

Beavers in Maine



Beavers are abundant in Maine and their dams can be beneficial to other wildlife and ecosystems. Beavers are Maine's largest rodent, with an adults weighing up to 60 lbs. Beavers breed in February and give birth to an average of 4 "kits" in late May. Young normally remain with the parents until the second year when they move out to establish new colonies. Their diet consists of tree bark with aspen being the preferred food. Dams are constructed of sticks, rocks and mud and can become large, complex structures. When beavers construct dams in culverts and streams near roads

and other infrastructure, conflicts can arise. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IFW) estimated in 1985 that the statewide beaver population is between 45,000 and 70,000 animals.

Legal status

Beavers are considered a furbearer by IFW and a trapping season is in place throughout the state. Trapping season varies by region with some seasons lasting nearly 6 months. According to Maine Revised Statute §12404.2, *"A person may not take or kill beaver under sections 12401 and 12402. The commissioner may cause agents of the department to take nuisance beaver at any time."* Beavers causing damage to roads or other infrastructure may not be removed unless by an agent of the IFW Commissioner.

Management options

Several options exist to manage beaver conflicts with municipal infrastructure, including roads, bridges and water treatment facilities. Municipalities experiencing beaver damage should first contact an IFW Regional Office or Game Warden to learn about specific options in their area. Additionally, IFW maintains a list of Animal Damage Control (ADC) agents, which are private citizens authorized by IFW to trap beavers outside the recreational trapping season.

(<https://www.maine.gov/ifw/about/contact/index.html>). The US Department of Agriculture, Wildlife Services program also conducts beaver management for municipalities throughout the state ([map](#) and/or 207-629-5181). ADC agents and the USDA may charge for their services. In certain situations installing a device to control water levels may allow beavers to remain at the site while also preventing damage to the road. Water control structures must be maintained and repaired as necessary to ensure they remain functional. In other

situations, trapping and relocating or lethal removal of beavers may be the best option to prevent damage. In all cases, a biologist or warden should be consulted to determine the best solutions.