

SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

Look for it now in Southwest Ohio!

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"Beaver" by Max Saeling, Unsplash



"Beaver Dam" by Luther Goldman, USFWS



"Beaver" by Tim Umphreys, Unsplash

American Beaver (*Castor canadensis*)

By Melissa Proffitt, Education and Communication Specialist,
Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District

There are two distinct species of beavers: the Eurasian beaver found in Europe and Asia, and the American beaver found across North America, including here in Ohio. April is when our native beavers start to emerge after several months of confinement in their lodges during the winter. These animals are well adapted to life in the water, equipped with webbed feet, a flat tail, clear "third-eyelids," and waterproof fur!

Beavers are North America's largest rodent. The rodent family is known for having big front teeth, and beavers put those impressive chompers to use felling trees for food, lodge and dam construction, and the creation of wetlands. Wetlands are special aquatic ecosystems that work as nature's filtration system, cleaning pollutants out of the water. These traits earn the American beaver the title of "nature's best engineer!" Want to learn more and do a fun activity with the kids? Check out Warren County SWCD's program [Dress Like a Beaver](#) on YouTube!

To learn more about this species, visit page 16 of Ohio Division of Wildlife's [Mammals of Ohio field guide](#).

FUN FACTS

- The only rodent in the world that is larger than the beaver is the capybara of South America
- Beaver babies, called kits, are born in late-spring to mid-summer. Their eyes are already open, they are fully furred, and they can swim within 24 hours
- Beavers have orange teeth, caused by iron-rich enamel
- Their teeth never stop growing, so it is important for them to gnaw and chew to keep their teeth worn down
- The average lifespan of a wild beaver is 24 years