

Beaver Largest Rodent Found In North America

(Editor's Note: This is the second of three articles on Oregon's fur bearing animals and trapping industry.)

By GORMAN HOGAN

PORTLAND (AP) — What is it that keeps the busy beaver so busy? For one thing, his long front teeth keep growing continually and he has to do a lot of chewing to keep them worn down. Of course, he's fond, too, of tender, juicy trees which makes up a big part of his food supply.

Besides his fur, the beaver is most famous as a dam builder, and that keeps him in the swim of things, so to speak.

Clumsy on land, the beaver, in his fight for survival, builds these dams so that his home may have an entrance always under water. While most of his dams are less than 300 feet long and 5 feet high, one in Montana measured more than 2,140 feet long.

The beaver, closely related to rats, mice and squirrels, is the largest rodent found in North America.

Oregon beavers, which grow 3 to 4 feet long and weigh 40 to 50 pounds, usually build their homes by digging a den into the bank of a stream. Beaver fur, prime in the winter, is a rich brown in color with two main layers, one of coarse guard hairs and the other of soft fur prized for coats.

Last year beaver pelts averaged \$12.78 each, starting low and climbing to a top of \$35. This year's opening price was around \$30. Chester E. Kebbe, chief biologist in charge of fur resources and water law for the State Game Commission, says:

The muskrat might be called the poor relation of the beaver but he is an important fur-bearing animal because he has such a multitude of brothers. While muskrat pelts are valued at only 65 cents apiece, more than 10 million are sold annually in this country.

Some of the more valuable pelts in Oregon come from the Klamath area where, as in other districts, farmers can, with proper management, harvest the muskrat as a crop of the land. Farmers and their families can trap any of the fur-bearing animals on their own land without paying a license fee.

In general appearance, the muskrat is a small replica of the beaver, except for the tail. The soft gray fur is dense and the darker the better. It is covered, as with the beaver, by longer brownish guard hairs.

The real prize for the trapper is the musk, since this fur has become a mark of opulence and on occasion has been prominently mentioned in the field of political influence.

The really valuable musk are the rare domesticated color mutations, but the wild musk, though hard to catch, is always sought by the trapper. While the average price of \$14.72 last year is not much above the average for beaver, the demand for musk is constant and the pelts are easily cared for.

Though popular with the human race, the musk is a much despised fellow in the animal world. He is a crafty, aggressive killer and a nuisance to poultry raisers, sometimes raiding roosts and killing chickens at night just for amusement.

Musk are found on most streams, lakes and coastal lands in Oregon. The fur is soft and shiny with a uniform russet to dark chocolate brown color.

Next: There's money in trapping.



BLAST RIPS UNION OFFICIAL'S AUTO—Shown above is the explosion shattered auto of Charles Clark, president of Local 746, IUE-CIO, Columbus, O. The car was bombed as Clark addressed a mass meeting of some 3000 Westinghouse strikers at a drive-in-theater a mile from the blast scene.

Production Limits Up To Farmers

WASHINGTON (AP) — If there is to be any overall limitation on farm production next year, the Eisenhower administration will leave it to farmers to impose it upon themselves.

Secretary of Agriculture Benson indicated Tuesday the administration does not intend to propose or to impose restrictions beyond those already required by legislation enacted before World War II. In fact, it wants to go in the opposite direction—toward greater farmer freedom.

The secretary sketched further

outlines of new farm program proposals the administration is preparing for presentation to Congress next month. He talked with newsmen at the conclusion of a two-day meeting of the government's 18-member Agricultural Advisory Commission.

Overproduction and the resulting accumulation of more than seven billion dollars worth of surpluses are accepted on all sides as a major factor in a prolonged decline in farm prices and incomes. These declines have become a major political issue.

Benson told newsmen that new measures will feature a "soil bank" plan under which payments—totaling 400 million dollars next year—would be made to farmers who take land out of surplus crops and put it to grass and trees.

But, he declared, this plan will be "absolutely voluntary." Farmers would be free either to take it or to leave it and continue the production of any crops except those under marketing quotas. Those are wheat, cotton, tobacco, peanuts and possibly rice.

In a recent War of major farm-areas, the Senate Agriculture Committee found many farmers urging use of rigid government controls to require all farmers to take a portion of their tillable land out of production until the surplus problem is solved.

The secretary said the wide range of the voluntary and back plan,

the administration would stress measures to speed up disposal of present farm surpluses and to protect family-type farms.

Meany Raps Tito, Nehru

NEW YORK (AP) — AFL-CIO President George Meany says Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru of India and Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia are "aides and allies of communism."

The nation's top labor leader also attacked "liberals" in this country in a speech Tuesday before the National Religion and Labor Foundation.

Meany said he was disturbed that many U. S. "liberals" are "stone silent" about the loss of human rights in Soviet-dominated countries.

Speaking of Nehru and Tito, Meany said no country can be neutral in the struggle between communism and democracy. He added:

"Nehru and Tito are not neutral. They are aides and allies of communism in fact and in effect, if not in diplomatic verbiage." Meany's speech was made shortly before the announcement in New Delhi of a cooperation pact signed by India and the Soviet Union.

Long White Spud Order Adopted

SACRAMENTO (UP) — An amended marketing order for Long White Potatoes becomes effective one minute after midnight Dec. 20, the California Department of Agriculture announced today.

The department said the new order, a continuation of one which first was put into effect in November, 1953, contains provisions to carry out grade, size and maturity regulations, establish advertising and sales promotion, and to do research in packing and distribution.

The amendments adopted this year provide for increased representation on the Potato Advisory Board, flexibility in maturity provisions and regulations for potatoes marketed for processing.

WOMEN DROWN

TAIPEI, Formosa (AP) — Ten women drowned Tuesday when a ferry boat capsized in Suwei Harbor, southern Formosa. The vessel was carrying more than 50 persons to a ritual in which offerings are made to gods to grant safety.

Commission Sets Poisoning Probe

PORTLAND (AP) — The State Game Commission's plans for poisoning to rid Tenmile Lake on the Oregon Coast of non-game fish will be investigated by the State Fish Commission.

The fish commission heard a report Tuesday from its research director, George Y. Harry, that some areas of the lake are spawning grounds for silver salmon.

Harry said, "Poisoning the lake, Harry said, might result in killing off a whole year's cycle of salmon. The Oregon Salmon Conservation League also opposes the lake poisoning program."

The game commission will hold a public hearing Friday on its plan to restock the lake with rainbow trout.

ACCIDENTS

NORTH LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — W. R. Cook has been involved in only two automobile accidents in his life. One of them happened yesterday (no one was hurt). The other occurred 13 years ago, also on Dec. 13. Both times Cook was driving on 13th Street.

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