

The BEAVER DEFENDERS

April 2003



Beaver Kittens (photo courtesy of Rita and Bill Vandivert)

They shall never be trapped anymore.

The BEAVER DEFENDERS



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April 2003

GOOD NEWS FROM UNEXPECTED

By Sarah Summerville

Winter's Tale

Last night, wearing a light sweater and tennis shoes, I enjoyed a balmy evening sitting at the cove waiting for the beavers. Although they never appeared, quite a bit of time passed in reverie as I thought about the past winter.

For many of us, it was an unusually difficult winter, with temperatures in the single digits for several weeks in January. Unexpected suffered frozen pipes and the never-ending task of fire tending; hauling wood and gathering kindling took its toll with frozen fingers and toes. We had a brief respite, however, and warmer temperatures melted enough of the pond to release at least one ice-bound beaver, as we found peeled sticks at Otter Dam on the last day of January.

In mid-February, the Big Storm dumped 24 inches of snow on Southern Jersey, shutting down the State and leaving the Refuge in complete isolation for days. The little cabin was buried in drifted snow, anchored to the quiet white earth with six foot cables of ice.

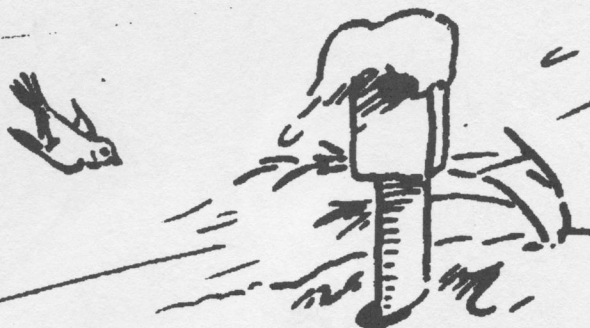
The trails were impossible to hike without snowshoes, and the world was quickly reduced to the immediate surroundings. These vital points of interest were all connected by a shoveled path from the front door to the bird food to the wood shed to the bird feeders and then back to the front door. The little birds ate everything offered, and then huddled together in the snowbanks. Cardinals, juncos and sparrows hunkered down, wing to wing, their tiny feathered bodies buffeted by the fierce north winds. Watching them survive the brutal elements

made me appreciate my insignificant task of shoving wood into a nice warm stove every few hours.

The hungry birds and squirrels would scabble up and down the huge tulip poplar just outside the window, sharing the contents of a wire feeder that I had secured to the tree. Over the course of several days, the bark surrounding the feeder actually changed color from their tiny scouring feet. The tree still bears its winter tattoo.

A Carolina wren discovered a hole at the base of the enclosed porch wall, permitting her to come inside for occasional respite from the bitter cold. There she sat perched on the shoulder of a t-shirt display, looking at me through the window much as I had been doing while she attacked the feeder earlier. She passed her time hopping around the porch, poking at literature and pulling the old abandoned nests off the shelf, as if they did not meet her particular housing specifications. After playfully darting in and out of the woodpile, she left her calling card and departed through her tiny trap door. Later I found that she was bringing a fellow wren to share her secret space.

During the storm the frozen pond was dotted with the bodies of Canada geese, sleeping in the growing snowdrifts, their heads safely tucked under their wings. As I watched them sleeping, a movement caught my eye at the dike. A small dark army breached the dam and began a solemn steady march toward the cabin. After forging 20 feet or so, they became startled by a sound or a smell and exploded into the air with a familiar shrill whistling cry. Wood ducks! After four aborted attempts, they nervously crossed the mound of snow at



the edge of the driveway and crossed over to the base of the bird feeder. Eight females and six males lingered there long enough to clean up the scattered nuts and seeds, then they quickly shuffled off to the safety of the woods adjacent to the pond. What a thrill it was observe these exquisite creatures from a mere fifteen feet away!



It's Finally Over

After four long months of deer patrol, January 31st could not come soon enough. Sometimes it felt like the shooting would never end, and even after the final day arrived, the shooting continued for several days, like a dirty habit that could not be broken easily.

Except for one or two minor incidents, it was a pretty quiet season. The excitement actually took place before shotgun season even arrived, when I apprehended my first poacher on the Refuge grounds. We had our day in court where he paid a fine and lost his hunting privileges for two years.

A couple hunters tried to block a remote Refuge access road with their vehicles; alas they did not know that we have a four-wheel drive pickup and some creative driving skills. Needless to say they were rather surprised to see the Refuge truck in its traditional place at Station 6 when the sun came up. Another hunter cut a hole in a brand new deer fence that had been erected over the summer by our neighboring farmer. After letting the farmer know that his fence was breached, we noticed that it still was not repaired until after deer season ended.

The weather was pleasant, however; cold in the morning and warming into the upper thirties by midday. Patrolling was quite enjoyable in spite of the never-ending gunfire surrounding the Refuge. We enjoyed watching bluebirds, turkeys and many deer, and we got to see folks we haven't seen since last year.

On behalf of the Refuge, I would like to thank the people who came to walk around the perimeter of the property - to list them all would finish off this column. They came at dawn; in the rain; in the snow; and in the

dark. They came from North Jersey and South, from Pennsylvania, Maryland and Delaware. They stayed late, and they gave me a day off every once in awhile. We could never have provided the Refuge with that level of protection from poachers without the help of these dedicated people. I only wish we did not have to do it again in five months. Please consider joining us!

Land Acquisition Update

In January the Refuge signed an agreement of sale with the owners of the 67 acre parcel on Unexpected Road. The land surveyor has already installed the corner monuments, and we are awaiting the title report and environmental assessment to be completed. We anticipate going to settlement in August, so anyone wishing to contribute to the Land Acquisition Fund can simply indicate this with their donation. In addition to land costs, we will need to pay for the above mentioned services, as well as for perimeter signs.

Of course, hard labor in the guise of hanging No Hunting signs will be accepted in lieu of monetary support. Bring your hammer!

Spring is Coming

The days are getting longer, and the flowers are coming up. Tree swallows loop and dive over the pond, picking off insects, while the phoebe diligently rehabilitates the forty year-old nest in the shed. A feisty bluebird couple have been defending their chosen box in the cove from an aggressive band of starlings.

I have been putting poplar in the cove nightly, and it has been accepted completely, usually under cover of night. The apples that I provide are shunned by the beavers, but are taken by the raccoons, opossums and geese. The magical appearance of fresh beaver cuts both upstream and down evidence not only the mobility of the beavers, but also their shyness. Last week the otters

moved through the cove, slipping, sliding and exploring the banks. The water is high throughout the Refuge, and there should be kittens in the lodge practicing their diving lessons.

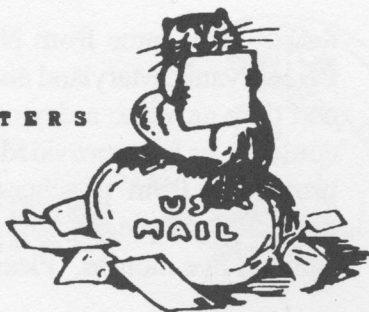
Spring is coming.



Hello,

We live in Siskiyou Co., Ca. and have a seasonal creek and seasonal pond right off our back porch. The pond gets to 15 feet deep maximum and dries up in summer.

LETTERS



Two days ago we spotted a small beaver swimming in the pond - can't tell you how thrilled we were! This valley (Scott River Valley) used to be called Beaver Valley, one hundred years ago, before trappers wiped out the beavers and changed the topography of the valley from wetland to rangeland. I had no idea they were still around, and I've lived here 7 years now.

I am hoping there is really a pair out there, but will be interested to see what they can do to raise the water level of the pond. I think the folks downstream will not be happy about a reduced water flow, but I certainly am not going to interfere with the beavers' work! Do you know if they are legally protected here? I will call Fish and Game, but will be cautious in case they are anti-beaver in some way! Thanks for any info.

-Glee Salvesson.

Dear Governor McGreevey,

I am very concerned with the "control" methods at the Fish and Game Council intend to use to control the so-called overpopulation of our precious wildlife; our bear specifically. Also, our deer, geese and other wildlife are targeted for thinning out.

Any time there are problems like this, I realize the solutions are very complex. However, there must be solutions other than hunting down and the killing of our most valued friends, the wild animals of New Jersey.

If the Fish and Game Council can't figure out how to do it, maybe it's time to get an organization that can. I'm sure consulting with any wildlife organization can offer alternative remedies that are more humane.

I am a retired, lifelong resident of New Jersey, and I have no intention of moving to Florida or anywhere else. I enjoy New Jersey's wilderness and wildlife and am confident that you do too. Please exercise your power to make sure that this State stays beautiful and our wildlife stays safe.

Thank you,

-Margaret Paddock

Hi Sarah,

You may remember talking to me. I'm in Nebraska working on research regarding water issues. I'm in the midst of transitioning from full-time job to PhD student and am excited to do my dissertation research on beavers. So is my advisor, as he wants me to study the beaver he has "left alone" on his family's farm. I will keep you posted if I hear of current research and when I start my work.

-Carla McCullough

We used to hear adults speak of the "first robin of Spring" and I vaguely remember at least one poem from my elementary school days that extolled this bird as a symbol of optimism and cheerfulness, a creature of warm days and mild breezes. Maybe winters were colder then and the birds truly didn't venture north of the Mason Dixon line or maybe they were here and we didn't see them-our eyes often overlook the unexpected.

Whatever the case, the bird became associated with the death of winter. Could grown ups and poets possibly have been so misinformed? I've sometimes thought about this as I've watched the birds tear wildly into my holly tree after a snow, seen them drinking from a puddle on an icy road or flying in loose flocks across a cold evening sky. I remember one hard winter when I looked out and saw about 20 of them sitting on a snow bank under the eaves of our garden shed waiting out a blizzard, their breasts beautifully set off against the powdery whiteness. Yes, they deserve their place as a symbol of hope, but that "Spring" robin isn't the "first", he's just the one you find pulling a worm from your lawn.

-Pat Brundage, President

Audubon Wildlife Society, Inc.
PO ox 34, Audubon, NJ 08106

Vegetarian Neighbors has posted the following activities for the coming spring:

- Sunday, April 13th, Picnic with the Cows at Helga Tacreiter's Cow Sanctuary, Shiloh, NJ;
- Sunday, May 25th, American Vegan Society Picnic Lunch, Malaga, NJ;
- Sunday, June 8th, Vegetarian Neighbors Picnic at Atkinson Park, Hurffville, NJ



Contact: Vegetarian Neighbors c/o Lois Dinshah
PO Box 385, Malaga, NJ 08328 -or-
Vegetarian Society of South Jersey,
PO Box 272, Marlton, NJ 08053, (877) 999-8775

Refuges Host More Hunters, Trappers Than Wildlife Viewers

A review of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service information by an animal advocacy organization to mark the 100th anniversary of the National Wildlife Refuge System shows that a majority of national wildlife refuges allow hunting and trapping and that more refuges offer programs for killing animals than for watching them. The Animal Protection Institute (API) says that the Centennial celebration is a sham, charging that the Fish and Wildlife Service has lost sight of the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System by allowing recreational killing of wildlife. To prove its point, the API points out that the Centennial Commission, established by the [F&W] service, is "stacked" with hunting advocates, including Commission Chairman William Horn, who serves as counsel to the U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance, and former assistant secretary of the interior for fish and wildlife and parks. API notes that the mission of the Sportsman's Alliance is to "protect the rights of hunters, anglers, and trappers." "It is clear that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has lost sight of the meaning of refuge and the original purpose of the National Wildlife Refuge System," says Camilla Fox, national campaign director of the Animal Protection Institute.

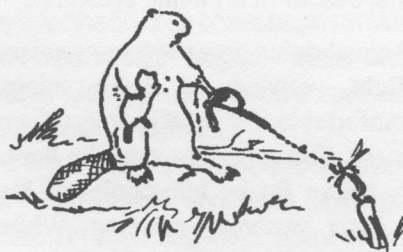
Of the 540 refuge units nationwide, more than half allow hunting (311 units) and trapping (280 units). In contrast, fewer than half offer opportunities for wildlife viewing (240 units). Currently, more than 100 refuges have designated programs for killing animals, but not watching them.

Of the more than 27 million people who visited refuges in 1995, 81.5 percent came to view and/or photograph wildlife, for environmental education, or for similar non-consumptive recreational pursuits. Only 4.5 percent visited a refuge to hunt or trap animals. Wildlife viewing at refuges is big business. Bird watchers annually contribute an estimated \$15 million to the local economy of towns surrounding just two Texas National Wildlife Refuges alone.

A 1999 Decision Research national poll found that: - 78 percent of Americans think it is against the law to hunt and trap animals on National Wildlife Refuges. - 71 percent agree that as long as refuge officials can remove dangerous animals, there is no reason to allow any other killing of animals on refuge property. - 83 percent disagreed that the rights of hunters and trappers are more important than the need to protect wildlife on refuges.

"Until the FWS stops catering to special interests and restores the National Wildlife Refuge System to its original purpose as sanctuaries for wildlife there is little to celebrate," says Fox. "Refuge is more than a word. It's time that our National Wildlife Refuge System lived up to its name."

*From the Environment News Service,
March 13, 2003*



London – One American and two British anti-cruelty activists were thrown out of the Julien Macdonald show this evening after jumping onto the runway and joining in the invitation-only event at the Roundhouse, part of London Fashion Week. Attendees, including Charlotte Church, were heard to gasp audibly and it was reported that P!nk, also in attendance, stood up to applaud the anti-fur stunt. Kayla Worden from North Carolina, USA, and Charlie McKenzie and Ida Birmingham of the UK managed to walk down the runway with their unfurled banners reading, 'Fur Kills', while chanting, 'No beauty in animal cruelty!'

Also under fire are fashion designers Betty Jackson and Jean-

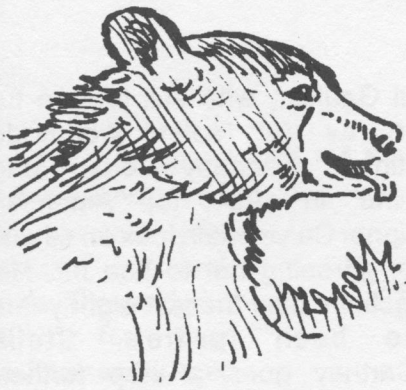
Paul Gaultier, who still feature fur even as fur sales worldwide continue a steady decade-long decline. In 1994, top American designer Calvin Klein took an ethical step, agreeing not to use fur. His collections over the last eight years have been fur-free. Stella McCartney goes a step further, refusing to use leather or any other animal parts in her work.

'People may be able to argue over a war with Iraq, but how can anyone support violence for fashion's sake?' says Sean Gifford, PETA's director of campaigns. 'Some old designers not only are heartless and shameless, they are also deaf to the cries of animals in steel traps who are painfully killed on fur farms internationally.'

PETA is stepping up its campaign to expose the suffering behind the fur industry's renewed push of fur fashions, knowing that educated consumers wouldn't be caught dead in the stuff. Although it is the 21st century, animals are still mangled in 18th century traps, drowned or beaten to death in the wild, and gassed, strangled or anally electrocuted on crowded, filthy fur farms. A recent PETA anti-fur ad, featuring singer Sophie Ellis-Bextor holding a real skinned fox with the tagline, 'Here's the rest of your fur coat', ran in publications around the world.

*-Reprinted from PeTA,
February 19, 2003*





Council Backs NJ Bear Hunt

Upper Freehold - The New Jersey Fish and Game Council yesterday proposed holding the state's first black bear hunt in more than three decades, a move certain to inflame partisans on either side of the long-running debate over the management of the state's largest wild animal. The vote marked the council's second attempt in three years to authorize a hunt, a hugely controversial measure in a state where bears are viewed as a menace by some and an exotic treasure by others.

After the resounding 10-1 vote in favor of a six-day hunt in December, several members of the council flatly declared they were unlikely to reconsider the decision, despite the vitriol they expect their action to unleash. The council will be called to make a final vote on the hunt this summer after the state has held public hearings. The hunt would be limited to the state's northwestern region, north of Interstate 78 and west of Interstate 287, although the bears' range is much larger, extending as far south as Ocean County and as far east as Monmouth County, council members said.

"I'm sticking to my guns - let the chips fall where they may," said John Messeroll, a council member from East Brunswick who is a plant science researcher at Rutgers University. He called hunting preferable to the euthanasia now practiced on so-called nuisance bears and to the growing number of collisions with cars. "I think I'm going to stick with the bear hunt.

What we proposed today is what we

thought was right," said council Chairman Scott Ellis, a Hamilton farmer. Ellis called it the council's duty to offer a recreational hunt, based upon the size of the state's bear population, which the council has been advised is more than 3,000.

In 2000, just weeks after approving a hunt, the council retracted its vote under pressure from then-Gov. Christie Whitman, who decided to cancel it after two dozen towns in the heart of black bear habitat joined with animal protection groups in opposition. One of the opponents calling on the governor to intercede was Woodbridge Mayor James E. McGreevey, then the presumed Democratic nominee for governor. McGreevey called the hunt "inconsistent with the state's commitment to protecting the environment and preserving open space for the benefit of all living creatures."

Animal rights groups have promised a fight, vowing to make things uncomfortable for McGreevey if he does not find a way to stop the hunt. They began faxing him copies of his own letter yesterday morning. While not criticizing the council, McGreevey officials have already begun distancing themselves from its decision. They hinted that the administration could stop the hunt if it deemed it necessary. Bradley Campbell, commissioner of the state Department of Environmental Protection, yesterday called the vote "enormously controversial" and cast some doubt on the population figures projected by his own Division of Fish and Wildlife.

Campbell noted that he had convened an independent panel to examine the estimates of nearly 3,300 bears, after hearing from skeptics at several public forums on the black bear. "I was especially concerned about this because the Division's internal projection of the current population has increased by more than 70 percent over the past several months," he wrote in a

letter sent Thursday to Ellis, urging the council to proceed cautiously. Campbell went on to say in the letter that the panel, composed of biologists, animal protection advocates, hunters and statisticians, could not agree on a number. Some panel members asserted that the population might be as small as 1,350 bears, he said. A spokesman for the governor yesterday echoed Campbell's caution. "We realize that some bears' aggressive behavior has put personal property and public safety at risk, but at the same time the governor has personal reservations about a hunt," said spokesman Micah Rasmussen. "We would hope that the council would consider accurate information about true scope and size of problem." Saying the administration would pursue long-term management solutions such as conservation and contraception programs, he added, "It remains to be seen whether further action is warranted."

While the administration cannot veto the council's vote, it can stop the hunt once it has started, said Campbell, who called the state's hunting law "not the most deftly drafted statute." He said it was not clear as yet how many hunted bears would be deemed excessive. The council similarly would not say how many captured bears it considers too many. Ellis said setting such a ceiling "may be political." Wildlife officials who advise the council say they will have a better handle on the bear population - and the rate of success among hunters - after one or two days. All bears that are shot must be checked in at hunting stations. The council proposed making 10,000 permits available for the six-day hunt, although wildlife officials said they expect the success rate to be no more than 5 percent.

In defending their decision yesterday, council members said it was their duty to manage a burgeoning population, before bears cause more serious problems and are reduced to vermin in the public's estimation. "The number of negative

incidents is continuing to grow and the population is moving south and east - areas where it would not be safe to take bears," said Jane Morton Galetto, a long-serving member. "When the worst happens, people will look at this magnificent species and say they want the bears gone. If one bear kills one human there will be an outcry."

Indeed, the council's actions are reverberating well beyond the northwestern region. Hunters in the central part of the state say they would venture north to shoot a bear if the hunt is authorized. "The problem in New Jersey is access," said Irving Luizza, a hunter in Hunterdon County who said he travels to Maine to pursue bears and said he views hunting as a sound management tool. "Pennsylvania has a hunt and New York has a hunt. I'm hoping people here understand that the population's not going to take care of itself."

Other onlookers want the bear left alone. "Just because it's not happening in my neighborhood doesn't mean I shouldn't pay attention," said Cindy Fijalkowski, a Hamilton resident who said she hikes in bear country. "Up there, it's their habitat. We need to respect their lives." Jack Schrier, the lone non-hunter on the 11-member council, voted against the hunt after voicing several reservations. Schrier said the council had failed to articulate clear population goals. He added that he was not eager to "open the door" for the annual hunt of what he said was not a traditional game animal in New Jersey.

"I'm the only public member, and it's important that the public has

representation," he said. His fellow council members are largely farmers or sportsmen.

-by Tracey L. Regan
The Times of Trenton, NJ, 2003. All rights reserved, reprinted with permission

(B.D. editor's note: to see the letter written by then-Woodbridge Mayor McGreevey, please visit www.honorandnonviolence.com/letter/html)

The 1000 Mile Bluebird Trail

- By Nels Anderson

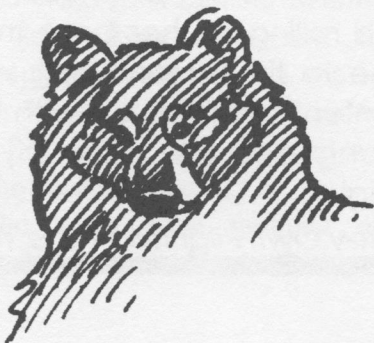
This isn't a story about a multitude of Bluebird Boxes stretching across several states or winding around in one state. My area of focus is the Pinelands of South Jersey, mostly in Shamong with many boxes located in the Wharton Forest. Now how can that be a thousand miles? Well, the trip each week to install, monitor and care for the 50 or so boxes begins in March and runs through August. Those twenty weeks with fifty miles traveled each week total a thousand miles.

The time and effort involved is just about all I can handle and takes up a good portion of each Saturday. There could be more than fifty boxes, but I am still employed so even the fifty can be a stretch some weeks. However, I do enjoy waking thought the pines, driving the sand roads and visiting peoples yards to check boxes. Surprises, joy, a closeness to nature, disappointments, a little sweat, a multitude of ticks and sometimes a unique view of nature accompanies each trip. The boxes are intended for Bluebirds, yet others are drawn to this makeshift shelter. House wrens, house sparrows, titmice, nuthatches, chickadees, tree swallows, flying squirrels, wasps, bees, ants, mice and even a toad have been found inside the boxes. A concern that really gnaws at my heart is two legged predators. Three boxes have disappeared this year. Murder, mayhem and larceny are too common.

I inherited a good portion of the trail from Augie Sexauer who still helps and has

served for many years. He began with the older style side opening box (some are still used) and then converted to the Peterson box which is easily opened from the front. This type has many features which favor bluebirds. The boxes I make are similar with slight variations in construction. The insulation, ventilation, protection and ease of monitoring make the Peterson box a winner. It is a little time consuming getting all the angles right, but it is a durable box that readily attracts the bluebirds. It is also a good target for hunters. Double 00 buckshot increases ventilation by an order of magnitude. We have one box remodeled in such a manner that continues to produce chicks year after year in spite of the extra holes. Its seems home is truly where the heart is.

How does one measure success in this type of endeavor? There are so many ups and downs, twists and turns that it would be difficult to capture success in a word or even a sentence. Sure, there were that many fledged could be a way but that may fall short and fail to measure the true effort involved. For me success is gathering a better understanding of bluebird needs in regards to housing, predator protection, and box location. At times I struggle; proper placement is important. Near a tree or cover? Facing East? In a borderline area? Near a road or a busy place? Deep in the woods? On the edge of the woods? Many locations have been successful and many still await their first tenants regardless of location. Putting a box in a prime area only to have it remain empty week after week is a disappointment. Moving a box and one week later finding a bluebird nest with five eggs is a great surprise and true sense of accomplishment.



From NJ Fish and Wildlife
(or A Few of our Friends have
Turned up Missing)

Beaver and Otter Harvest 2003

Wildlife biologists from the NJ DEP's Division of Fish and Wildlife, with volunteers from the Division's Wildlife Conservation Corps, NJ Trappers Association and the NJ Fur Harvesters, staffed 6 statewide beaver/river otter check stations.

From the information gathered, trappers harvested an estimated 501 beavers and 51 river otters during the 2003 season.

New Jersey Deer Taking 2003

Hunters took an estimated 63,031 deer between 9/7/02 and 2/15/03. The deer season total is the fourth best in state history and a decline from the 69,970 deer taken in 2001 and the 77,444 taken in 2000.

From Fur Free Century Campaign ~ Humane Society of the United States

News - Northern Ireland this month joined Scotland, Wales, and England in banning fur farms, defined as farms where furbearing animals are raised

solely or primarily for their fur. The Fur Farming Prohibition Order was finalized several weeks ago in Westminster, England.



Campaigners now are working to ban fur farms in the Republic of Ireland, the last country in the British Isles without a ban. Such a ban will prevent fur farmers from moving their farms to the Republic of Ireland once the recently passed UK fur farming ban goes into effect. Other nations that have strict fur farming legislation include Austria, Sweden, Holland, Switzerland, Italy, and New Zealand.

In the US, no states have banned fur farming, but some states prohibit keeping foxes in captivity. California has housing requirements for mink and fox that make fur farming of these species cost prohibitive.

Action of the Week

Purdue University may be one of the Midwest's most prominent institutions, but its affiliation with the Fur Takers of America's "Trapper's College" is regrettable.

Every September, Purdue sponsors a week long continuing

education "Furbearer Management Course," which teaches students how to use traps to kill animals. The Indiana Department of Fish and Wildlife grants students a "Special Use" permit to trap animals out of season during the course. Using steel-jaw leghold traps, the students in the course in 2001 trapped 158 animals, killing 46 of them. Included among the dead animals was an otter, which is a protected species that was only recently reintroduced into Indiana after nearly being exterminated by habitat loss and fur trapping.

Let Purdue University know that sponsoring this course is incompatible with the mission of an institution of higher learning. Ask that it cut its ties with Fur Takers of America and Trapper's College and stop offering the "Furbearer Management Course."

Write to:

Victor Lectenbergh, Dean of Agriculture
1140 Agricultural Administration
Building, room 114
West Lafayette, In. 47907
Call: 765-494-8391
Email- VLL@purdue.edu

ANWR Victory March 19, 2003

The Senate voted to remove a provision from the 2004 budget opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska to oil drilling. An amendment to remove this provision, sponsored by Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-CA), passed by a narrow vote of 52 to 48.

Thanks to more than 25,000 Environmental Defense activists and the many others who quickly responded to the urgent action alert by contacting Congress. We helped turn the tide against efforts to open this precious wilderness area to oil companies.

I had watched fat little beavers sitting up like queer diminutive Buddhas on a river bank, solemnly wagging their heads at the rising sun, while the mother lay by and crooned at them, plucking them towards her at intervals and rolling on her back from time to time, murmuring with contentment, happy with her young and the sheer joy of longing.

-Grey Owl, *Pilgrims of the Wild*

War in Paradise

-by William Ingram

When Christopher Columbus came to the New World, the ocean currents carried him and his crew not to either mainland, but to the Caribbean islands between.

There they found naked natives in a tropical paradise, and said of them that they were *in Dios*, or with God, like Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Hence the name "Indians".

The natives of the north wore clothes, but they too were named Indians. They were all members of a branch of the Oriental race, from across the Bering Strait thousands of years before. The natives told many tales; many of these stories were about animals. This one is called:

The War Between the Beavers and Porcupines

Beaver and Porcupine are vegetarians and like some of the same foods. Porcupine stole some of Beaver's food. Beaver questioned Porcupine, who lied about what he had done. Beaver attacked Porcupine with his famously sharp teeth, but Porcupine fended him off with a face full of quills. A round toothpick is about the same size and shape as a quill.

The Beaver People grabbed Porcupine and took him to an island to starve. Porcupine called for his friends to help him, but they could not. Finally, Porcupine sang to the North Wind to bring cold weather. The lake froze over and the Porcupine People crossed the ice and rescued their starving brother. The Porcupines now declared war on the Beaver People.

The spiny tribe grabbed old Flattail and carried him to the top of



a tall tree. As Beaver could not climb trees, they thought he would be in as perilous a situation as was their brother on the island. Then they backed down the tree tail first, as porcupines do.

But by simply eating the tree from the top downwards, Beaver was able to return home victorious.

It's Called Beaver Smart

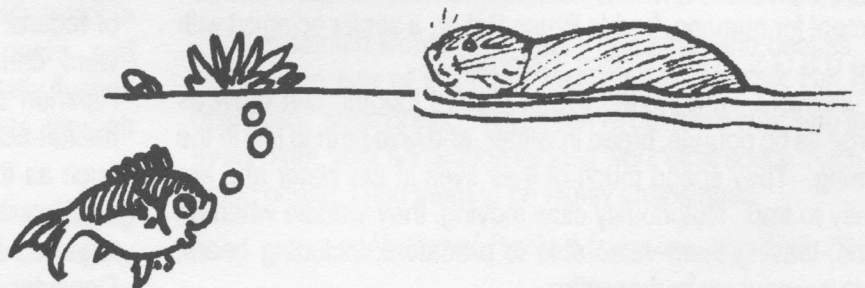
For two years now the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Wyoming has been feeding the beavers who are living in Littlefield Creek south of Rawlins. One week, the BLM and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, working together, airlifted a whopping 6,400 pounds of aspen logs for the beaver. The logic of BLM is that no one knows how and where to build a dam better than a beaver. According to BLM fisheries biologist Mike Bower, they want the beaver, after they eat the bark on the luscious logs, to build dams along Littlefield Creek to improve the riparian and fisheries habitat for the Colorado River cutthroat trout.

The BLM is simply giving the beaver a helping hand, by providing the materials they will need to build the dams to improve the habitat along Littlefield Creek. The goal of the beaver project is to stop a headcut from further eroding the creek. If it is not stopped, the stream channel will get lower and lower and the water table will continue to drop. This makes it difficult for willows and other riparian vegetation to get established. Once the beaver stop the headcut, the willows and other woody vegetation will flourish, providing the needed shade to cool the water so the trout can survive. The ponds the beaver create by impounding the river with their dams will offer habitat for the Colorado River cutthroat trout, a BLM designated sensitive species.

Bowers said that when they started feeding them, the beaver knew just what to do. Last year, he said the beaver where given 12,000 pounds of timber, and they used every bit of it while constructing five dams in the creek. The response was immediate, Bowers said.

The beaver have done such a good job repairing the creek and improving the habitat that the BLM and the Game and Fish Department plan to reintroduce another 500 cutthroat trout into the creek later this fall or next year.

- from *Wildlife 2000*
PO Box 6428 Denver, CO 80206
2002 issue



The Benefits of Beavers - by Todd Wilkinson

At dawn, Douglas Smith climbs into a small airplane and sets a course for the rugged interior of Yellowstone to track radio-collared wolves. By late afternoon, he's back on terra firma, this time perched on a six-foot dome made of mud and willow branches protruding from a freshly created wilderness pond.

Smith is not listening for howls now. He's waiting for the agitated tail slaps of *Castor canadensis* and trying to better understand the building blocks that make healthy ecosystems whole. In all of his years working as a federal wildlife biologist, including his current stint as chief wolf researcher in America's oldest national park, he has been intrigued most by the lives of "keystone species"-the pivotal creatures that profoundly affect the composition of plants and animals in the environment around them. Considered functionally extinct at the beginning of the 20th century, beavers have made a dramatic comeback across the United States and Canada - good news for beavers as well as other species. The large industrious rodents create wetlands and marshy areas that provide habitat for hundreds of species.

As much as Smith is captivated by wolves, he holds a special place in his heart for another keystone species, what he calls the "unassuming charismatic rodent" that inhabits the backwaters of public attention. Smith, of course, is referring to beavers, the largest native rodent in North America.

Legendary for their prowess at building dams and engineering wetlands, beavers are making a dramatic comeback. Today, the recovery of the beaver, though slow to reach some areas such as Rocky Mountain National Park, rates as one of the greatest conservation success stories. In dozens of national parks, from the glacier-coated valleys of Alaska to the mountains of Appalachia and southwest toward the Rio Grande, these shy aquatic mammals play a tremendous role in bolstering the diversity that makes parks important wildlife havens.

"The ecological role of beaver is tremendous," says Stewart Breck, a research biologist with Wildlife Services, and arm of the U.S.D.A. "Beaver are credited with being able to alter the environment more than any other animal in North America, except for humans," adds Bruce Baker, a senior scientist with the U.S.G.S. in Fort Collins, Colorado.

Beavers, which often live in domed lodges, can grow as large as 65 pounds, breed in winter, and give birth to kits in the spring. They spend much of their lives in the water and are easy to trap. Notoriously slow moving, they waddle when on land, leaving them vulnerable to predators, including bears, wolves, coyotes and cougars.

As recently as 300 years ago, scientists say 65 million beavers lived in North America, a conservative estimate in the eyes of some, who place the historical continent-wide peak at perhaps closer to five times that number. Regardless of the unofficial census figures used, beaver experts today agree on two points: these animals were once astoundingly abundant, setting the stage for the bounty of riparian wildlife European settlers found when they reached the continent; and the animals suffered radical depletion because of commercial fur trapping.

Iconic American explorers Lewis and Clark had a hand in this exploitation. During their expedition across the country 200 years ago, these men established a series of fur trading posts, including Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site in North Dakota, as a way for the U.S. to assert a larger geopolitical presence in global commerce.

Both the explorers had personal financial stakes in promoting the harvest of beavers. In fact, it was Lewis' declaration a letter to President Thomas Jefferson that the upper Missouri River held more beavers than anywhere else on Earth that hastened a rush of fur trappers to the region. Within 40 years, beavers were virtually trapped out of the Rockies. And by the beginning of the 20th century, just 100 years after the Lewis and Clark Expedition, beavers were functionally extinct in the U.S.

"We are only now beginning to comprehend the effect that beaver had," Smith says. "Unfortunately, we're also still coping with the aftermath caused by removing these animals from most of the Lower 48 in an amazingly short amount of time."

The near-elimination of beavers led to a drying of wetlands and an expansion of meadows and forests to the detriment of marshy species. But beginning at the end of WWII, as a new age of ecological enlightenment emerged in the U.S., hundreds of federal and state-sponsored beaver reintroduction efforts were carried out nationwide to enhance riparian habitat. Riparian zones-one of the richest and most diverse types of habitat-account for just 2 percent of the landscapes in regions such as the American West, yet they provide 80 percent of wildlife with habitat at some point in their lives. Beavers, Smith says, are boons for species diversity.

Consider the lesson from Voyageurs National Park in



Minnesota, where Smith worked for 11 years. During the 1940's, aerial photos showed that less than 4 percent of the park was riparian habitat, but during the subsequent three decades when beaver numbers were allowed to grow, the amount of riparian acres quadrupled.

How can animals that can weigh up to 65 pounds affect epic positive change on a landscape level? "Beavers bring double rewards," Smith says. "They not only break up the landscape, but they affect the homogeneity of species by producing aquatic habitat that hundreds of related species cannot live without. Where you have beaver coming back, you'll often also see recovery of other species."

Despite beaver's reputation for causing flooding, their marshes actually help buffer adjacent landscapes against the effects of flash floods. Their network of channels, dams, and sloughs slows the water as it moves through a drainage, holds water in the landscape longer, insulates areas from drought, and recharges underground aquifers.

Among the biggest beneficiaries of beaver presence are moose, mink and muskrat; numerous bird species including songbirds, wading birds, waterfowl, and raptors; as well as

amphibians, reptiles, aquatic insects, and of course, fish that thrive in slow-moving water. Scientists also believe that beaver ponds may be crucial in aiding the recovery of imperiled trout,

and along the West Coast some say the animals historically provided key habitat that aided large runs of coho salmon.

Beaver ponds and dams function as water filters that capture silt and pollutants, leaving water heading downstream cleaner. Despite beavers' reputation for causing flooding, their marshes help buffer adjacent landscapes against the effects of flash floods. Their network of channels, dams, and sloughs slow the water as it moves through a drainage, holds water in the landscape longer, insulates areas from drought, and recharges underground aquifers. Water that normally flushes through a river corridor in a single day will pass through beaver-inhabited environments in 7 to 10 days.

Mark McKinstry, research scientist at the Wyoming Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at the University of Wyoming in Laramie, has spearheaded a novel project in



which 285 beavers were introduced into 14 Wyoming streams on public land and private ranches. The goals were to improve wildlife habitat, restore damaged streams enhance natural water supplies for livestock, and combat aridity. The seven-year effort proved to be an overwhelming success. "Beaver deliver a huge bang for the buck. As a public investment, you'd be hard pressed to find an animal that delivers bigger returns," he says.

The fact that ranchers are learning to regard beavers as partners shows how societal attitudes have positively shifted, McKinstry says. It also demonstrates how national parks, in serving as reservoirs for less appreciated species, are ahead of their time. They continue to serve as important natural laboratories, delivering lessons that can be applied on a larger landscape level.

Of course, beavers can, and do, preset challenges to humans. They topple trees in city parks and backyards, and their handiwork has flooded basements, roads, crops, and woodlands, causing millions of dollars in property damage each year, notes Breck. Only a few decades ago, the standard protocol for dealing with such enterprising beavers was dynamiting their dams and lodges, then trapping the animals. Today, Breck's Wildlife Services emphasizes nonlethal methods of management. Researchers with Wildlife Services have devised special materials to armor tree trunks, and they've discovered nontoxic chemicals that repel the animals.

For Smith, it's no coincidence that his study of beavers ultimately led him to wolf management. Not only are wolves and beavers bound together as predator and prey, but similarities abound. Both species shape the ecosystem they inhabit, exist in extended family units, and scent-mark their territories. Both have also developed unique ways of communicating. Where wolves howl to exchange information or sound an alarm of intruders, beavers slap their flat tails against water surfaces to put their kin on high alert.

In addition, both animals are classified as "cooperative breeders," a distinction that applies to only 2 percent of mammals in the animal kingdom. In simple parlance, cooperative breeding species are led by dominant males and females that remain monogamous until one of the mates dies.

"I've studied wolves and bears and birds and beetles, but beaver are one of the more fascinating creatures I've ever observed," adds Breck. "When you're out there watching them every night, your admiration for their work ethic soars. Far from being boring, I find them to be highly charismatic."

National Parks Magazine, Jan/Feb 2003

Reprinted with permission

Big Goes Home - from *Beaversprite* by Dorothy Richards and Hope Sawyer Buyukmihci

That year the wild mother beaver Lilah, overburdened with a large litter, had decided that I would make a good foster mother and had deliberately presented me with two kits to raise. They weighed about a pound apiece. I put them in a corner of the upstairs bedroom and they swam in the bathroom sink. I named them Big and Little. Little, always gay, playful and affectionate, died at seven weeks.

Big, by this time, was practically weaned and ate apples, carrots and leaves. I decided to reintroduce him to his parents. Would Lilah take him back, or would she hiss and blow and repudiate him? It was with misgiving that I took Big on one arm and my apple basket on the other and started for the beaver pond. I was prepared to pick him up and bring him back if any unpleasantness should occur.

Lilah was on the platform waiting for me. I put Big down in front of her, afraid of rejection, but knowing her well enough to be sure that she would not inflict physical harm. He showed no fear of his mother, and to my surprise she could not have been more tender. She was glad to see him. She bent her head and talked to him in a low, gentle tone as though he had returned to her after a few hours' absence. I wondered if she noticed his rather stunted size and felt sorry for him. Big slipped into the water and swam around the platform in short trips. Between trips, he climbed into my lap to wipe water from his fur and to eat leaves I picked off the branches for him. After a while, Samson came. He showed no emotion, but took the kit for granted.

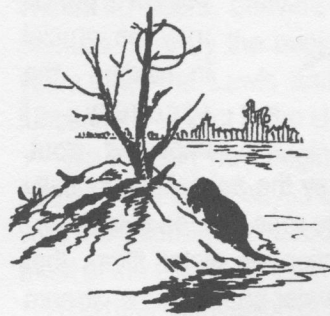
Big's brothers and sisters, however, evinced great interest in him. They looked him over inquisitively, smelled him and jostled him as though he were one of them. Though smaller than his litter-mates, he made up for lack of size with his spunk and unusual vocal ability. In his excitement at this new world, he chattered away, raising his voice in volume and tone when the others came close while he was eating. When he got down to swim they followed. He made frequent trips around the platform while the others trailed him, and he seemed to enjoy their attentions. He reminded me of a sophisticated city cousin who lords it over his country kin, unaware that he is the one who has a lot to learn.

When Lilah and Samson sat on shore to engage in a biting session, Big came to Lilah's side. He watched both big beavers intently, then stood up and felt of Lilah as far

up her body as he could reach. It looked as though he were saying: "I just can't believe a beaver can be this big." When Lilah went to the lodge, Big swam after her. When she dived he came back to me. This should have told me something, but I failed to get the hint. Greatly relieved that he was back with his family, I went secretly away.

I should have known better. This little beaver had never seen deep water since infancy; he had never learned to dive. He could not reach shelter inside the lodge without diving at least three feet to find the underwater tunnel. The beavers had accepted him so well that I thought they would take care of him. How could they know that I had been remiss in teaching him to dive? There was misunderstanding on both sides.

The next evening when I arrived Big was there to meet me. He came from below the platform instead of swimming from the lodge, but even then I did not understand. I figured he had merely come out early. After the other beavers had eaten and gone, Big remained. He stretched up his arms and wanted me to pick him up. It was hard to refuse him, but thinking it was my duty, I left without him. On the way home my footsteps faltered several times. I felt I had made a mistake to leave him. Still I kept on and, physically exhausted, sank into bed.



The next morning the thought of Big haunted me. I went to the pond. There he was, sitting on the lodge, while the others were snug inside. The moment he saw me he splashed in, swam across the water and rushed up to me with pathetic greeting cries. I brought him home, filled the bathtub and replaced the ramp

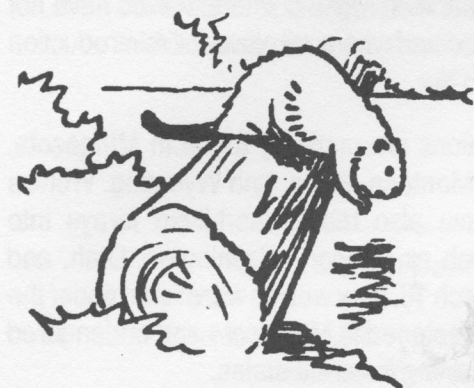
so he could climb in and out. I placed his favorite old bathrobe in a corner for his bed. After a brief dip in the tub he scooted off the ramp, down the hall and into his corner. He fell fast asleep among the bathrobe folds.

When he awoke toward evening I didn't want to take him back to the pond, but knew it was necessary to wean him away from me and an artificial environment. That time he began teaching himself to dive. He had observed the others as they disappeared underwater over the

entrance and in the spot where they vanished he began his efforts. At first he could barely get himself beneath the surface. Once he grabbed Lilah's fur as she went down, but lost his hold and bobbed back up. He cried out in frustration. By the time I left he had not succeeded in getting into the house, but I thought that during the night he would manage, assisted by the others. In the morning I went to check and found him waiting for me to bring

him home. I carried him back to his bedroom, snuggled in my arms.

That evening I took him to the pond again and he followed close at my heels all the while I put corn



near the upper bank for the ducks, and corn and branches at the platform feeding place. After he had eaten apples with the others he swam out to the lodge and continued to teach himself to dive. His efforts became more determined. At last he disappeared. When he didn't come back I knew he had made it. I could imagine him inside the lodge examining his birthplace for the first time since he had left it as a newborn. He was still in the lodge, alone, when Lilah took poplar branches in to him and I felt that she had welcomed him home.

"Goodbye, Big", I called to the lodge as I turned to leave. To make sure he was safe I went back the next morning. He was not in sight and did not come when I called. That evening, however, he came to me eagerly, swimming fast and giving little cries of greeting. When I left he tried to follow me home, but I managed to sneak away. he was only seven weeks old and still a six-pound baby, but he never slept in our house again. After that night he accepted his family and I resigned myself to his absence.

Beaver Defender Alerts

In the past, I have contacted many Beaver Defenders, usually via internet, to help affect NJ legislation that runs counter to the interest of animals. Whenever I reach out to my elected representatives to make my opinion heard on a particular issue, I find it rather frustrating to never find out what the result was. So here is how it went on some of our most recent issues:

Beavers in Colbert County, Alabama - families of beavers were to be trapped out by USDA Wildlife Services. I regret that we have not been able to contact anyone in Alabama regarding this issue. I will keep trying.

Bill A424 - Requires applicant for open space monies to provide statement concerning deer management on lands to be preserved using those monies. This bill was considered by the Assembly Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee in mid-November of '02. It was sent back to the sponsor (Sen. Kean) for "more work."

Bill S563 - Same as Bill A424. This bill was considered by the Senate Economic Growth, Agriculture and Tourism Committee in January '03. It passed out of committee and into the Senate for a full vote.

Bill S2013 - Allows hunting on Sundays. This bill was pulled from Senate Committee consideration due to our putting pressure on the bill's sponsors. Good job!

NJ Bear Hunting Issue

Friday, March 7th the NJ Fish and Game Council voted 10-1 in favor of bear hunting in our State. (See page 6, "NJ Council Backs Blackbear Hunt", this issue.)

We have been faxing and calling Governor McGreevey with a plea to stop the bear hunt, regardless of the Council's vote, just as Governor Whitman did in 2000. The ultimate goal is, however, to reform the Fish and Wildlife Council to represent all members of our society, not just hunters.

From Stu Chaifez, March 25, 2003

"...We are in the process of creating a new non-profit organization dedicated to the dissolution of the current Fish and Game Council and to the ending of wildlife management as we know it. **The Center for Animal Protection** will not only stand as a bulwark against the hunting industry, but it will also sponsor a new broad based coalition that will take the fight to the Council itself. From animal rights people to environmentalists, to wildlife rehabbers to those who fight against bad government, to experts and mainstream citizens, the new coalition will strike hard and continue striking until the day is won.

This new coalition will pick up the current campaign and carry it to it's natural conclusion. In addition to continuing to pressure the Governor, we will make our first public stand at the Game Code hearing on May 13, when the Council must sit before the public and listen to our comments. The Game Code hearing is going to be a media event bar none, and by having a strong presence inside, not only of bear supporters, but of those who fight for deer and geese, we are going to throw down our gauntlet and show that a force united for all animals is a force to be reckoned with..."

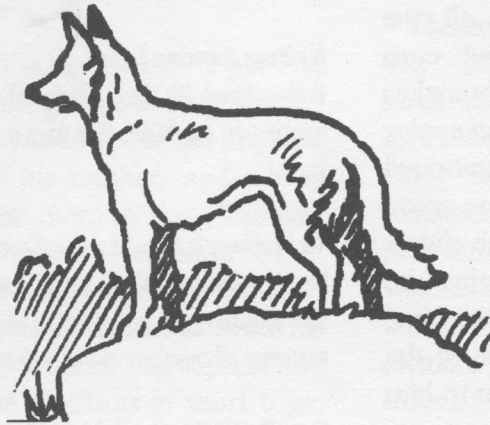
Anyone who wishes to join forces with the Center for Animal Protection can contact Stu at (856) 428-2635

The Feds Push the Gray Wolf Back into the Dark Ages

The gray wolf, which once ranged all across the United States in the hundreds of thousands, now numbers an estimated 3,700 individuals who dwell in only a few regions. The U.S. government apparently believes those numbers are strong enough to merit a reduction of federal protections, despite the objections of conservationists who say wolves still face many threats to their long-term survival.

On March 18, the Department of the Interior (DOI) issued the much-anticipated "final rule," which downlists most gray wolves in the lower 48 states from endangered to threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). On the same day, officials from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) told conservationists that the agency is already making plans to remove federal protections entirely for gray wolves in two major geographical areas.

These "delisting" plans, which could be implemented within the next year, will leave most wolves bereft of federal protections. Their survival will be in the hands of individual states, the same states that have shown these animals little mercy so far.



Gray Wolves: A Brief History

The gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) and red wolf (*Canis rufus*) once ranged throughout the United States, in numbers thought to be near 400,000 for the two species combined. But from the moment European settlers stepped foot on North America, they began large-scale eradication efforts. Federally funded eradication programs, which lasted through the mid-1900s, employed bounties, poisons, trapping, and aerial shooting. They succeeded in extirpating wolves from all of the lower 48 states except Minnesota, where a tiny remnant population sought refuge in the Northwoods.

The gray wolf finally earned protections under the ESA in 1974, but those protections have constantly been under attack by livestock and hunting interests. The protections, though undermined by illegal killings and continued habitat loss, have allowed wolves gradually to make their way back to Wisconsin and Michigan. Reintroduction projects have also allowed the gray wolf to begin recovery in the west and southwest.

Approximately 3,700 wolves, 2,400 of them in Minnesota, are now known to live in the contiguous 48 states. This is certainly an improvement for the species, but most of the wolves outside of Minnesota exist in small, isolated populations, surrounded by lands where wolves are not welcome. What's more, the habitat that gray wolves now occupy represents only a small fraction of their historical habitat. Substantially more suitable habitat is available in regions where wolves have not yet naturally recolonized and where no plans for reintroduction exist.

Gray wolf populations are currently found in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming. Wolves from these states have also made short-lived forays into neighboring states such as Oregon, Washington, Utah, and North Dakota. Until March 18, gray wolves were listed under the ESA as threatened in Minnesota and endangered in the remaining lower 48 states.

In places where they have been reintroduced (such as Yellowstone National Park and central Idaho), wolves were (and still are) classified as "experimental, non-essential," a designation that allows for more relaxed management, which translates into more killing.

One of the many gray wolf subspecies, the Mexican gray wolf (*Canis lupus baileyi*), or "lobo," has been reintroduced in eastern Arizona and allowed to disperse into New Mexico. There are only about 200 Mexican gray wolves, most of them in captive breeding programs. Of the 34 Mexican gray wolves released since 1998, only 22 are still free-ranging. Five have been shot, one disappeared, one was hit by a vehicle, and five were returned to captivity.

~Reprinted with permission from the Humane Society of the United States Weekly Newsletter, April 1, 2003

Become a Beaver Defender! Fill out the Membership Form on page 15 and join today!

The New 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 through education and example.

The New Beaver Defenders Membership Application

Name: _____

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

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- What Beavers do for Waterways
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- Slandered Do-gooders (snake information)
- The Square of Flesh
- Chopper, in Memoriam
- Intruder in a Cageless Zoo (by Ferris Weddle)
- Is it Safe to Come Near You? You Won't Hurt Me, Will You?

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



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