

LEVELED BOOK • J

Want to Be a Beaver?



Written by Bonnie Highsmith Taylor

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Do you like to play in water?
Do you like to swim?
If you do, then you might like life
as a **beaver**.



When you're a beaver, you can
swim days after being born.
As an adult, you can hold your
breath for fifteen minutes.



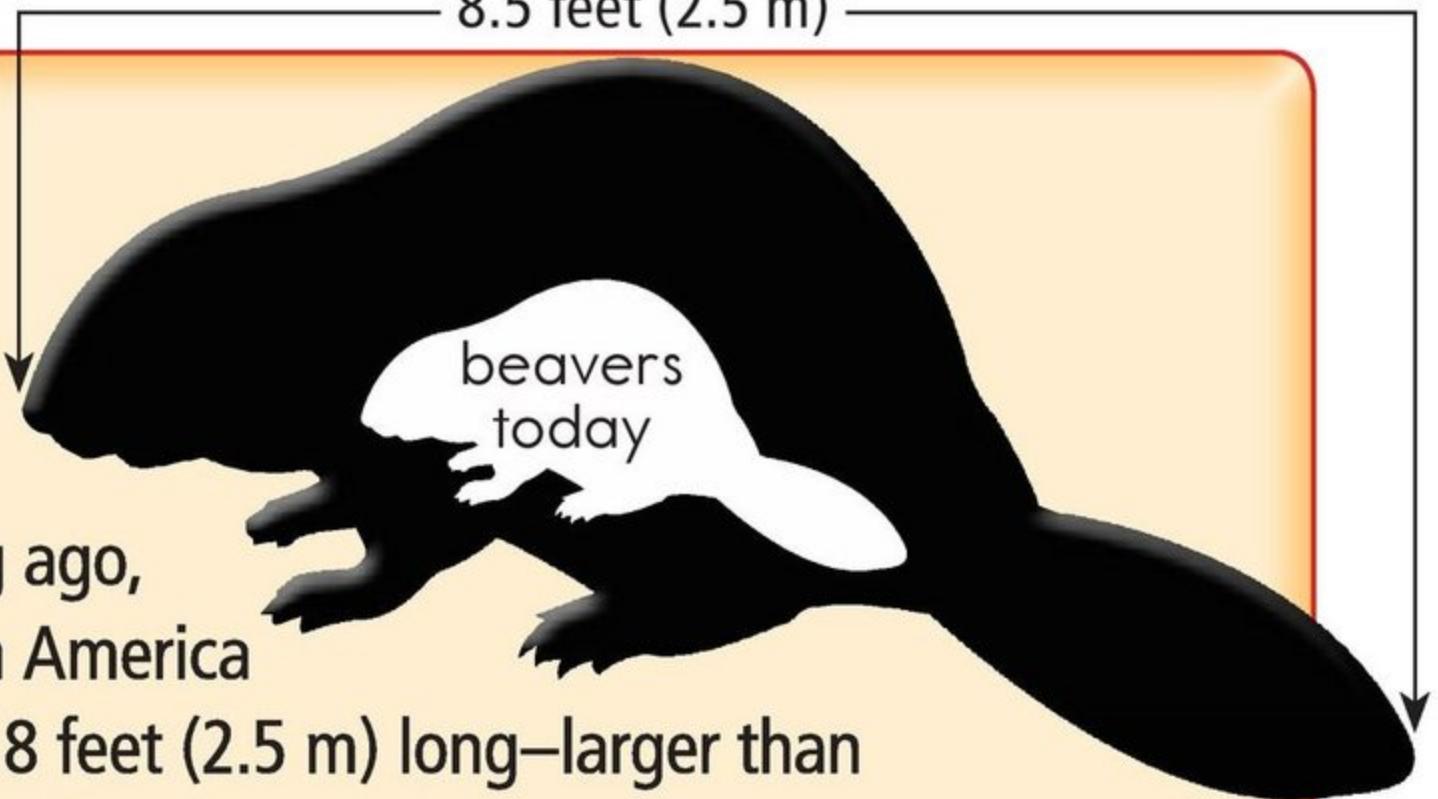
A beaver's clear eyelids work as swim goggles do for people.

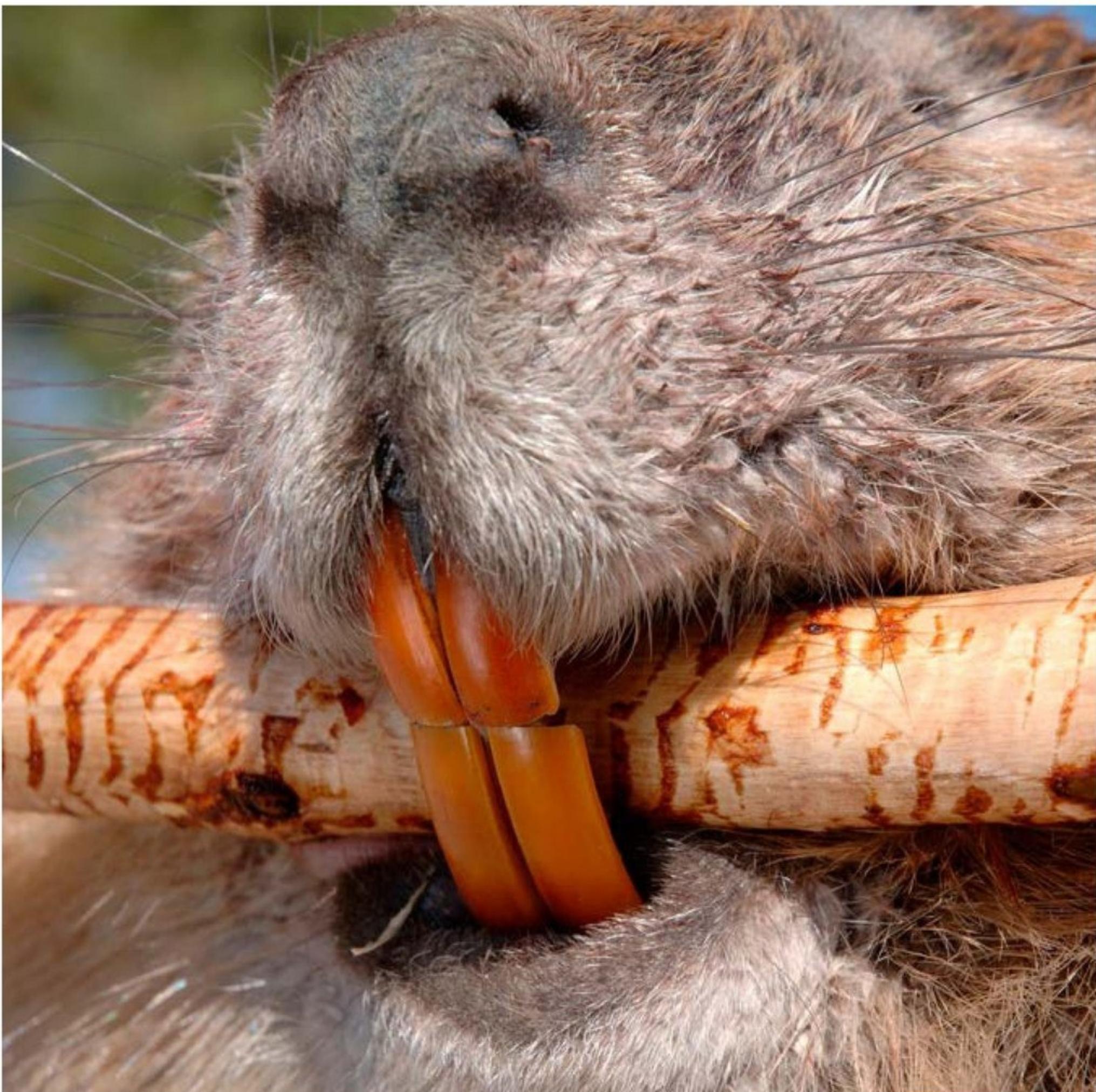
A set of clear eyelids allows you to see underwater.

You can also close your nose and ears to keep out water.

Do You Know?

Beavers are not as big as they used to be. Long ago, beavers in North America were more than 8 feet (2.5 m) long—larger than a black bear today!





Beaver lips close behind the front teeth. This allows beavers to carry branches in their mouths without swallowing water.

Your four huge front teeth never stop growing!
Chewing on wood all the time keeps them from growing too long.
You can chew through a skinny tree in twenty minutes.



Beavers often cut down trees with skinny trunks, but not always.

Why do you want to chew through
a tree? To build a dam!



Dandy Dams

In a week, a beaver family can build a dam that is 35 feet (10.7 m) long. Some dams, built over many years, have been more than 1,000 feet (305 m) long!

Beaver dams create ponds, which provide a place to live for many plants as well as fish, turtles, frogs, birds, and other animals. Humans dislike the dams, though, when they flood human homes and farmland.

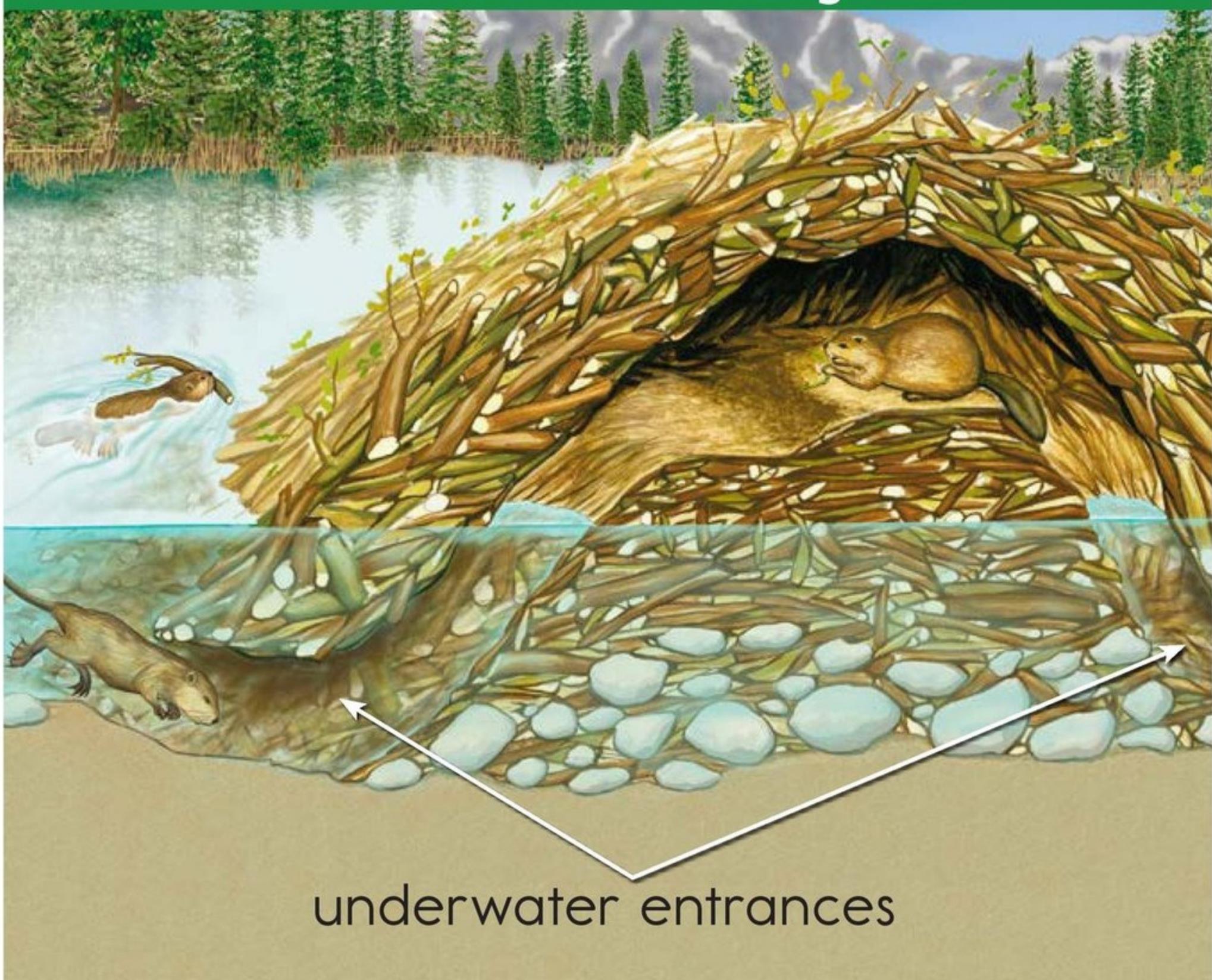
Behind the dam, you build your home, called a **lodge**.

A lodge is shaped like a dome and made of sticks and mud.

In cold weather, the mud freezes hard.

This keeps the lodge warm.

Look Inside a Lodge



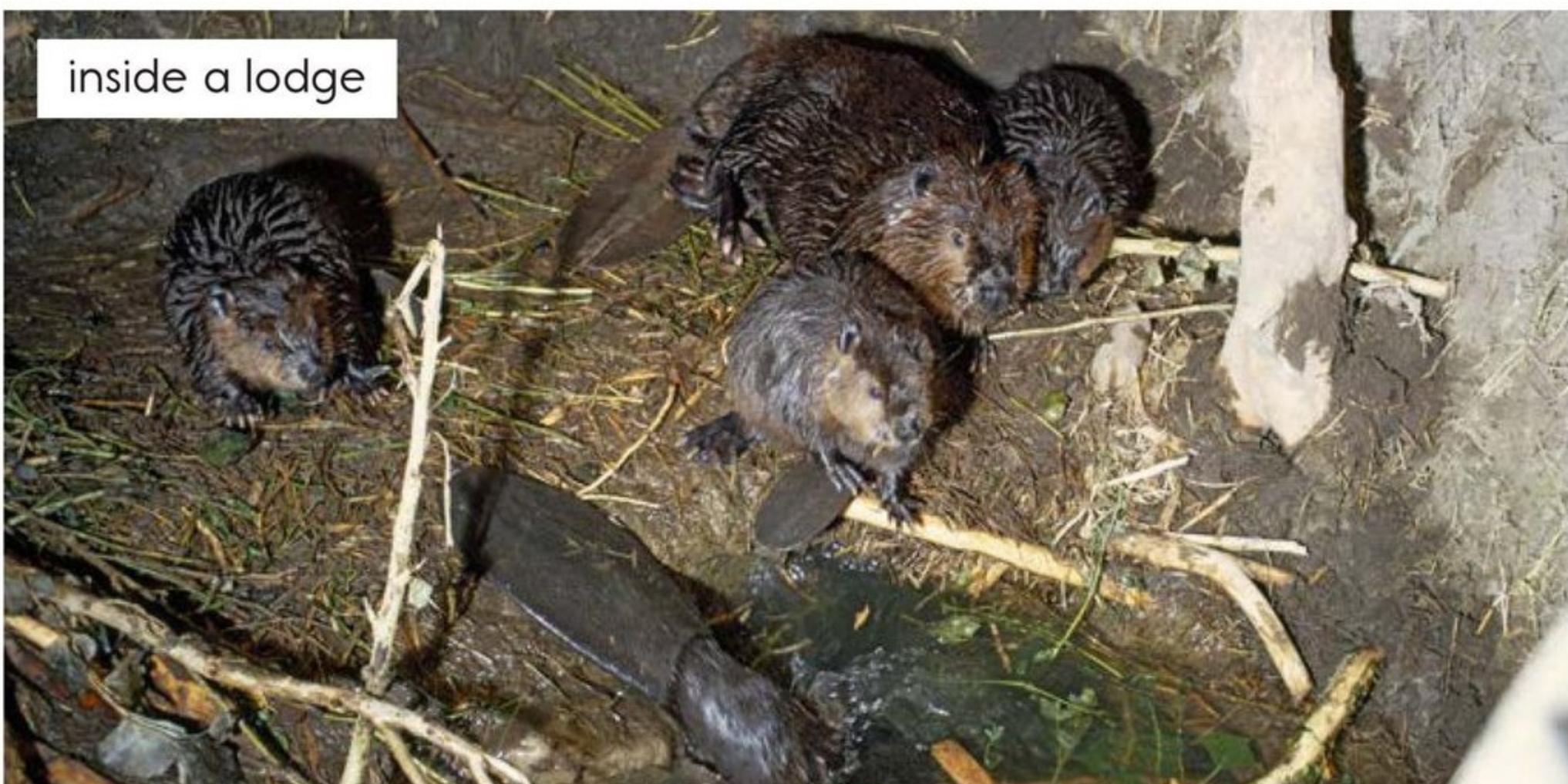
The hidden entrances and water around the beaver's home make it very safe.

outside a lodge



A beaver's lodge can be 40 feet (12 m) across and 10 feet (3 m) high. That's bigger than a double garage!

inside a lodge

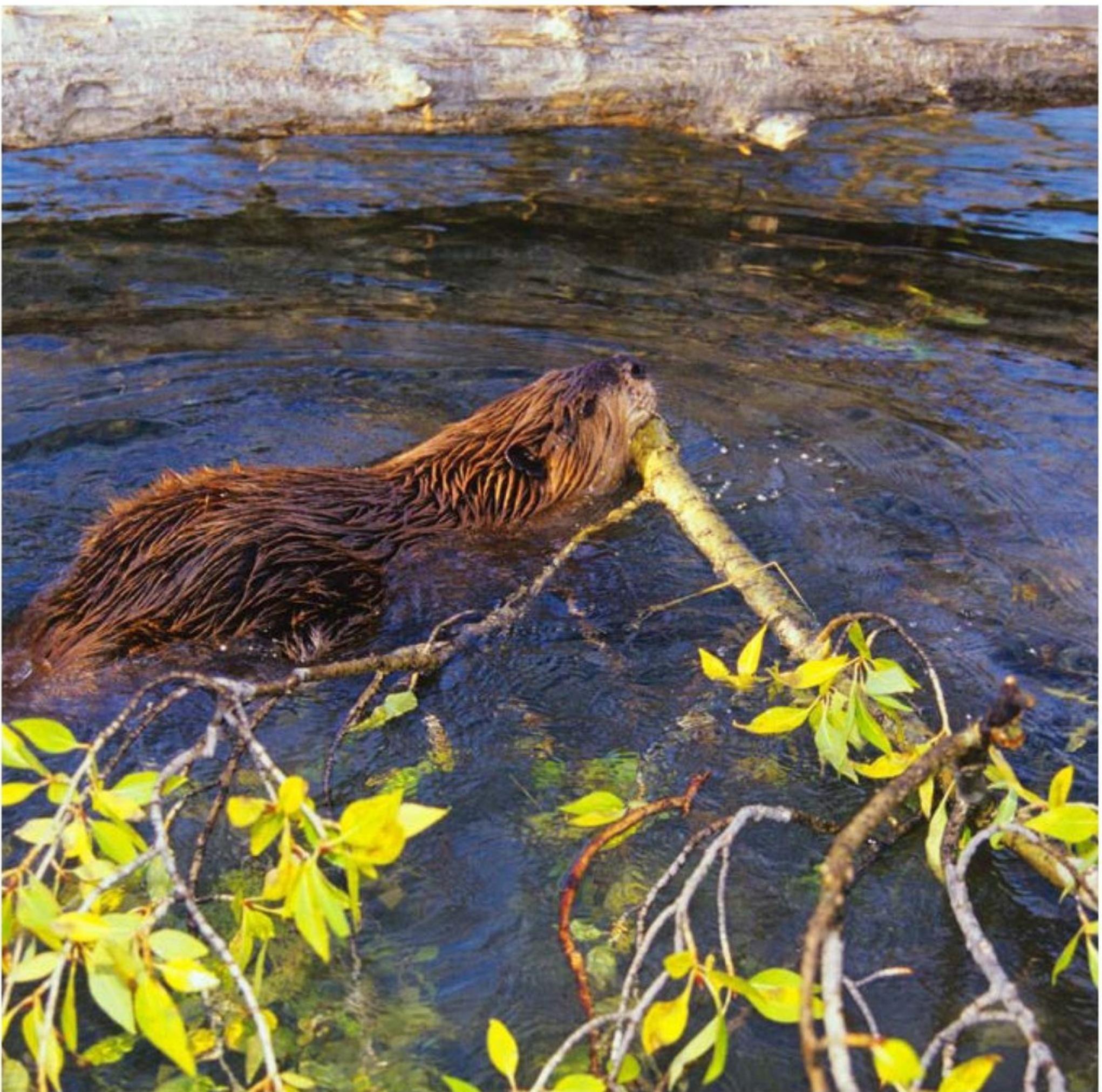


In spring, beaver mothers give birth to three or four babies, or kits. The parents raise them in the lodge.

Your family, called a **colony**, lives

in the lodge together.

You and your mate stay together
for many years.



Because beavers store food underwater, they can still eat, even if the top of the water freezes.

As a beaver, you waste nothing.
You eat the leaves, twigs, and bark
of the trees you cut down.
You **store** enough limbs under the
water near your lodge to last all
winter.



Beavers eat grasses, apples, water lilies, and lots and lots of trees.

In the spring, you dine on ferns
and water plants.

You fill up on roots, too.



Like humans, beavers can change the land around them.

Storing food and working on your
dam keeps you busy.

You work mostly at night because
you are **nocturnal**.

Do You Know?

When people work hard, we say they are “busy as a beaver.”

Some animals hunt you because
you're slow on land.

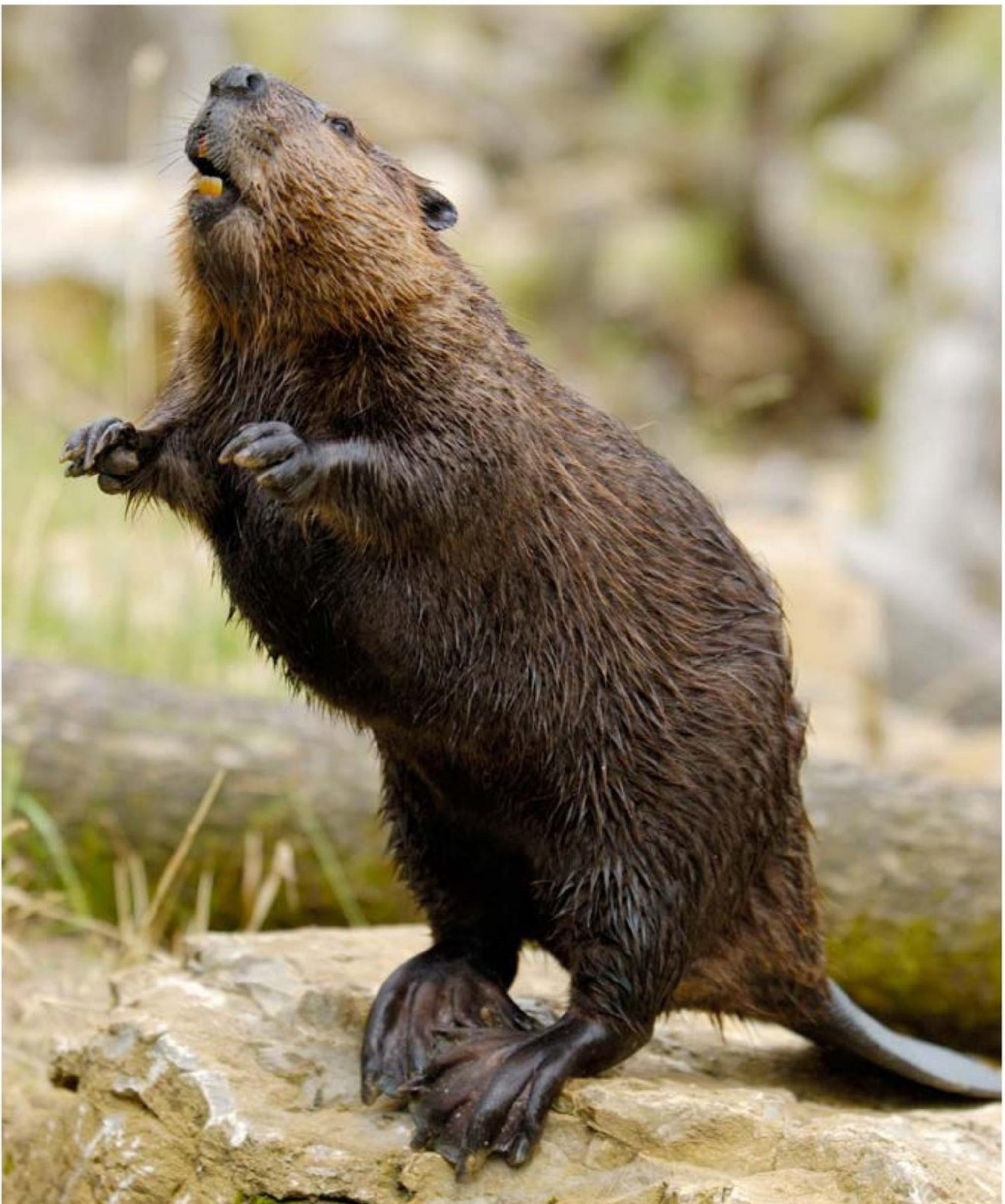
You're safe in the water, though.

When an enemy comes close,
you slap the water with your flat,
wide tail.

The loud sound may warn other
beavers.



By 1900, beavers were almost gone from North America. Today, beaver numbers have bounced back.



A beaver's tail may be 16 inches (41 cm) long.

Your tail also helps you balance
when you stand.

It helps you steer when you swim.
It even stores fat for the winter.



Young beavers usually remain with their parents for two years.

If you like water and don't mind work, then you might like being a beaver.



Beavers live in many types of places. Those places all have one thing in common, though. Can you guess what it is?

Glossary

beaver (n.)	a furry mammal with a large, flat tail (p. 3)
colony (n.)	a group of animals that live together (p. 9)
dam (n.)	a barrier that stops the flow of water (p. 7)
lodge (n.)	the home of a beaver (p. 8)
nocturnal (adj.)	active at night rather than during the day (p. 12)
store (v.)	to keep or collect something to use later (p. 10)

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