

Beavers ^[1]

Beavers

Laura Hegyi, 2006

See also [Beaver \(NC WINS\)](#) ^[2]



Image from the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission ^[3]Beavers- the largest North American rodents, recognized by their rich brown fur, webbed hind paws, and large, flat tails- were trapped almost to extinction in North Carolina as well as in much of eastern North America during the colonial period, their valuable pelts ^[4]being an important item of trade in the colonies. The last reported native North Carolina beaver was seen in [Stokes County](#) ^[5] in 1897.

In 1939 the agency that became the [North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission](#) ^[6] released 29 Pennsylvania beavers in the [Coastal Plain](#) ^[7] in what is now the Sandhills Game Land. The beavers thrived, and by 1953 their population, estimated at 1,000 animals, stretched into seven counties. Because their pelts remained valuable, the stocking program was continued between 1951 and 1956, with 54 beavers released in nine other counties. By the early 2000s, beavers—natural engineers that take down trees to create dams and shallow ponds—had become so successful that regulated trapping was necessary in some regions to diminish timber damage and flooding in populated or agricultural areas. Although sometimes causing damage, beaver ponds also provide ideal habitats for creatures such as kingfishers, [muskrats](#) ^[8], and [wood ducks](#) ^[9]. In fact, North Carolina's native wood duck population and harvests have increased concurrent with the rise in the beaver population.

Additional Resources:

"Beaver." North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission.
<https://www.ncwildlife.org/Learning/Species/Mammals/Beaver.aspx> ^[3]

McGrath, Chris; Olfenbittel, Colleen; and Sumner, Perry. "North Carolina Wildlife Profiles: Beaver." Raleigh, N.C.
<https://www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Learning/documents/Beaver.pdf> ^[10]

Megalos, Mark A.; Jones, Edwin J. and Turner, J. Chris. "Working with wildlife #23: Managing Beaver Ponds." North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service. 199?. <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/working-with-wildlife-1994-no.-23/2421756> ^[11] (accessed September 25, 2012).

Woodward, David K.; Hazel, Robert B. and Gaffney, Brian P." Economic and Environmental Impacts of Beavers in North Carolina." Second Eastern Wildlife Damage Control Conference, 1985. Paper 50.
<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/ewdcc2/50> ^[12]

Bromley, P. and others. *Beavers*. Wildlife Damage Management, N.C.Cooperative Extension Service. AG 472-4, Oct. 1994.

Image Credits:

Maslowski, Steve. "beaver.jpg." Image from the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission.
<https://www.ncwildlife.org/Learning/Species/Mammals/Beaver.aspx> ^[3]

Subjects:

[Wildlife](#) ^[13]

Authors:

[Hegyi, Laura](#) ^[14]

From:

Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press.^[15]

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Links

[1] <https://www.ncpedia.org/beavers> [2] <https://www.ncpedia.org/beaver-nc-wins> [3] <https://www.ncwildlife.org/Learning/Species/Mammals/Beaver.aspx> [4] <https://www.ncpedia.org/fur-and-skin-trade> [5] <https://www.ncpedia.org/geography/stokes> [6] <https://www.ncwildlife.org/> [7] <https://www.ncpedia.org/geography/region/coastal-plain> [8] <https://www.ncpedia.org/muskrat-nc-wins> [9] <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/north-carolina-wood-ducks-natural-history-and-management/3280754> [10] <https://www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Learning/documents/Beaver.pdf> [11] <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/working-with-wildlife-1994-no.-23/2421756> [12] <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/ewdcc2/50> [13] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/wildlife> [14] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/authors/hegyi-laura> [15] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/encyclopedia->