



Beaver

Castor canadensis

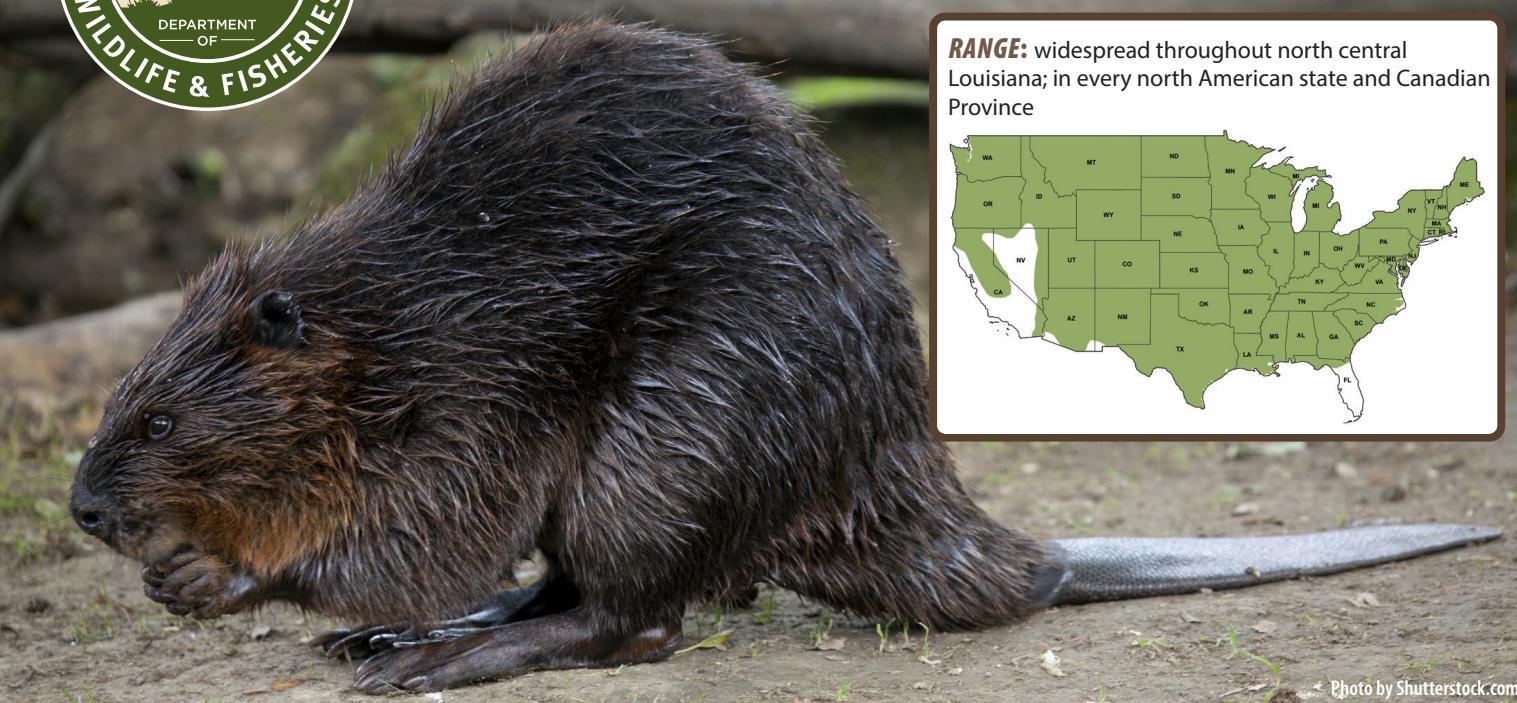


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RANGE: widespread throughout north central Louisiana; in every north American state and Canadian Province



Anatomy

Beavers are humped back, with a wide, flat tail (11-15 inches long, 6 inches wide). The average adult weight is 33 pounds, 35-45 inches, 20 teeth, webbed feet. They have castor glands on the abdomen, which produce oil that the beaver rubs into its fur to waterproof it. Their ears and nose have valves which close when submerged. They have only a single lower body opening called cloaca (similar to birds and reptiles). Beavers are prey to wolves, bobcats, bears, coyotes; young are prey to eagle and owls as well. Beavers host an internal parasite, giardiasis, which can affect our drinking water. Beavers are North America's largest rodent.

Diet, Habitat & Behavior

Beavers build dams, constructing conical shaped lodges with sticks and mud above waterline. They alter the habitat a great deal; dams result in flooding of lowlands, which provides a better habitat for muskrats, many fish, and waterfowl; mink and otter hunt regularly around beaver dams. Dams cause property damage to crops and roads. Beavers are strictly vegetarian, consuming cambium layer of many woody plants, such as sweetgum, yellow poplar and willow. They mark their territory with castor oil and mounds of mud and debris. Beavers are very territorial. They can hold breath for 12-15 minutes and travel miles underwater.

Reproduction

Beavers are sexually mature at 2 years old. They breed in winter or early spring. Gestation is 115-120 days and the average litter is three. Their young stay with the parents for two years



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