapping into another Beaver territory.



Congowings:

Good question Jersey Shore Amy. I'm sure the Center will be looking for a suitable release area when the time comes.

Comment From stpetejane

This is so fascinating! Amazing they know how to do all that to survive. Wow!

Comment From Lydia in PA

Little beaver finger puppets being sold at WCV. I got one last time I was there

Comment From Lydia in PA

That is a good question Jersey Shore Amy--I have been wondering that myself

Comment From MH in SC

Congo..since they form colonies, is it typical that a new lodge might be attached to or close proximity to where they came from



Congowings:

I'm afraid I didn't find any information concerning two families in the same den. While they do share their lodges with other critters, I don't think they share with other families of beavers. Good question.

Comment From MH in SC

I'm still thinking about that nursing and those teeth...lol

Comment From Dave in Missouri

Very cool!

Comment From VA Kris

So Mr. Beaver is about two years old.



Congowings:

I believe that is what the vets think.

Comment From MH in SC

If from same family I mean?

Congowings:

I think once they are three they go off on their own, MH in SC. If anyone finds that information I hope they will share with us.

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

Video said weaned in 2 weeks, so those teeth grow quickly!

Comment From Lydia in PA

But MH the babies teeth are probably not so big that they cannot nurse..and the vid say they only stay on mom's milk for a few weeks

Comment From Diane in Waterloo, ON

I'm guessing that building a dam and lodge is inherent in the species, since this beaver will not be taught but will be released.



Congowings:

Hello Diane. I think some is instinct though.

Comment From VA Kris

I read that the kits start gnawing at three days old!

Comment From MH in SC

I know...it was just the thought. I'm sure they wean so quickly to as to stimulate teeth growth...

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

Congo - did you find info about survival rate of kits in first year?



Congowings:

No, I didn't Jersey Shore Amy.

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

I guess if I am stranded in the wilderness I will gnaw on bark until I am rescued.

Comment From VQW

MH in SC, they may stop nursing at two weeks because teeth are strong enough to start eating vegetation at 3 days old...poor mom!



Congowings:

The work of beavers makes them a keystone species in maintaining habitats that are relied on by many others. As well as wetland, beavers create standing dead wood (by drowning some trees) which is inhabited by insects, and in turn attracts bird life.



Congowings:

Beavers have a tremendous impact and interesting role on ecosystems. Dams alter the flow of rivers and can flood hundreds of acres. Dams prevent erosion and raise the water table, which helps purify the water as silt builds up and breaks down toxins, according to ADW. As sediment and debris build up, carbon increases and nitrogen decreases. The chemical changes alter the

type of invertebrates, and the new water source attracts new species of birds, fish and amphibians. Flooded timber dies off and a forest becomes an open water ecosystem. Over time, abandoned dams decay, and meadows appear.



Congowings:

On the other hand, beavers are notoriously destructive. They cause \$100 million in property damage yearly and their re-working of river currents can cause massive floods on our nation's farms. They have been known to destroy whole forests and one beaver couple almost took out a world-famous cherry tree forest in Washington D.C.

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

I bet the cherry trees tasted yummy!

Comment From Lydia in PA

I was also surprised to learn how important Beavers are to people. I read that "Beavers reliably and economically maintain wetlands that sponge up floodwaters, alleviate droughts and floods (because their dams keep water on the land longer), lesson erosion, raise the water table and act as the "earth's kidneys" to purify water. The latter occurs because several feet of silt collect upstream of older beaver dams, and toxics, such as pesticides, are broken down by microbes in the wetlands that beavers create. Thus, water downstream of dams is cleaner and requires less treatment for human use."

Comment From Kathy in NM ♥

Hi Congo and CN -I'm late, but made it! I recently read a study that showed that beaver ponds are surprisingly good at removing the chemical run-off from fields - something to due to the peat build-up on the bottom of the pond - keeping the water in the pond clean and downstream as well.

Comment From Pat, NJ

Double edged sword.

Comment From VQW

It was the Washington sundae...lots of nuts and a cherry tree on top

Comment From Diane in Waterloo, ON

They also alter the water levels of lakes. Once a dam at the end of our lake was destroyed the water dropped six inches overnight.

Comment From MH in SC

Congo....was there any info about mating/courtship rituals....? I mean males fighting over females?



Congowings:

I didn't go into much detail since I knew my time was limited, MH in SC. Maybe we can find out more and discuss later. There is something else going on at 3pm here.

Comment From Lydia in PA

Without a doubt Beaver life is good for we humans as well as other species.

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

So losing 48 million beavers equals a great decline in environmental quality as well.

Comment From Lydia in PA

I read that after weaning, their favorite foods include water lily tubers, apples and the leaves and green bark (cambium) from aspen. That is all still pretty soft stuff, so I doubt teeth are not highly developed at too young an age



Congowings:

Actually, it is at 3:15pm . . .



Congowings:

A few interesting facts to leave you with -



Congowings:

In 1948, new human inhabitants of western Idaho began to clash with the local beaver population. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game wanted to put these threatened beavers in a nearby protected area, but they didn't know how to get them there. Elmo Heter of Idaho Fish and Game devised an ingenious solution: By using surplus parachutes from World War II, the department could drop boxes of beavers down from planes. After some careful calibrations, 76 beavers made the skydive into the basin, and all but one survived the fall.



Congowings:

The beaver is the national animal of Canada, and features on the Canadian five-cent piece.

Comment From Lydia in PA

Now I am picturing beavers in little parachutes Congo!

Comment From JohninVA

Thank you for the great educational session, Congo, it's been really fantastic and enlightening :) I haven't been commenting, but have been reading throughout. I regularly follow the patients at the WCV.



Cgowings:

Glad you enjoyed it JohninVA. And very nice to have you join in today.

Comment From cwerb ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡

thanks Congo! Fun class!

Comment From Lydia in PA

Congo, Thank you for doing this class. As always, you do an excellent job!

Comment From VQW

Thanks for the great class, **Cgowings**

Comment From MH in SC

Thank you for your time today Congo. Lots of interesting info, and the vids were great.

Comment From Dave in Missouri

Very awesome class **Cgowings**, thanks so much!

Comment From BarbG

loved the class-thanks so much Congo

Comment From Cathy in Poquoson

Thanks Congo for a fascinating class!

Comment From sue in Maine

thank you ms **Cgowings** for such an interesting class. learned a lot today!

Comment From David in VA

Wonderful class Ms. Congo... Thank you for enlightening us about our newest cam star.

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

Learned a ton - should be a Beaver Badge for this class. :) Thank you Congo!



Congowings:

It is really nice to see so many here this afternoon. Thank you for making sure I didn't share this information to only myself. ;-)



Congowings:

A great read: Between a Tree and a Hard Place, January 13, 2015:

<http://wildlifecenter.org/blog/between-tree-and-hard-place>

Thomas, Class of 2014

Comment From Pat, NJ

What a super interesting class today. Thank you so much CW for your time and excellent presentation.

Comment From Lydia in PA

Pretty cool Canada friends! Beaver on your 5 cent pieces!

Comment From Diane in Waterloo, ON

Thanks Congo. This was great fun today.

Comment From Kathy in NM ♥

Thanks Congo for an informative and enjoyable class today!

Comment From VA Kris

Thanks for everything, Congowings.



Congowings:

I'd like to leave you all with a great video. It is a bit longer, so I couldn't share it here:

Beaver Documentary on Dam Building Beavers (42:56):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kNIn1CVDEyU>

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

Thanks very much for a great class, Congo. This is a link to video of the beaver parachute drop:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=APLz2bTprMA&oref=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DAPLz2bTprMA&has_verified=1



Congowings:

Thank you Brenda. When it comes up it does say it might not be suitable for all, so some might not want to click on it.

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

Will this be archived so I can go back and watch the videos again?



Congowings:

Yes, I'm going to try and copy it when I get off, Jersey Shore Amy.

Comment From Lydia in PA

Well today we learned that the largest dam in existence is located in Wood Buffalo National Park, Alberta, Canada. It stretches for 850m, and is visible from space. So, this is Ellen D's stand up comedy take on that dam. It is so funny. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q5PXRIjI4il>



Congowings:

By the way Lydia - you have to watch the spelling on that word. ;-)

Comment From Jersey Shore Amy

I wonder if Caleb's kids fell asleep in their lodge?

Comment From Brenda from Virginia

You will need to sign in to your Google account to verify your age to view the parachute drop.

Comment From CarolinaGirl

Thanks a bunch Congo. Great class. I learned so much about the amazing beavers.

Comment From Pat, NJ

typing on a laptop maks me crazy. I hope you understood your presentation was superb!

Comment From dsbb in tx

Hi Congo! Received my calendar today. It's beautiful - Thank you!!!



Congowings:

Yay!! The fledglings are now migrating. ;-)



Congowings:

I want to thank everyone for sharing their time with me this afternoon. Gives a new appreciation of that little beaver in Critter Cam 1. Don't forget - Raina will be here at 3:15pm. Don't miss it! Take care and enjoy watching the Critter Cams -