



THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE
PROTECTION
of Fur-Bearing Animals

215 – 3989 Henning Drive,
Burnaby, BC, Canada V5C 6P8

Telephone: 604-435-1850
Fax: 604-435-1840

fd@furbearerdefenders.com
furbearerdefenders.com

Municipal Beaver Trapping FAQ

Aren't beavers just pests that destroy urban environments?

On occasion, beaver activity can cause flooding, but the benefits of beaver activity outweigh the costs. Over half of North American species rely on the wetland environments created by beavers. And beavers have proven to control water levels, limiting flash flooding during rainy periods and can keep a constant supply of water during times of drought. Much of the fertile land in North America can be attributed to beavers and their wetlands. Killing beavers has dire consequences for our ecological systems.

Don't beavers eat and destroy lots of trees?

Beavers are very predictable in their diets and some simple management practices will ensure trees are left alone. Once a colony is established, beavers have very little use for falling large trees. The colony sustains itself on the new growth of saplings, as well as other aquatic plants. Beavers keep a symbiotic relationship with their surroundings to ensure there is always going to be substantial food sources for the future. If you are still concerned about beaver damage, there are also some inexpensive and easy ways to protect your trees such as tree wrapping and fencing.

Isn't trapping an effective way to remove problem beavers because it's cheap and easy?

Trapping is not a cheap and easy alternative. Municipalities are often spending thousands of dollars every year to pay for trapping services. Furthermore, trapping is only a temporary fix because when beavers are removed from an area, it simply opens up prime habitat that only attracts more beavers. Trapping is not a permanent solution to controlling beavers.

Can you solve beaver problems without having to kill them?

Yes. A long-term approach to solving beaver conflicts involves the installation of non-lethal alternatives such as the Beaver Deceivers® or pond levellers. These devices help regulate the flow of water and do not harm the animals. They can be constructed for just a few hundred dollars and require little maintenance. If properly installed, Beaver Deceivers® can last for over a decade. In addition to these devices, you may also want to restrict nearby habitat and food sources by wrapping trees and erecting fences.

If these alternatives indeed work, why doesn't the municipal governments use them?

In many cases, municipal governments simply are not aware of the alternatives. Wildlife conflicts that involve a municipal resource get passed to the department that oversees the resource, and doesn't necessarily have any experience with wildlife. This is why often times trappers are simply hired to "get rid of" the beavers.

What about coyotes? Raccoons? Are we supposed to accommodate all these pest animals that damage our property and injure our pets, too?

There are humane solutions to most, if not all, wildlife conflicts. There is a place for every human and animal to coexist, and trapping and killing animals is not, and should not, be the knee jerk response of every problem that arises.

What about trapping and relocating the beavers? Will that solve the problem?

Live trapping and relocating beavers is a better solution for the beavers than trapping and killing them, but only if the beavers are relocated wisely, into an area that does not already contain beavers. Care must be taken to not remove parent beavers that may have young kits in the dam, and the family unit should not be split up. This is also true of trapping and killing adult beavers, as it may leave kits orphaned. Live trapping and relocating should only take place when the above conditions are met and if the land owner is willing to make habitat available to more beavers. A wildlife specialist should only perform live trapping.

Note: Always check your local, provincial and federal wildlife regulations for your area, as sometimes beaver relocation is not permitted.

Don't beavers carry diseases?

All animals, including humans, have the potential to be vectors for parasites, disease and bacteria. Beavers are no different, but because they are semi-aquatic animals and live in water, they are sometimes tagged as being responsible for outbreaks of "beaver fever" or giardiasis, which is frequently found in stagnant water. Any warm blooded animal, including humans, are capable of being a host for this disease.

Are beavers dangerous?

Beavers are non-aggressive, except to other beavers who enter their territory, or to predators who threaten their young. Beavers are passive, peaceful animals who are shy of people and do not pose a threat to other animals. They don't even bother fish, as they are vegetarians. Beavers raise families of 4-6 young in the spring and form strong family bonds, and are monogamous. Last year's kits may stay for one or two more years with the family, helping to raise the newest youngsters before setting off to establish a family of their own.

Can you deter beavers by just removing their dams?

Beavers are driven to build dams by an instinctive response to running water, so when their dams are destroyed, they will quickly rebuild – they can't help themselves! Additionally, tearing down a dam can affect the ecology in the immediate region, as well as having far reaching implications on the habitat and the animals that depend on it. In an effort to live harmoniously with beavers, several companies have invented devices that give beavers the illusion of having dammed an area successfully, but actually allow water to flow through the area, called pond levellers. There are also 'Beaver Deceivers®' which are simple wire cages that prevent beaver from blocking culverts and flow through pipes that could potentially cause flooding.

How do I know if my municipality is trapping beavers?

The best way to find out if your municipality is trapping beavers is to contact City Council or your City Councillor.

How can I stop the local trapping of beavers?

There are many ways you can help stop the trapping and killing of local wildlife. Ask your City Councillor to pass or amend City bylaws to give local wildlife more protection (ie. encourage the Engineering Departments to implement non-lethal alternatives such as a Beaver Deceiver® as the very first measure to dealing with beaver conflicts.) Write your Member of Parliament to express your views on cruel trapping. Contact The Association for the Protection of Fur-Bearing Animals for more information about non-lethal alternatives to trapping and get involved with our campaigns and programs. Visit furbearerdefenders.com.