

Why Few People Acknowledge the Endangerment of Beavers

The iconic national emblem of Canada, the beaver, is in distress. Many people might think that the risk of their endangerment ended at the beginning of the 20th century, but beavers are still at risk of endangerment due to the deterioration of their habitat, and the pollution that makes their environment uninhabitable.



Beavers prove to be one of the most hard-working rodents in North America (Credit: Shutterstock/Ronnie Howard).

The History of their Endangerment

According to the Canadian government, in the late 1800s, due to the fur trade, the fur trapping, and the extermination of beavers, they nearly went extinct. Also, in the early 20th century, Canadian beavers started becoming endangered due to the increase in hats that were derived from their fur. And the irony is, the fur trade of the beavers was a significant reason why Canada chose beavers as their official emblem. This makes Canadians realize that we have a long history of endangering beavers, so why are we following in our past footsteps? The

answer to this would be that few people acknowledge the risk of endangerment of beavers, they simply think that just because there are currently 6 million beavers in Canada, none of them are suffering.

The Importance of their habitat

The habitat of beavers has both been perceived as an annoyance and a key element of ecosystems. The annoyance is simply conceived from the floods that are created from their dams and the chopped down trees. However, the creation of dams is not to terrorize humans with the fear of a flood, they are built to provide a safe habitat for beavers and to surround themselves with a very steady body of water. In fact, given all the hard work beavers commit to, they are easily one of the most significant natural engineers of North America. Many species rely on beavers to build dams to suit their personal needs, like the trout and the salmon populations that rely on beavers to arrange sediments and to control the natural water flow. These species of fish are then relied on by carnivores and omnivores for their nutrition. Overall, if it were not for dams that the beavers create, there would be a rapid decline in numerous species.

Moreover, beavers do not increase the rate of floods, they do the opposite. In fact, the creation of a beaver pond lets water be well absorbed by the soil, which decreases the possibility of any potential drought or flood from occurring. In addition, when beavers slow the body of water in a pond, which creates a wetland, this proves to be an ideal reproduction site for amphibians like frogs, toads, newts, etc. Finally, it is estimated that 85% of all the north American fauna are dependent on these wetlands.



The result of the loss of beavers, it has caused numerous streams to erode (Credit: The Beaver Believers/ Sarah Koenigsberg).

The Effects of Pollution

In 2020, humanity has accounted for more than 1.5 trillion tons of carbon dioxide into our planet's atmosphere, Canada is also the 10th biggest contributor to carbon emissions, holding about 2% of the earth's carbon emissions. This increase in carbon dioxide emissions fastens the process of climate change which then decreases the distribution of fish species in ponds by contaminating the water. Nevertheless, the ponds that beavers create filter out pollution and reduce erosion. So, the creations of beavers help strain the contamination that we inadvertently blame them for.



Beavers struggle to live in contaminated rivers, which is the result of pollution (Credit: Devon Wildlife Trust/Michael Symes).

What we can do to help

If you live near the habitat of beavers, the action of simply stopping the utilization of pesticides and runoffs that occurs into wetland could tremendously help beavers. Beavers give so much to our ecosystems, they help reduce the possibility of floods, they arrange sediments and regulate water flow for fish, and they create ideal reproduction sites for amphibians. As humans, we have benefited a lot from the mere existence of beavers, so why haven't we given them a source of benefit? We need to perceive beavers less as pests and more as

a key component in our ecosystems. Every one of us should consider using different sources of energy instead of those who release carbon emissions to reduce the pollution in their habitat. Like going to the store on a bike, using the home heater less frequently, considering buying solar panels, and many more.

Sources:

(n.d.). Retrieved June 29, 2020, from <https://www.hww.ca/en/issues-and-topics/species-at-risk-in-canada.html>

The beaver: A 'toothy tyrant' but a Canadian symbol | CBC News. (2016, July 31). Retrieved June 29, 2020, from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/beaver-canada-symbols-1.3658037>

Beaver. (n.d.). Retrieved June 29, 2020, from <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/beaver>

Corona, L. (2017, August 11). Importance of Beavers in an Ecosystem. Retrieved June 29, 2020, from <https://animals.mom.me/importance-beavers-ecosystem-5777.html>

Dam fine engineers. Why beavers matter | CBC News. (2017, May 18). Retrieved June 29, 2020, from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/why-beavers-matter-1.4121550>

Silverman, J. (2008, July 07). Why do beavers build dams? Retrieved June 29, 2020, from <https://animals.howstuffworks.com/mammals/beaver-dam1.htm>

Publishing, C. (2018, August 24). Beavers Can Mitigate Climate Change. Retrieved June 29, 2020, from <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/2018/08/beavers-climate-change-conservation-news/>

Ritchie, H., & Roser, M. (2017, May 11). CO₂ and Greenhouse Gas Emissions. Retrieved June 29, 2020, from <https://ourworldindata.org/co2-and-other-greenhouse-gas-emissions>

