

BEAVER

Lifespan: 10 to 15 years in the wild (up to 25 years in captivity)

Weight: 11 to 30 kilograms (males and females are similar in size, with weights increasing in northern regions)

Body Measures: Head-to-body length 80 to 100 centimeters, tail length 25 to 50 centimeters

TAXONOMY & ANATOMY

Belonging to the family Castoridae, this massive semi-aquatic rodent possesses a robust body equipped with a distinctive, horizontally flattened, scaly tail used as a rudder and fat storage. Recent 2026 genetic monitoring studies across European river basins show distinct sub-population variations highlighting their high evolutionary resilience. It features webbed hind feet, dense waterproof fur, and continuously growing, orange, iron-rich incisors specialized for felling trees.

HABITAT

This highly industrious species strictly requires freshwater environments bordered by woodland, including rivers, streams, lakes, and extensive wetlands. They actively modify their surroundings by constructing complex dams from branches, mud, and stones to raise water levels. Recent 2025 climate-adaptation tracking proves these beaver-engineered pools act as critical ecological buffers against severe summer droughts and wildfires.

DIET

As a strict herbivore, its dynamic diet shifts according to seasonal availability and consists entirely of plant matter. During spring and summer, it feeds on aquatic plants, grasses, ferns, and fresh leaves. In autumn and winter, it switches to woody material, consuming the bark, cambium, and twigs of deciduous trees like willows, aspens, and poplars.



INTRODUCTION

Masterfully re-engineering entire freshwater landscapes with relentless determination and brilliant architectural skills, the Eurasian beaver stands as an indispensable keystone species whose profound ability to restore complex wetland ecosystems creates vital sanctuaries for global biodiversity.





ETHOLOGY AND TEMPERAMENT

Operating as highly social and territorial animals, these nocturnal rodents live in stable, tight-knit family groups typically consisting of a monogamous breeding pair, the young of the current year, and the subadult offspring from the previous year. The entire family cooperates to maintain their territory, build dams, and excavate safe lodges with underwater entrances that offer maximum protection from terrestrial predators. They communicate through a sophisticated system of vocalizations, physical postures, and chemical signaling, frequently using specialized scent glands to mark territorial mud mounds. Furthermore, they display a famous alarm response by forcefully slapping their broad, flat tails against the water surface, creating a loud cracking sound that warns the entire family to dive for cover.

FUN FACT

Beaver dams transform ordinary riverbeds into massive, highly efficient carbon sinks. The trapped underwater sediments lock away up to fourteen times more carbon than surrounding forest soils, making this rodent a powerful ally against global emissions.

BREEDING SEASON

The dedicated mating window takes place once a year during the freezing winter months, specifically between January and February, when pairs mate in the water or inside the warmth of their insulated winter lodge. The species exhibits a gestation period of roughly one hundred days, leading to the birth of one to four fully furred, open-eyed kits around May or June. These precocial young are capable of swimming within hours of birth but remain safely inside the dry lodge for several weeks, completely dependent on their mother's rich milk and parental protection. Both parents and older siblings actively participate in bringing fresh vegetation to the kits, nurturing them for up to two full years until they achieve sexual maturity and disperse to establish their own territories.

