

The BEAVER

UNEXPECTED WILDLIFE REFUGE, INC.

Article by David Ropeik,
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DEFENDERS

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BEAVER DEFENDERS approve challenge and healthy sport. The fascinating sport of beaver-watching is fun for all--including the beavers.

Defenders: 'Don't Wipe Out Beavers'

State: 'Let Kids Kill if They're Not Trouble-Makers'

NEWFIELD — A south New Jersey woman, an ardent "beavers are beautiful" enthusiast, has founded a group pledged to prevent their furry friends from becoming extinct in the Garden State.

There is little doubt that Mrs. Hope Sawyer Buyukmichi's "Beaver Defenders" are on the march with the state Conservation Department as their target.

The state plans a brief beaver season in February in which 100 \$5 permits will be issued for the taking of five beavers each, except in, or close, to beaver colonies posted by the Conservation

Department's Fish and Game Division.

THE BEAVER Defenders contend that taking all 500 beavers allowed could make them virtually extinct. A Fish and Game spokesman admitted there are only about 800 beavers left in the state.

"Although hundreds of miles of New Jersey streams are without beavers, the state plans another open season," said Mrs. Buyukmichi. "Why are these quiet, steadfast and valuable engineers persecuted?"

The Cumberland County woman charged the beavers were being trapped for their

fur, and expressed the belief that, if enough people started shouting, instead of whispering, about the problem, the season could be cancelled.

UNDER direct fire from the Defenders is Fred Space, head of the state Fish and Game Council which is made up of three farmers, six sportsmen and two commercial fishermen.

"We're not going to exterminate the beaver," he said, and contended beavers' "tremendous ability to reproduce" would prevent that.

Purpose of the trapping, he said, is twofold. One reason is to stop beavers from building dams that flood farmlands. The other is "healthy sport."

MANY of the trappers are teenagers who, Space said, pick up \$10 a pelt and profit from the "challenge" of the experience he termed "outdoorsy."

"These kids aren't the ones causing all the trouble," he said. "They aren't hippies or radicals. They aren't the kind that go to these jam sessions and take dope and run around naked."

The Beaver Defenders say children may never get to see a beaver if the teenagers are allowed to continue.

A FISH and Game official reported that beaver colonies were being protected in four state preserves and about two private ones. Mrs. Buyukmichi said this was not so because beavers stray far from their colonies and are protected only within 200 feet of such posted preserves.

The Beaver Defenders admit beavers do, sometimes, flood a little farmland, but, generally, preserve great quantities of water as a significant resource through their dam-building activity.

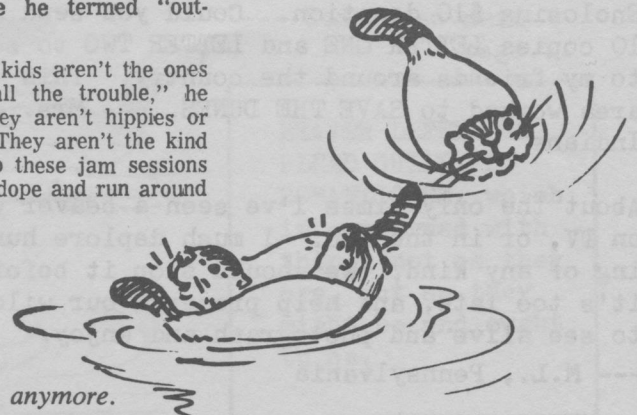
In her Beaver Defenders newsletter, the Beaver Defender director raised the group's battle cry: "Save the beaver and restore our children's heritage."

The Beavers' view is thus expressed by a New Jersey member, a teacher of elementary school children:

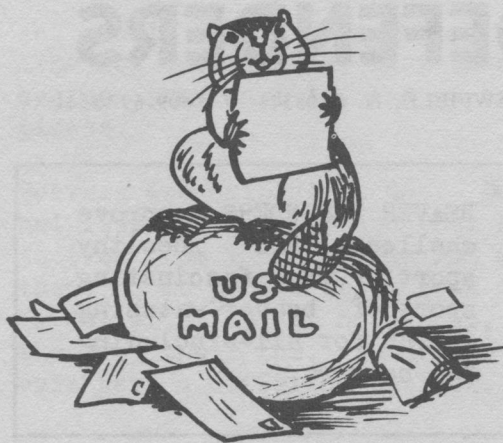
TRAPPERS---BEWARE

We're setting a trap for humans.
We hope they take the bait.
We want to captivate their hearts
Before it is too late.

--- By Betto Seitz, for The
Beaver Defenders



They shall never be trapped anymore.



I am interested in helping to save the beavers. Please include me. --- Mrs. L.D., Louisiana

There is no excuse for anyone to trap an animal and leave it to suffer for days until its eventual death. Although I have never seen a beaver or otter in my native Michigan, I've come to know them on trips to Northern Ontario. They are delightful. How anyone can harm them for mere want of fur is beyond me. I believe the answer to this horrid practice lies with the people who buy fur-trimmed articles. If all women, and men, would refuse to buy anything with fur on it, the trapper would have no means by which to support his crime.

Please let me know how else I can help. Urging people to stop buying furs is one way, but there must be other ways I can help. Let me be an extension of your Helping Hand. --- Miss S.P., Michigan

I have written to all the state legislators concerning the anti-trapping legislation. If I can be of any more assistance to you, I hope you will let me know. There is so much room for improvement in the wildlife struggle and work to prevent cruelty to animals. --- Miss R.T., New Jersey

Enclosing \$10 donation. Could you send me 10 copies LETTER ONE and LETTER TWO to send to my friends around the country. This area worked to SAVE THE DUNES. --- Mrs. J.N., Indiana

About the only times I've seen a beaver was on TV, or in the zoo. I much deplore hunting of any kind. We should stop it before it's too late, and help preserve our wildlife to see alive and photograph and enjoy.

--- M.L., Pennsylvania

Although I cannot offer a contribution at present, I would like you to know that you have my whole-hearted support. I am fully opposed to any kind of trapping and/or use of poisons. You may use my name in any effort toward conservation of our wildlife resources and to prevent pain to our animal friends. --- Gary S. Bogart, New York

I'm a blank when it comes to verse, but I'll keep your request for beaver poem in mind, and after I get another copy of Beaver Defenders, I might get some teacher to work on the project as a school assignment.

Two Pendleton kids are pushing an organization for 19-year-old kids to vote. I sent them your brochure and some other animal leaflets. They offer to keep our literature in their office to pass out. We all know it's hard to penetrate the hard shells of most adults, and our best bet to make a better world is to impress the younger generation---to encourage these fine young people. I plan to get to Pendleton some Saturday and talk with these kids and leave more material.
--- Mrs. L.W., Oregon

I have found the only effective way to slow up the trappers is to literally run them out of my swamp, and in other places to run their trap lines just behind them to spring and/or remove the traps and snares. So far my beavers and wolves are doing all right, but I'm in trouble with all my bounty-hunting neighbors. At least an awareness is growing in the area. Thanks for the encouragement! --- M.F.G., Ontario, Canada

I share your desperate concern to save beavers, and I do want to join the Beaver Defenders. I have never known a beaver intimately, and only wish I could. The only ones I have ever seen were in Green River in Utah, where my son, who is with the National Park Service, was stationed at Dinosaur National Monument. They were playing in the river near Alan as he swam nearby, and I thought them delightful. --- Mrs. K.M., North Carolina



"Playing in the river."

HAVE YOU MET . . . THE BEAVER?

By Hope Sawyer Buyukmihci

He has delicate black hands, grotesque outsize webbed hind feet, expressive eyes, cuddly waterproofed fur and a talent for dam-building and making underwater roads. He also likes to sing.

The beaver is one of nature's greatest engineers. He knows just where to build dams for the best conservation of water, always keeping in mind where his lodge will be situated and how he can get food without staying long on land. Water is his best protection, and he stays close to it. You will rarely see a dry beaver in the wild, for he takes frequent dips.

A baby beaver is born fully furred, with his eyes open. He is in such a hurry to dunk himself that his mother sometimes has to pull him back by his pingpong-paddle tail when he dives into the water too recklessly. He is born on a bed of fresh, clean wood shavings on a shelf above water, inside his sturdy lodge, which is completely surrounded with water. Inside the lodge, in the center, is a swimming pool which has underwater passages to the outside.

It is fun to watch a baby beaver come out from his home for the first time. He may emerge when he is about two weeks old---maybe sooner. He has managed to duck down through the water, scramble along the deep passageway, and come popping out on the surface with a Glub! Glub! There he looks for the first time at the beautiful trees and bushes, the waterlilies and other water plants which cast reflections into his home pool. He practices swimming, exploring and playing water games, as well as finding many tasty leaves, stems and roots to eat.

Beavers like to wrestle, grasping each other by the shoulders and pushing with all their might. The winner is the one who pushes the other over backward, either on land or in the water. They find floating pieces of stick and nudge it along with their noses, like a boy playing with a hoop. They like to dive in with a derisive flip of their tails, then swim underwater and come up right under their parents, giving the old folks a scare. When logs and branches are being stored for winter food, young beavers come slyly along and pull out a piece to eat. They soon learn better, though, and come swimming with a big branch to tuck into the family pantry.

A mother beaver utters a sharp hiss to scold her young one, and if that doesn't make him mind, she lunges at him through the water and gives him a hard push with her nose. She teaches him to eat from his own stick, not hers, and she shows him how to comb his hair.

The mother and father beaver guard their children, and they see that there is plenty of water and food. The babies may ride on the mother's tail, play diving and swimming games with her, or with their father, and when very small may tease their mother until she holds them in her arms and rolls over and over with them in the water.

Beavers do sing. One cold January night a naturalist sitting in a blind near a beaver lodge heard four young beavers humming in harmony within the lodge, which was covered with snow and surrounded by ice.

Beavers are ready to make friends with man. People who befriend beavers have enticed the youngsters to their laps and fed them and petted them and scratched behind their ears. As do all wild animals, beavers love freedom

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FOR BEAVERS' SAKE

Plan ONE PROJECT
A DAY... A WEEK...
or A MONTH.
Tell us about it,
if it succeeds.
If it should fail,
START ANOTHER.

BEAVER DEFENDERS
PLEAD GUILTY TO
ROMANTICISM, which
is concerned with
things not as they
are, but as they
might be and ought
to be.

and should never be caught or imprisoned. Like all our friends, they should come because they want to, and go as they please.

Beavers are helpful to man. But they are helpless before him, and they need protection from those who do not understand them. Some people still look on beavers as dollar bills, or nuisances, and trap them for their fur. Those who know beavers have a different outlook.



Dale Hylton, Director, National Humane Education Center, Waterford, Virginia, in a recent Kindness Club newsletter put out by the Center, published a profile on THE BEAVER.

Says Hylton: "I'm for an all-out campaign to ban the taking of beavers by anyone except authorized conservation employees, and that must be restricted to transplanting for their (the beavers') own welfare."

LITTLE BEAVER---CONSERVATIONIST

Little brown brother of water and stream,
At your employment, of what do you dream:
Reservoirs---homes of more creatures than you---
Joy of the waterfowl, sharing them, too?

Little brown brother, this work is your plan:
Damming the waters long-wasted by man;
Neatly retaining their use for the rest:
Small conservationist---one of the best.

--- By Louise Weibert Sutton, Indiana,
for the Beaver Defenders

SHARING THE WORLD

Beavers are some of America's best conservationists. By damming up shallow streams they help provide water in dryer seasons, in ponds, which are shared by other wildlife, including waterfowl, otters, fish, water snakes, frogs and other wildlings which are becoming scarce. These ponds after awhile form silt, which gradually may become marshy meadowlands, richly abundant with wildflowers and other plants. As the beavers move on, they clear off the riverbanks and give more space to young trees which were once crowded and spindly.

Beavers have long been exterminated by hunters in areas where they were most numerous and are in great danger of becoming extinct. Man has too long regarded dominion over smaller species as meaning, "Tromp down, walk over, use up." Now, suddenly visualizing a world denuded by his lack of regard, he has had to come to a stop, and is

at last taking a critical look at himself and his fellows. He has begun to gradually see that dominion need not mean aggression, but that actually, it is stewardship over all the works of the Great Creator.

Not only are the quiet little folks of woods and stream, the beavers, in danger of extinction. Man himself is in danger if he fails to act wisely in conserving the earth and its other useful inhabitants.

Man should not only make laws to protect wildlife, he should obey them, and teach his children to, so that the beavers and other fine friends of this lovely earth may not some day be just a drawn picture in a book---instead of happy fellow creatures, alive, enjoyable, and still sharing the world with man.

--- By Louise Weibert Sutton

"We have heard much of the wonderful intelligence of the beaver, but that regard for the beaver is all a pretense, and we would give more for a beaver hat than to preserve the intelligence of the whole race of beavers." --- Henry David Thoreau, in 1859.