

Return of Beaver to Pennsylvania

In early March 1934, Edward Loop trapped a 29 pound beaver. What made this catch news worthy was the fact that it happened near Glen Iron in Pennsylvania. For the first time in 31 years, Pennsylvania trappers were free to trap beavers from March 1 to April 10.

Though no beaver had been seen in Pennsylvania since 1900, the State Legislature declared a permanent closed season in 1903. Twelve years later a pair of beavers were brought in from Wisconsin and turned loose in a State game refuge. At intervals over the next nine years, the Pennsylvania Game Commission imported 46 more pairs.

With each beaver mother producing two to six kits per year, a protected beaver population doubles roughly every year. By 1933, Pennsylvania's 94 beavers had become 15,000 and citizens had started to complain. The beavers had flooded farms and roads, plugged mill races, and destroyed valuable timber. The damage in 1933 totaled \$20,000. If nothing interfered, Pennsylvania would have 1,976,080,000 beavers doing \$2,623,040,000

worth of damage by 1950. The Pennsylvania Game Commission decided they had to act before this happened.

With 50,000 trappers in Pennsylvania, the Game Commission limited each trapper to ten set traps for beaver at any time and a catch of not more than six beavers during the season. No bea-

no catches, was Beaver County with 1. In 1934, beaver could be legally trapped in only eleven states: Pennsylvania, Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Kentucky, parts of Michigan, Oregon, Texas and Wisconsin.

I encourage those who have information contrary to what is written above to respond via mail, email, phone or the magazine.



ver could be dug or smoked from his lodge, or shot except when found alive in a trap.

The total catch was 6,408 beavers. With a range of \$4-12 and an average of \$10 per pelt, trappers earned over \$60,000. The biggest beaver caught was 71 pounds. Catches were made in 50 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties. The county with the most beaver caught was Potter County with 1,092. Ironically, the county with the smallest catch, excluding those where there were

References:

Beavers in Pennsylvania. TIME Magazine. March 12, 1934.
Beaver Catch. TIME Magazine. May 21, 1934.

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