

The BEAVER DEFENDERS



*Long-time Refuge Supporter, August Sexauer,
back for yet another patrol season;
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, AUGIE!*

January 2006

They shall never be trapped anymore.

The BEAVER DEFENDERS



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January 2006

HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM UNEXPECTED!

by Sarah Summerville

It is amazing how quickly this year has passed. You know the old saying that time flies when you are having fun? Well, we had a ball! I cannot think of anything more enjoyable than growing the Refuge, saving habitat and protecting our animal friends. We met a lot of new faces (both smooth and furry) this year, spent time with old friends, and we said goodbye to some wonderful people, whom we shall never forget.

Unexpected tabled several events this fall, including the Pinelands Celebration at Whitesbog, NJ, and talked about how to live with beavers humanely. We gave our Unexpected slide show to the Bayshore Discovery Project in Bivalve, NJ, hosted Boy Scout Troop 65 for their 6th year of trail work and bench building, and were visited by many other organizations including the Vineland Nature Club, the Cub Scouts and friends and families from near and far.

In October, we had eight days of badly needed rain, and the pond filled up to a near-normal level. The two remaining beavers who stayed in Miller Pond are now safe and sound in their cozy winterized lodge.

Hunting season has been very quiet, thankfully. It may seem to some people that it is not necessary to patrol now because it *is* so quiet, but that is *why* it is quiet. The hunting community around these here parts know we care. We are out there, walking, watching and waiting. Thank you, all of you, who were able to help this year.

THANK YOU

Roger Donald Paul Tom Lois Brian Sharon Gareth Heidi
Daniel Lorene Tom Joy Erin Larry Anna David Frank Al
Fred Lynn Amber Freya Melissa Dan Kenny Mary Ann
Augie Oren Bobbie Dave Chuck Lori Gail Bill Spike
J.W. Nermin and Davie the Cat

Many years ago, deer hunting season lasted six days in December. During that time people would come to help Cavit and Hope, our founders, patrol the Refuge. The hunters were belligerent, and there were many

contentious arguments, some quite heated, with verbal threats and shots fired. The local hunters felt the Refuge had purchased their rightful hunting grounds, even though the previous owner had no idea, or interest in, what was happening on her lands.

Years after the Refuge was established and the borders constantly protected, many of these trouble-making hunters retired or passed away, and their children were never allowed to hunt here. Also, during that time,

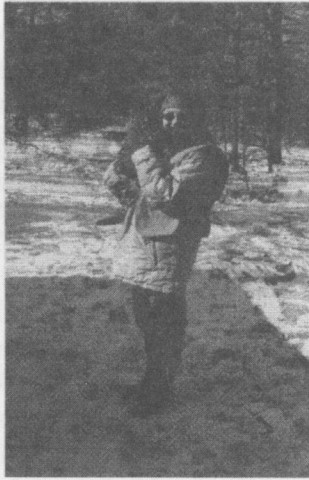


Freya, Fred, Amber and Lynn at Station 6

deer hunting season was expanded from six days to five months; from the beginning of September until the end of January, with the traditional "six day shotgun season" still falling on the first week of December. So now we patrol during the entire season. "Six day" is when hot food is provided, along with fruit, cookies, tea and goodies brought by fellow patrollers.

A typical patrol day will have us up and out ½ hour before sunrise, parking the Refuge pickup truck at Station Six. Here, at the intersection of two sand roads on the northerly side of the Refuge, there is a commanding

view of our property lines. While the truck is occupied by a stationary patroller, other people don the stylish blaze orange attire we provide and begin to walk the perimeter trails. Some may find a nice strategic spot to sit quietly and observe and listen; others like to get the blood pumping and get a good hike going.



Mary Ann - ready to hike

On brisk, cold mornings, the rising winter sun illuminates every little blade of grass, leaf and pebble, all coated with soft, silvery frost. Your breath is white smoke, and the cold air bites your lungs and a fast walk around the sanctuary is just the thing to wake you up. At a fast pace, it can take about 1 ½ hours to circle the entire Refuge, including the new land. Hiking like this will not give you much opportunity to see the wildlife, though. Startled flocks of scratching turkeys burst up out of the laurel, beating the air and pine trees with their frantic wing flapping, and deer bound off gracefully over the blueberry bushes.

Over the years it seems the deer have learned which way to run; usually into the Refuge. This is why we walk on the perimeter trails, and not the inner trails where we might spook them onto unprotected lands next door.

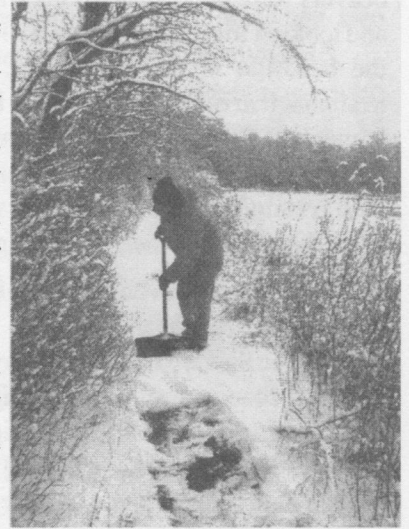
When deer are frightened by a noise or smell, they will stand still to determine from where the threat is coming. They have a keen sense of smell and hearing, and can see the slightest movement. Like beavers, they have a built-in alarm system, only instead of the loud crack of the beaver tail, they throw up a silent "flag". The long white hairs on the underside of the tail puff up, and they throw the tail up; a signal for everyone to run. This bright bouncing white tail can be 12" long, and also serves as a beacon for frightened little fawns to follow through the forest.

Deer are not migratory and typically do not stray far from their home territory. An adult deer requires about ten pounds of food a day, and their stomachs have four chambers like the stomach of a cow. They will eat their fill and then curl up somewhere safe and "chew the cud". They enjoy eating branches of budding maple, white cedar, willow, sassafras, oak and blueberry plants. They also enjoy water lilies, sweet fern and fruit, like apples and berries. In the winter, they browse on these small

branches, eat acorns, and other nuts, and old field crops.

During November and December, the deer are mating, and the bucks are pursuing the does through the fields and forest. As if things aren't stressful enough for them, they are being hunted and shot at, too!

After the first day of "six-day", we got about three inches of snow, and the Refuge was covered with a silent, soft white blanket. Normally, I am thrilled when it snows; being the first to walk through this little bit of heaven after it snows is a magical experience. Unfortunately, after you have tread the many snow-covered 8" wide planks a few times, you are left with long treacherous concrete boardwalks covered with 1 ½" of hard packed snow and ice. This potential hazard was quickly eliminated when Al Federici showed up for dawn patrol on Tuesday - with his snow shovel. First one out, he cleaned all the planks off, and by noon they were safe and dry.



On an afternoon patrol that took me along Unexpected Road and Miller Pond, I came across a large dual-axle County truck parked next to the water. As I approached, I recognized a fellow who enjoys spending his lunch hour watching the activity on Miller Pond. We exchanged greetings, and I asked him what he had seen there so far.

Only 4 miles to go, Al

With sandwich in one hand and binoculars in the other, he listed his latest observations with enthusiasm. Today, six otters, two osprey and an immature bald eagle. Not a bad lunch. But he went on, expanding his list to include, over the seasons, double crested cormorants, kingfishers, hooded mergansers, blue egrets, herons, ring neck ducks, wood ducks, water snakes, snapping turtles and tons of tree swallows. And most recently, a beaver, on a rare daytime appearance.

He expressed to me the same feeling that I have about this sanctuary: what a wonderful, magical and special place - thanks to the foresight and hard work of our Founders, Hope and Cavit Buyukmihci.

Dear Hope, Dear John,

I can proudly tell you that my letter to the publisher of *Templin Post* was printed yesterday. It was my reply to another letter of a former inhabitant of Beutel, the village where I found accommodation during my trip to the beaver works last week. The letter of Mr. Argow called the beavers a nuisance and of no advantage at all for the village. It was a hunter, Mr. Kindermann, who showed me this letter after he had started reading Hopes book *Lily Pond*. This means that he had started changing his mind just by getting information about the beavers life and soul. And it was your success!

My reply has now been printed. I argued that the beavers were the reason for my trip to Beutel, coming from far and looking for accommodation. Beavers attracting tourism was the headline in the newspaper. And I argued against the irrational fear of being overrun by beavers, for they are building homes and do not accept non-members of their family to settle down within a range of a mile along the riverbank or lakeshore. And I reminded them of the mesh wire for protecting fruit trees in the backyard of their lots along Little Beutel Lake.

Yesterday evening I rang up Mrs. Schultheis of Marjoss in Spessart forest. She is the leading beaver defender in that area which is nearest to Frankfurt. She had received my photo-mailer with lots of pictures from *Lily Pond* illustrating our common adventure helping the beavers repairing their broken dam. She was very pleased.

Now she is interested in reading *Lily Pond* in German in order to get the story about the beavers of *Lily Pond* at its whole. In April, when I first mentioned your famous book, she wasn't really interested. Another change of minds as a result of your guidance and help to me and to the beavers. So I've ordered four copies of your book, one for Mrs. Schultheis.

Mrs. Schultheis has told me, that there are enough beaver defenders living near where beavers have started building their dams and logdes in Spessart forest. So I will have to see what else I could do for the beavers over there. Perhaps some support or promotion for the beavers. At the time there are not many complaints about beavers alongside the small rivers and villages in Spessart forest, as far as I understood her. We'll see.

You can image how much I am yearning for my next trip to New York state and especially to Harriman State Park! It's really a beavers paradise. Bye for now, Alex

(This letter was sent to Hope Ryden, author of *Lily Pond*, *Four Years with a Family of Beavers*, and her husband John, by Alex Hiller, a social worker, beaver lover and tireless Beaver Defender. Alex lives near Frankfort, Germany)

The Price of the Crime

We read it in the newspapers, we hear it on the radio every day, every hour, that hundreds of thousands, nay, millions of chickens, geese, ducks and turkeys are being pitilessly exterminated all over the world. We see them on television running for life, desperately flapping their wings, we hear their cries of terror as they are brutally grasped by men in masks and overalls, piled on top of each other in containers and either gassed or burned alive or thrown into pits and buried alive. And we accept it. There is no outcry, no protest, no scream of indignation. Even the World Federation for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) is keeping quiet. Nobody dares to accuse the administrations who are responsible for this and raise their voices to say out loud that this is not a way to treat sensitive, living beings, and that this is a crime and a heavy collective guilt for which we unfailingly will have to pay.

The price may be the loss of our migratory birds, along with the devastating and unimaginable consequences for the environment and for our own survival.

Migratory birds with their potential to spread avian flue have suddenly become the mortal enemies of man. "Killerenten"

– killer ducks – is the name given by a popular Swiss newspaper to the innocent wild ducks and geese that are flying into our lands at this time, day after day, to pass the winter on our lakes. And in certain eastern European countries we can already see hoards of humans roaming about destroying birds nests in panic-stricken fear of some hypothetical virus.

In blind and furious determination they are demolishing and burning down nesting areas and barricading all openings to cow sheds with netting and meshing to stop swallows from building their nests under the roofs and beams – a clear death sentence for that already heavily threatened species of birds.

What in heaven's name has yet to happen before we recognise in our unrestrained consumption of meat and our abject and highly dangerous methods of factory farming the very source of our misery? How much more hardship, suffering and catastrophes still need to occur before we understand that the vile and stupid maxim of "mankind before all else" is leading us to ruin?

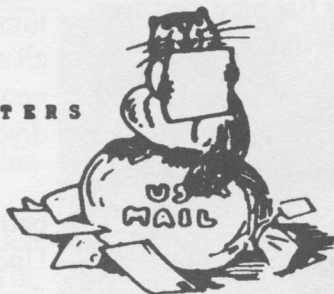
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(from ECOTERRA.int, October 2005)

LETTERS



Houdini the Beaver Baited, Saved

By Edward Munger, Jr, The Daily Gazette, Schenectady, NY, December 15, 2005

A loose-knit team of animal experts and state Canal Corp. workers spent three frigid evenings this week at Lock 11 before rescuing "Houdini". The 32-pound beaver was discovered about 30 feet down in the lock chamber after it was drained last week, said Tim Delaney, a lock operator.

The emaciated beaver was likely stuck there for six days, rescuers said. Adult beavers are typically 45 to 50 pounds, rescuers said, and vegetarian by nature. This one was ravenous enough to eat fish also stranded in the lock.

The rescue squad formed after Delaney contacted Carolee Start, a rehabber who then called Sally Star Jorgensen, a member of Beavers: Wetlands & Wildlife. Jorgensen contacted biologist and wildlife rehabilitator

Sharon Brown and her husband, Owen J. Brown, leaders of the Dolgeville-based non-profit organization.

Delaney said he, fellow lock operator Billy Donnally and Jorgensen joined the Browns on Sunday night, hoping to capture the beaver with a fishing net. "I did have him in a net, but he was just too heavy and too cold and I didn't want to hurt him," Delaney said.

On Monday, the Browns returned with a "Hancock" trap. Owen Brown said he and his wife baited the trap with poplar twigs, apples and a beaver scent. He said that in the past it has taken about an hour to trap a beaver, but this animal was elusive.

"He walked over to the trap, went right in to about six inches from the plat that sets it off... and decided it wasn't for him and walked away." Brown said. After the second night, the group named the beaver "Houdini".

As temperatures dropped further into single digits on Tuesday - the third night - a change in bait by the rescue squad proved successful, Brown said. "Last night we put a pear in it, and all beavers love pears for some reason," he said.

The group decided to set the trap and go to a nearby eatery, returning about 8:30 PM to find their quarry.

Sharon Brown said she and Jorgensen spent roughly four hours the previous two nights shining flashlights down on the beaver while the others tried to trap it.

"We all got pretty cold," said Sharon Brown, who noted the non-profit group's work focuses on consultation and education. She said they initially intended to release the creature the evening it was caught, but the beaver had a tail injury and appeared weak. "It seemed too dangerous to release him on such a cold night," Sharon Brown said.

The Browns are caring for the beaver, which will likely be released in the wild once it has regained its strength. The Browns have raised several orphaned beavers on their 300 acre property that now has two beaver colonies on two wetlands, Owen Brown said.

Tim Delaney, who generally operates Lock 15 farther west, said he was on "pump detail" at the Amsterdam lock when he and Donnally noticed the beaver.

"This is the second time I've seen it happen," said Delaney, who said he sees beavers in the lock all summer

when it's full of water. "It's kind of a common sight in the spring," Delaney said.

Delaney said he had worked at the Beaversprite Sanctuary in Dolgeville for about a year before gaining the Canal Corp. job and became familiar with New York state's official mammal. "Part of my job was to care for the beavers, and I certainly learned a lot about them," Delaney said. He has become the unofficial go-to guy when these incidents periodically occur along the Mohawk Valley segment of the canal.

(Beavers: Wetlands & Wildlife is an all volunteer, non-profit organization created to carry on the educational work of the "Beaver Woman", Dorothy Richards.

BW&W, 146 Van Dyke Road, Dolgeville, NY 13329

(518) 568-2077

www.beaversww.org

Sharon Brown, BW&W biologist, has compiled a 6 page list of Selected Literature about Beavers. If you would like a copy of this comprehensive list, please send BW&W a stamped, self-addressed envelope to the above address.

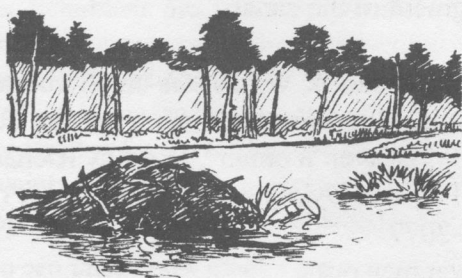


Wetlands and Flood Control

Wetlands Institute, Winter 05-06, Vol.34, No. 1

Before the European colonization of North America there were about 45 million acres of wetlands in the Mississippi River watershed, approximately ten percent of the total area. There are now approximately 19 million acres of wetlands remaining in the watershed. Farmers have systematically drained the region's wetlands and put farms and towns in the fertile floodplains. The extensive drainage system that was put in place moves water out of the fields and into the rivers much faster than before. Water that would have taken weeks to months to move downstream now reaches the rivers in a matter of hours. As a result, levees needed to be built to hold the higher peak flows of water in the river channels. The Army Corps of Engineers now maintains a vast network of levees, dikes, pumping stations and channel dredging operations to try to keep the water out of the natural floodplains in the Mississippi watershed. Since 1960, the Corps has spent at least \$30 billion on flood control efforts. In spite of these efforts, flood damages have steadily increased and are now estimated to cost \$3.5 billion each year.

Wetlands serve in several ways to reduce flooding and improve water quality. Wetlands hold water back from the streams and rivers thus reducing the water's energy and ability to erode soil; wetlands store water so that peak flows are reduced in wet times, and stream flows are maintained during dry times. Wetlands function as natural water purification systems, allowing particles to settle out of the water and allowing microorganisms and plants to use and break down agricultural chemicals.



We have watched them at play in their watery realm,
or working long hours on the shore,
And we've sworn in our hearts one great oath, not in vain:
They shall never be trapped anymore

By Paul Destler

Legislation to end the use of steel-jawed leghold traps on animals in the U.S.

Animal Welfare Institute Fall 2005

On July 26th, 2005, Representative Nita Lowey (D-NY), Representative Chris Shays (R-CT) and 38 of their colleagues reintroduced legislation, H.R. 3442, The Inhumane Trapping Prevention Act, to end the use of conventional steel-jawed leghold traps on animals in the United States.

The non-selective and highly destructive steel jaw leghold trap is the most common type of trap used on the millions of animals killed for their fur each year in the US. Victims suffer excruciating pain and fear as they tear ligaments and break teeth in their struggle to free themselves from the bone crushing trap. The Animal Welfare Institute is campaigning vigorously against the steel trap in this country and abroad.

The World Veterinary Association, the American Veterinary Medical Association, and the American Animal Hospital Association have condemned use of steel jaw leghold traps as inhumane. According to a US Fish and Wildlife Service study conducted at Yale University, 78% of the American public is opposed to use of leghold traps.

The European Union (EU) banned use of the barbaric steel jaw leghold trap so that 88 countries now prohibit their use. Nobly, the EU went a step further; the EU law also prohibits import of furs from countries that use steel jaw traps. On December 11, 1997, in response to this European law, the US Trade Representative reached an "Understanding" with the EU in which the US agreed to end use of "all jaw-type leghold restraining traps" by 2002 on muskrat and nutria and to phase out use of "conventional steel-jawed leghold restraining traps" by 2004. Adoption of HR 1800 would ensure that the US fulfills its commitment to the EU.

Legislation will make it unlawful to:

import, export, or transport in interstate commerce
conventional steel-jawed leghold traps and articles
of fur derived from animals trapped in such traps;
or sell or acquire such a trap transported in violation
of such provision.

The Bill also prescribes criminal penalties for violations.

Please contact your representative and ask them to support this legislation.

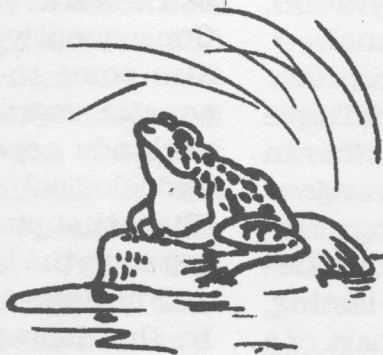
Dissecting Animals Optional in NJ Schools

Dissecting animals in high school will soon be optional in New Jersey.

The state Legislature has passed a bill that requires all state school districts to give alternatives to students who oppose dissection.

Some legislators say dissection is an archaic method of teaching anatomy that doesn't benefit students -- who might oppose it for moral reasons or are just squeamish. Some school districts already allow students to opt out of the dissections.

The bill now must be signed by the governor.



the 16th century.

Dr Simon Pickering of the Cotswold Water Park Society was coordinating today's release. He said: "I hope I live to see the day that beavers are freely roaming across the countryside once again. I really hope that this programme can be successful."

The beavers were vital in wetland areas as they helped to maintain the environment by clearing trees from lake edges, he

added, "Beavers are a key wetland species, they manage the environment brilliantly. At this site they will eat mainly willow trees. They are essentially very lazy animals and will spend much of their time lying about sleeping and eating." "The European beaver is much more gentle than the Canadian beaver and causing damage will not be an issue with them. Unlike their Canadian cousins, they don't tend to build as many dams."

The beavers were released into two purpose-built straw lodges with an access shoot to the lake which will become their home. The animals, which are nocturnal, will quickly leave these lodges and set up permanent homes.

Some 10 beavers were released at the site in Kent by the Kent Wildlife Trust in 2001. But many died and the remaining beavers are now considered too old to breed.

Dr Pickering said the beavers had no natural predators in England and the main problems they would face would be not settling into their environment and struggling if this year's winter was unusually cold.

The beavers cannot be released into the wild until the scheme is deemed a success and the projects can then gain a licence. The Cotswold Water Park is made up of lakes, wetland and woodland, covers 40 square miles and is an important wetland site for animals, plants and birds.

Jeremy Paxton, owner of the Lower Mill Estate, which boast seven lakes and two Sites of Special Scientific Interest, said he was delighted the beavers were being reintroduced on his land. He said: "We now just need to leave them alone and let them get on with a bit of breeding."

"Beavers are an environmental architect and they improve the diversity of the places where they live. "They have been away from England for far too long. They are one of our indigenous species. "It feels very good to have them back."

Beavers back from the brink

Published: 27 October 2005

An animal that has been extinct in England for almost 1,000 years has today been released at a wildlife reserve as part of a reintroduction programme. Six European beavers were released at an enclosed site at the Cotswold's Water Park in Gloucester.

This is the second attempt to reintroduce the species to England after a previous attempt in 2001 in Kent ran into difficulties with the animals failing to breed.

The beavers from Bavaria were kept in quarantine in Devon for six months before their release today. The release is seen as the first step in a programme to reintroduce the European beaver into wetlands across the area.

The beavers' 15-hectare enclosure on the Lower Mill Estate is protected by electric fences and monitored by closed-circuit TV. The beavers will be split into two families of two females and one male and they will be free to roam in a lake and woodland environment.

If the beavers breed successfully, it is hoped their enclosure can be significantly widened to cover a larger area in the estate.

The European beaver was once native to Britain but was hunted almost to extinction in England in the 12th century before eventually dying out in its stronghold in Scotland in

Return to Rockwood

by Skip Lisle, MS Wildlife Conservation,
President, Beaver Deceivers International

Three years ago I worked with Sherri Tippie and Wildlife 2000 on the flow device in Rockwood, Colorado, just north of Durango.

Flow devices are used to protect properties from beaver-related flooding in a long-lasting, non-lethal manner. That project was part of a larger effort to encourage beaver management in the region to be less reactive and lethal, and more economical (long-term solutions) and ecologically sensitive. This included the construction of several other flow devices and presentations by Sherri and myself. The message: a) beaver damage can be controlled non-lethally at the vast majority of conflict sites, and b) live beavers, in ecosystems, offer society a long list of important services. This was, and is, our retort to the very negative, narrow and fear-filled way in which this uniquely valuable species is initially viewed by many citizens, and is often portrayed in management circles.

Chief among the values that beavers offer is the restoration, creation, and maintenance of fantastic habitats for hundreds of species. The wetlands, or flowages, that beavers build support obvious animals like ducks, trout, and aquatic furbearers, but they also embody subtle habitat values that are often overlooked. For example, members of the deer family are more adept at running through shallow water than their shorter-legged, stockier predators. Therefore, as a landscape element, flowages, represent escape habitat, or "chase-breakers". Of course, they also produce food - a wealth of aquatic plants and shrubs like willow that are browse

throughout the year. In the north, animals can walk on water in the winter. Consequently, unlikely creatures like turkeys also come to feed on the seeds and buds of aquatic vegetation and, for a time, become wetlands species themselves. From a hydrological standpoint, wetlands are also filters that purify water, and sponges that hold water on the landscape, recharge groundwater and mitigate the damage of large-scale floods. In the delicate systems of the West, beaver flowages and the vegetation they support, can also reduce or reverse the stream destroying process of erosion and "headwall-cutting".

All the values that beavers produce help to improve the quality of human life. As long as their properties can be protected, most people prefer to live in a beautiful, healthy, productive, wildlife-filled landscape where there is adequate water. Thus, in respect to beavers, and in general, economic development goes hand-in-hand with thoughtful, high quality land, wetland and wildlife management.

Rockwood is no exception to the "live-beaver rule". At the time it was built, the first device eliminated the need to kill or remove the beavers, which has slowly led to the growth of lovely, non-threatening wetlands downstream.



A completed Beaver Deceiver

During the few minutes I observed them they were teeming with migrating birds, being used by racoons, muskrats, and trout and being carefully watched by hawks. Fortunately, there are no vulnerable properties for about a third of a mile downstream from the original flow device ... until you reach the next culvert.

Because beavers are territorial, the small area between the two culverts will never hold more than one family. Moreover, there is no quick way to tell how many beavers were responsible

for the new dams and wetlands; it could be one. At any rate, one thing can be known; if all beavers are removed from a given area, and that is absolutely necessary to protect a culvert by trapping, then beaver dams decay and wetlands drain. Therefore, the trapping represented an immediate threat to the wetlands, and to our earlier investment in the development of that ecosystem. Given that there are other well-known solutions, this was also an affront to what I call the hunter's ethic: never kill needlessly or wastefully, and try to avoid unnecessary suffering. One beaver, left in a trap for several days without food or shelter, bloodied itself badly in its struggles to get free until finally released by a concerned citizen; it was the beginning of a long, holiday weekend, so one wonders how many days would have passed before the trap was finally checked.

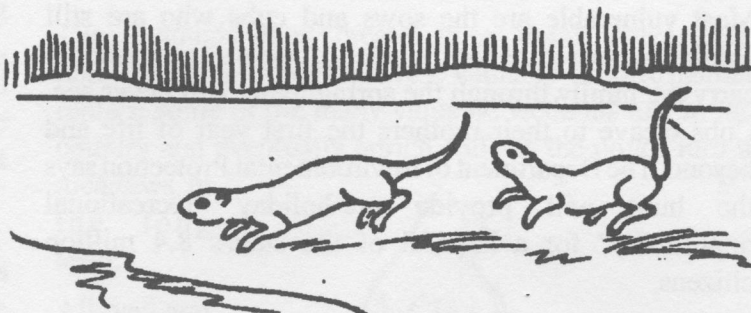
Sherri and I contacted the property manager, Greg Drover, to ask permission to build a flow device; the property owner is The Glacier Club, (TGC). Greg quickly gave his consent and even offered to pay for the work, which I completed over the next couple of days.

Now TGC and the state highway department have an enduring solution to what would otherwise be a chronic problem. For being open-minded and flexible, there is protection for a precious habitat, and respect for the local people who walk the road and enjoy watching wildlife in the flowage. I extend a warm thank you to them.

I hope citizens and government official in all agencies will begin to view this issue differently. We live in a tiny, fragile habitat called Earth. Our ecological balance sheet gets a little weaker each year. If it is allowed, the return of beavers to as many ecosystems as possible represents an enormous, incredibly low-cost opportunity to reverse some of those losses. Properties can be protected non-lethally; in fact it is much more economical than endless cycles of killing.

The Fur Trade (ca.1600-1900), the first great

beaver exploitation event, nearly eliminated this species forever, and devastated the wetland ecology and hydrology of the continent. A few men became rich, but the rest of the citizenry paid an enormous price over hundreds of years in economic losses that we usually don't even recognize (e.g., flood damages and erosion).



Today beavers are in the midst of what may be a two-hundred year recovery process. All too often the gut reaction when they try to re-colonize one of their age-old habitats is to reach for a trap or a gun. However, if we can make an attempt to protect our properties non-lethally, if we can look at the "big picture", and if we can over-come our fears, then this recovery phenomenon represents an enormous opportunity. It can be used to restore the streams and rivers of our continent to their ancient, natural condition, and to make them far more productive, healthy, and stable than they are today. Therefore, we should follow our forebears example and once again exploit beavers with a passion. But this time not for fur, but for furthering our country's and our planet's ecological and economic wealth.

(Reprinted from **Wildlife 2000, 2005 Highlights**. **Wildlife 2000** is a non-profit organization celebrating 20 years of successfully live-trapping, relocating beaver and creating better habitat, naturally! You can contact them at PO Box 6428, Denver CO 80206, Tele. 303-935-4995)

The United States loses about 300,000 acres of freshwater wetlands every year. But beaver-created wetlands are the only form of wetlands that are increasing in North America.

NJ Bear Hunt Based on Unfounded Claims

By Susan Russell, from the Asbury Park Press, 12/6/05

As we humans enjoy the weeks before Christmas, the Dickensian bustle, the magical lights, the warmth of hearth, family and home, hundreds of New Jersey's black bears are enduring eight days of stone-cold terror, violence, pain, separation, wounding and death. Charles Dickens would have appreciated the hypocrisy.

Most vulnerable are the sows and cubs who are still feeding, or searching for the safety of dens so necessary to carry the family through the spring many will never see. Cubs cleave to their mothers the first year of life and beyond. The Department of Environmental Protection says the hunt will provide pre-holiday "recreational opportunity" for a handful of the state's 8.4 million citizens.

Animal advocacy organizations and independent experts have exhaustively challenged baseless claims accepted as fact by most of the press. Chief among these is the equation of population reduction, or the random killing of bears, with protecting human safety, and the unquestioned presumption that the number of complaints, regardless of the genesis or severity, are the foundation upon which hunts should be based.

Separating bears from people is no mystery. As national parks in the United States and projects in Canada have proved, human and bear safety is greatly enhanced by the simple act of properly storing garbage in bear-proof bins and trash containers. Bears are shy and wary of humans. The possibility of hunting accidents far exceeds any danger posed by bears. Trash storage programs, however, must be enforced. Yet under Commissioner Bradley M. Campbell, the Department of Environmental Protection failed miserably to enforce the state feeding ban, issuing only one summons and one warning in 2004.

Facts and public opinion — a stream of opinion polls reflected broad opposition to a hunt, even in bear country — haven't stopped the hunt this year. Given New Jersey's national notoriety for conducting a "war on wildlife," it's time to openly examine larger issues.

Having successfully lobbied New Jersey's leghold ban in 1984, a ban opposed by the fur industry, the National Rifle Association, the Division of Fish and Wildlife and the meatpackers union, my perspective is based on more than

20 years' experience. Much has changed.

In 1984, a delegation of furriers and meatpackers visited Assembly Speaker Alan Karcher, a co-sponsor of the leghold law. The delegation asked him to quietly kill his own bill. Many legislators do. Karcher didn't; he stood by his convictions. So did Senate President Carmen Orechio, Assemblyman Ben Mazur and Gov. Thomas H. Kean. All resisted hunter-NRA-furrier-union pressure. Each honored his word.

Because many Democrats have misguidedly decided to curry the hunter vote — witness presidential candidate John Kerry's disastrous goose hunting photo op — many no longer stand by their convictions, or honor the wishes of the majority of New Jersey voters. With hunter numbers in New Jersey nearly halved and falling, the move is inexplicable.

Acting Gov. Codey ignored all requests to step in and direct his own DEP commissioner to instead initiate serious waste management initiatives. Former Gov. Christine Todd Whitman halted a bear hunt. Codey says it is up to his employee. With Democrats in power, legislation to protect bears and implement proven alternatives has gone nowhere.

Four of the five black bear kills will take place on Gov.-elect Jon S. Corzine's watch. He has said he opposes a hunt. As is the practice with other pending policy decisions, why didn't Campbell defer the bear issue to the incoming Corzine administration? If opposed to the hunt, Corzine should have publicly asked Campbell to do just that. He did not. It is strange that an administration functionary is more powerful than an incoming governor and an acting governor.

A frenzied press amplified the ceaseless drumbeat for a hunt. For certain newspapers, any bear sighting, any minor infraction, any "complaint," including bears climbing trees, was front-page news. The Asbury Park Press editorials were nearly a singular exception.

Reporters for major papers carrying hot and heavy bear "news" were uninterested in mitigating information. Trash-management programs that reduced human-bear complaints by up to 80 percent were not newsworthy. That no one was enforcing the bear-feeding ban — the crux of the entire issue — got no press. And now it is too

late. If television coverage of the 2003 hunt is any indication, reporters will cover the actual hunt, the parade of broken bodies, many cubs among them, like a celebrity poker match.

New Jersey's Division of Fish and Wildlife works openly with furriers, the NRA and gunmakers in umbrella trade associations. There is no greater, or more ignored, conflict of interest in government. The industry's collective goal is reversal of hunters' plummeting numbers by bringing hunting to the suburbs, recruiting children and women, and formalizing partnerships with major conservation groups in trade-offs called "greenwashing" by the Washington Post. Nowhere is any of this more rampant than in New Jersey.

A 24/7 media-driven culture that so feverishly consumes or reveres junk while treating animals as disposable objects connotes a crisis of conscience, and of values. Who do the bears see about that?

(Susan Russell, Little Silver, is an animal rights advocate.)

BD Note: During the 2005 bear hunt, 297 black bears were slaughtered. Please contact NJ Governor Corzine and ask him to stop the 2006 bear hunt.

Did you ever imagine what it would be like to be a beaver?

To see the sun setting every evening

To smell the wonderful outdoor air

To taste succulent poplar twigs

To love one's mate and children

To feel the steel trap cut through one's life

Did you ever imagine what it would be like to be a beaver?

-By Nermin Buyukmihci



Traps are an Inhumane Way to Solve Beaver Woes

Letter to the *Boston Globe*, November 15, 2005

In response to an article in *Globe North West* ("Tewksbury awash in beaver dams," Oct. 27), I wrote to officials of Tewksbury and the *Globe* in an effort to encourage a balanced presentation of the beaver-related flooding problems that perennially lead to a call for the repeal or weakening of the ban on leg-hold traps.

Such a response is unnecessary and inappropriate. The ban on traps was supported by a vast majority of the citizens of the Commonwealth, and the goal is to limit the use of inhumane and indiscriminate devices, which includes the infamous conibear full-body trap.

Imagine the agony of a beaver that can hold its breath for a very long time trying not to drown caught under water in a leg hold or conibear trap! There are trappers who claim that padded traps are humane. Try wearing a thick glove and shutting your finger in a car door. Humane? Beavers are indeed rodents, but the most amazing rodents there are, displaying intelligence, perseverance and dedicated family life, traits some humans would do well to emulate.

The wetlands they create store flood water, clear pollutants from runoff, provide valuable wildlife habitat, replace some of the many valuable wetlands lost in this country and eventually enrich soils as the ponds turn to meadows in the long term.

All well and good, unless that wetland is in your backyard, flooding your septic system or your town's

roads. Here is where it is vital not to resort to short-sighted, hysterical calling for trapping and killing these amazing animals.

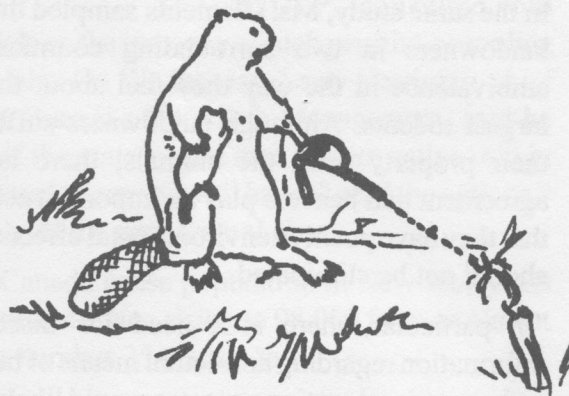
There are humane alternatives. Devices such as "beaver deceivers" are easily built and maintained drain systems that allow water to flow through the beaver dam and prevent backup over the land.

They are constructed so the animals cannot plug up the drain. The Massachusetts Audubon Society is using such devices on several of its sanctuaries and would be a good source of information. In addition, the website www.beaversww.org is an excellent source for design of such devices and to locate people in New England who do such installations.

To the citizens and officials of Massachusetts towns plagued by beaver flooding, please consider humane long-term solutions to your problems before calling for the trapping and killing of the beavers.

There is a better way to solve this problem.

CAROLYN BISHOP Belmont



Beavers make friends and enemies in nature and human society

AIKEN, S.C. -- The same Southern landowners who, in a recent survey, claimed they care a lot about wildlife are not that fond of beavers, and a researcher at the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory says that makes it important to manage beaver populations from an informed ecological position.

Once extinct in South Carolina, and probably so in Georgia, the presence of beavers in a stream system increases the diversity of birds in the area, according to a study done at the Ecology Lab by researcher Krista Lee Clements.

In the same study, Ms. Clements sampled the opinions of landowners in two surrounding counties and found ambivalence in the way they feel about the continent's largest rodents. Although landowners suffer damage to their property from the animals, there is widespread agreement that beavers play an important ecological role, that they have positive environmental effects and that they should not be eliminated.

"In particular, there is a need for dissemination of information regarding non-lethal means of beaver control, and a beaver relocation program would likely find support among many rural landowners," Ms. Clements said.

Decision makers must take a broader look at beaver management because of the animals' two -- almost opposing -- images. Even though they are often considered a nuisance, even an economic hardship, by landowners, they are considered a "keystone species" in the wild. A keystone species is one that changes the environment in ways that create a favorable new habitat for other species.

"In the past, all of our beaver management decisions have been based on the economic hardships beavers have wrought on people," Ms. Clements said. "With the data coming out now showing how beavers increase biodiversity among birds, fish and plants, it is important that those ecological measures need to be taken into account, along with losses to crops and timber, when measuring the impact of beavers."

There is a message to be learned by other wildlife investigators, Ms. Clements said. "People involved in conservation should remember that just gathering data is only half of the process, and the easy half. Integrating human values and economic concerns into the process is critical in any attempt to use our data," she said.

Landowners surveyed expressed a high degree of interest in wildlife and nature. But their level of enthusiasm about beavers was lower: Fewer than one-third claimed to care a lot about beavers. The results did not, however, support the conventional wisdom that rural landowners hold negative views about beavers, Ms. Clements said. Most agreed that beavers have a right to exist and that beavers should not be eliminated. Moreover, respondents expressed admiration, if not appreciation, for beavers by describing them as determined, hard-working and intelligent.

Paradoxically, Ms. Clements found that when asked, "How much do you care about beavers?" those who claimed to "care little" had the highest knowledge of the animals. Whereas, those who claimed the greatest care for the animals had the lowest knowledge of them.

Questions about landowners' knowledge of beavers revealed some gaps. For instance, 25 percent thought that beavers eat fish -- they don't -- and 20 percent thought beavers are rare in Georgia and South Carolina -- they aren't. Nearly half of the respondents did not know that beavers are mammals or rodents -- they are both.

Members of environmental, outdoor, fish and wildlife organizations did have significantly higher knowledge scores than non-members, suggesting that interest in wildlife is the motive for gaining knowledge, Ms. Clements found.

As part of her master's thesis, Ms. Clements monitored 10 beaver ponds and six free-flowing stream sites on the Savannah River Site (SRS) near Aiken, S.C., in the summer and winter of 1995. She counted the number of bird species and individuals and noted the differences at each site.

She conducted her research at the University of Georgia's Savannah River Ecology Laboratory, which is located on the Savannah River Site, a 310-square mile federal nuclear weapons materials processing reservation.

Ms. Clements found that beavers increase biological diversity among birds by creating wetlands where there were none before. She also quoted previous studies that showed increased fish populations in beaver ponds compared with other sections of the same streams. The other studies cited also show increased vegetation around those same ponds. Beaver ponds also encourage significant differences in the abundance of several bird species. That is probably because nesting and feeding habits are enhanced by the ponds, Ms. Clements said.

For examples, great-crested flycatchers and yellow-bellied sapsuckers both nest in the soft cavities of trees killed by the flooding caused by beavers. These birds also eat the insects that inhabit the dead trees.

Fish-eating birds, such as the belted kingfisher and the green-backed heron, are present more often at beaver ponds than at streams. Some of their fish-eating cousins -- anhinga, great blue herons, great egrets and little blue herons -- are seen more often at ponds. But Ms. Clements did not see enough of these birds in either setting to make those observations significant, she said.

The researcher also found waterfowl, including wood ducks, mallards, ring-necked ducks and the hooded mergansers, only at beaver ponds. Other birds who prefer thickets, such as white-throated sparrows and rufous-sided towhees, prefer the pond sites to streams, Ms. Clements said.

In all, she recorded 91 bird species at beaver ponds on the SRS in her two seasons of observations.



Government plans to reduce Canada geese population by more than half, by Mike Jaccarino, AC Press, 11/24/05

Federal officials announced their intention to more than halve the Canada geese population in New Jersey within the next decade, employing a variety of methods and legislative policies. Among the measures to be taken: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will no longer require a permit for private land owners and age-restricted developments to "addle" or shake geese eggs - thus preventing them from hatching - and destroy nests.

Previously, U.S. Fish and Wildlife required private residents to get special permits for such activities.

The NJDEP consulted with federal officials on the issuance of such permits, according to state officials. On Wednesday, Larry Herrighty, chief of the DEP's Bureau of Wildlife Management, said he didn't know if the state would take a more active role in managing Canada geese now. "I haven't read the options," said Herrighty of the new federal plan.

The Canada geese population in New Jersey has exploded in recent years, rising to 98,000 from an almost indiscernible number 25 years ago.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife plan, finalized Nov. 18, aims to make that number 41,000 by 2015, according to *U.S. Rep. Jim Saxton, R-3rd*. "Resident Canada geese are at unhealthy population levels and their numbers are growing," Saxton said.

Other measures that the new Canada geese policy includes: Private and public airports can now, without permits, kill birds that threaten safety at the facilities, officials said.

Additionally, county and local governments "can destroy birds that are a public health threat to reservoirs, athletic fields, parks, and public beaches" in coordination with state officials.

The new policy will ease hunting restrictions in the Atlantic Flyway Region, or all the area east of the Mississippi River. The new policy will also provide for a summer hunting season in August, according to officials.

The new measures will take effect Dec. 17.

For information on how to save our Canada Geese, contact the Coalition to Prevent the Destruction of Canada Geese, PO Box 917, Pearl River, NY 10965-0917 or visit www.canadageese.org

The Mod Squad - GOP moderates derail drilling plans for Arctic Refuge and offshore areas (from Grist Magazine:)

Opponents of drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge got some shocking good news last night: 25 moderate House Republicans, led by Rep. Charles Bass (R-N.H.), defied pressure from the GOP leadership and vowed to oppose a \$54 billion, filibuster-proof budget bill unless provisions allowing drilling in the refuge and in offshore areas around the country were eliminated -- and promises made they would not return. And lo, in late-night negotiations, House GOP leaders blinked; the provisions are gone. This unexpected development of moderate GOP spine is a blow to the Bush administration's plans for expanded dirty-energy production, but the struggle ain't over. Senate drilling monomaniacs Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) and Pete Domenici (R-N.M.) say they'll bottle the legislation up well into 2006 if the final version doesn't include Arctic Refuge drilling. But the House coalition avers it'll stand firm. Elephant fight! Elephant fight!

Support the Right to Arm Bears, by Bonnie Erbe
From Capitol Hill Blue; Ain't this America...11/1/05

Last week's local section of The Washington Post celebrated -- yes, celebrated -- the killing of a black bear by an 8-year-old girl. The compassionate among us mourned not just the cruel and completely unnecessary killing of one of nature's most fabulous creatures, but the love of violence and destruction instilled in this child by her family.

That certain Americans sadly find valor in killing is beyond doubt. But in many ways, it's also beyond belief. That they would take pleasure in a wantonly destructive act and train this into an 8-year-old female heart is beyond forgiveness.

We've heard it all before. Hunters love nature. Hunters work to preserve wildlife. Hunters are great stewards of the environment. Hunters eat what they kill. What was the justification here? That enough bears exist in Maryland to kill them off without destroying the species, as mankind once almost did. Only cowards could find solace, justification and pride in that.

There's no sport in taking down a large, lumbering animal with a .243 caliber rifle, the kind used by the young girl portrayed in worshipful prose by the Post. That's the same caliber weapon NATO uses in its assault weapons. There's more technology than sport in today's high-powered, scoped weapons. (The Post did not report whether the rifle she used was scoped or not.)

I've sat in the Maryland woods and watched deer saunter by, totally unaffected by my presence. I've watched grizzlies, mothers and cubs, in Alaska's Denali National Park. If destruction of their lives had been my goal, the task would have been simple. Nothing to laud, any more than the lauding of fecklessness itself.

A week or so ago, I drove down a dirt road through a 200-acre farm along the Chesapeake Bay. I passed two hunters, all dressed up in fatigues, rifles in hand, apparently waiting for some prey to pass close by. They looked more like overgrown school boys in arrested development than men.

Despite all this, the Post described the state's first

bear kill of the season in glorified terms: "There's a new hunting legend in the mountains of Western Maryland. Born to the woods, she's 4 1/2 feet tall and 8 years old, with a shock of light brown hair and a steady trigger finger that put two bullets into a black bear's chest cavity Monday, according to her and her father and granduncle, who were hunting with her."

That her family's prideful recitation of the facts included the nugget she "skipped school" to take part in the hunt clues us into their hierarchy of values: fake machismo over education. Sad, sad, sad.

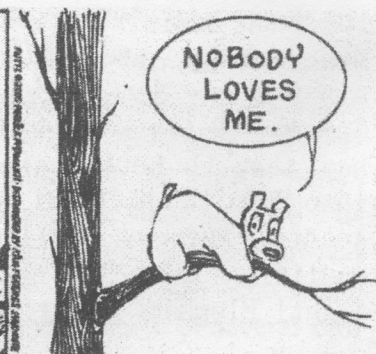
Perhaps because there are few satisfying wars to fight anymore (what true war hero would stack, for example, Iraq up against World War II?), the testosterone-challenged among us now need to vent their need to destroy one of nature's most stunning creations. It's sad enough when that false sense of power is visited on boys. It's sadder still when it's foisted on young girls.

It's almost as horrific as the latest blend of technology and feckless machismo: Internet hunting. Some skewed mind devised a system that mounts a rifle and a camera onto a platform pointed at caged creatures. With a click of a computer mouse, "bang, bang" and the creature is destroyed. Congress is considering a bill (and so are several states, including Texas, Michigan and Minnesota) that would ban the interstate practice of same, which proponents defend as a way of allowing the disabled to hunt. Methinks the disabled have more important things to do.

There's a special place in the afterlife for worshipers of the cruel, for those who feign strength by destroying life.

(Bonnie Erbe is a TV host and writes this column for Scripps Howard News Service. E-mail bonnieerbe(at)CompuServe.com.)

MUTTS



The Beaver Defenders Membership Application

Name: _____
Email: _____
Address: _____
Phone/fax: _____

Membership/subscription is \$20 annually, **due each July**. Please make checks payable to Unexpected Wildlife Refuge. All contributions are tax deductible. The amount of your donation in excess of membership dues will be considered a donation unless otherwise specified. **THANK YOU!**

Mail to: Beaver Defenders
PO BOX 765, Newfield, NJ 08344

In the Store!

(Please include an additional \$3 for shipping and handling of merchandise orders)

Books: Hoofmarks (by Hope Buyukmihci)	\$10.00
Beaversprite, My Years Building an Animal Sanctuary (by Dorothy Richards and Hope Buyukmihci)	\$15.00
The Best of Beaver Defenders	\$ 5.00
T-shirts: Hunter green, on the front - our logo; on the back - I support the Unexpected (with charming beaver).	\$15.00
Mug: Light brown mug with green logo, very tasteful	\$ 5.00
Posters: Trapped beaver and baby	\$ 1.00
Beavers turn wilderness into happiness	\$ 1.00 (colorable!)
Cards: 12 custom beaver block prints created by fifth graders with poems written by Beaver Defenders, 24 pack, fit legal envelopes	\$ 4.00
Sheet Music: Away with Traps, Song of the Beaver Defenders	\$ 1.00
We Love You, Little Beaver	\$ 1.00

Educational Materials free with a self-addressed stamped envelope.

- ▶ Unexpected Wildlife Refuge, Home of the Beaver Defenders
- ▶ What Beavers do for Waterways
- ▶ Beaver Problems and Solutions
- ▶ Species found at the Refuge
- ▶ Coloring sheets (five different beaver scenes, drawn by Hope Sawyer Buyukmihci)
- ▶ They All Call it Home
- ▶ Slandered Do-gooders (snake information)
- ▶ The Square of Flesh
- ▶ Chopper, in Memoriam
- ▶ Intruder in a Cageless Zoo (by Ferris Weddle)

The Beaver Defenders is published quarterly by the **Unexpected Wildlife Refuge, Inc.**, a non-profit organization created in 1961 to provide an inviolate sanctuary for wild animals, to study wild animals in relation to humans and to promote humane treatment of animals and environmental protection.

Furs should be worn on only the ones they were born on.



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Silver, Diamonds and Gold

There is silver in the moonlight
Where the beaver casts his wake;
And the wood duck's bill drips diamonds
When the day begins to break.
Then at noon the water flashes
Where the swimming otters go;
And at dusk the gold of sunset
Paints a jeweled afterglow.

-Hope Sawyer Buyukmihci

