

Name: _____

The Busy Beaver

By Guy Belleranti

Imagine you're walking along a beautiful stream. You happen to spot a large pile of sticks, logs, mud, and stones right in the water. Chances are you're in beaver territory, and you're looking at either a beaver dam or beaver lodge.

What's the difference between a beaver dam and a beaver lodge?

Beavers build dams on rivers and streams to stop moving water. The dam creates a large pond of still water behind it. In these ponds, beavers build homes called lodges. When the water current is too strong or the water is too deep, beavers can't build a dam. When this happens, they will build their lodge on the edge of the river or stream.

Why do beavers live in lodges?

Lodges provide beavers with shelter from hot or cold weather and a safe place to hide from predators such as wolves, bobcats, cougars, and coyotes.

Lodges also give beavers a place to store food for the winter.



How do beavers get the sticks and logs for these structures?

They use their strong front incisor teeth to cut down trees and chop them into small pieces. They use their mouths and feet to drag the sticks into position.

How do beavers go in and out of their lodges? Do they have doors?

No, beaver lodges do not have doors. Entrances to lodges are always through hidden underwater openings. The beaver must dive underwater to find the entrance. Beavers design their lodges this way so predators can't find their way in.

Are there rooms inside of a beaver lodge?

Most beaver lodges have two rooms, called dens. One den is for drying off when a beaver exits the water. The other den is where the beavers spend most of their time.

What kinds of foods do beavers eat?

They are herbivores, which means they eat only plants. They love to munch on woody plants like trees and shrubs, and aquatic plants like lily pads, sedges, and cattails.

Do beavers live alone?

Each beaver lodge usually houses a father, a mother, and young beavers. Newborns are called kits. When they're just over a year old, they're called yearlings. Together this beaver family group is called a colony.

Where do beavers live?

Beavers live across most of North America. They can also be found in Europe and Asia.

How big are beavers?

Except for the South American capybara, the beaver is the largest rodent in the world. They can grow over three feet long, not including the tail, and weigh over 60 pounds.

In what ways is a beaver's body adapted to its surroundings?

A beaver's body is built perfectly for the

water. It has large webbed back feet for paddling through water. Its large, flat tail is perfect for steering. It also has a thick, waterproof fur coat.

How long can a beaver stay under water?

Most humans can hold their breath for about a minute. A beaver has specially adapted lungs. It can hold its breath and stay underwater for as long as fifteen minutes.

Where can I learn more about beavers?

There are so many things to learn about beavers. You can find terrific books about beavers in most libraries. The internet has countless beaver articles, pictures, and videos as well.

A beaver's home, called a lodge, is usually built in the middle of a pond.



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1. Why do beavers build dams?

2. List four predators of the beaver that are mentioned in the article.

3. Why are the entrances to beaver lodges underwater?

4. A capybara is...

- a. the largest species of beaver
- b. a rodent that is smaller than a beaver
- c. a rodent that is larger than a beaver
- d. a predator that hunts beavers

5. How long can beavers stay underwater?

- a. about half an hour
- b. about a quarter of an hour
- c. about an eighth of an hour
- d. more than an hour

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The words below are vocabulary words from the article. Some letters are missing. Write the missing letters and then write the full words on the lines. Please be sure each word is spelled correctly.

1. ___ e r ___ i t o ___ ___

clue: area of land controlled by a particular animal

1. _____

2. ___ ___ m

clue: structure built to block flowing water

2. _____

3. ___ i ___ d e ___

clue: not able to be found easily

3. _____

4. ___ o d ___ n ___

clue: mammal with teeth that continually grow

4. _____

5. ___ o ___ ___ ___ y

clue: group of animals that live together

5. _____

6. ___ i ___ ___

clue: baby beavers less than a year old

6. _____

7. ___ ___ ___ r ___ i n ___ s

clue: young beavers that are between one and two years of age

7. _____

ANSWER KEY

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1. Why do beavers build dams?

Beavers build dams to stop flowing water. This creates a large, still pond behind the dam, where beavers build a lodge.

2. List four predators of the beaver that are mentioned in the article.

wolves, bobcats, cougars, coyotes

3. Why are the entrances to beaver lodges underwater?

This prevents predators from getting inside.

4. A capybara is...

- a. the largest species of beaver
- b. a rodent that is smaller than a beaver
- c. a rodent that is larger than a beaver**
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1. t e r r i t o r y

clue: area of land controlled by a particular animal

1. territory

2. d a m

clue: structure built to block flowing water

2. dam

3. h i d d e n

clue: not able to be found easily

3. hidden

4. r o d e n t

clue: mammal with teeth that continually grow

4. rodent

5. c o l o n y

clue: group of animals that live together

5. colony

6. k i t s

clue: baby beavers less than a year old

6. kits

7. y e a r l i n g s

clue: young beavers that are between one and two years of age

7. yearlings