



# Beaver Control - What a landowner CAN do in South Carolina

**Hunting/Shooting:** There is no closed season on beaver. Beavers may be hunted year 'round on private lands with a valid hunting license. A free depredation permit can be issued to landowners that do not have a hunting license (see Depredation Permits). A permit is required for anyone to hunt or shoot beavers at night.

- **Rifles can be extremely dangerous when fired into water** and have a tendency to skip (ricochet) off the water's surface. **Rifle bullets may travel 1 to 2 miles after ricocheting off the water's surface.** Use of a 12-gauge shotgun with #4 buckshot is preferred (larger sizes of buckshot, such as 00 or 000, may have too few pellets to be effective). Other shot sizes such as T and F are acceptable.

**Trapping:** The normal trapping season for licensed trappers is Dec. 1 - Mar. 1. **HOWEVER**, a property owner may obtain a free depredation permit to trap outside of the normal trapping season and/or without a trapping license (see Depredation Permits).

### Legal Traps:

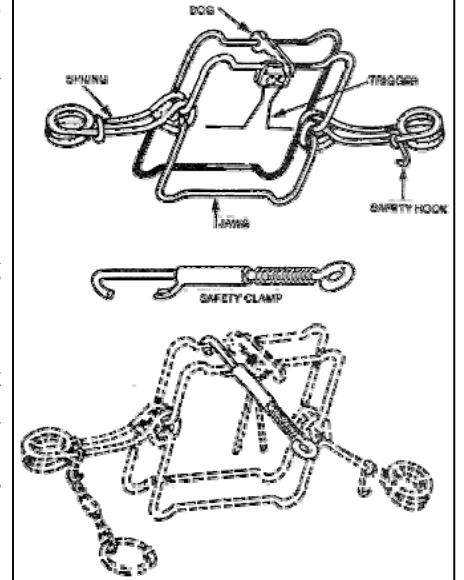
- **Body-gripping traps (Conibear):** Recommended size is the #330. No baits or lures allowed. Must be set in a water or slide set and in the vertical position only. **Note:** use care when using Conibear traps – they are designed to quickly and humanely kill the beaver. Always use the attached safety hooks when setting Conibear traps (see Figure 1 at right).

#### Suggested Conibear #330 Accessories:

- Conibear Setting Tongs - use to facilitate setting body-gripping traps.
- Conibear Safety Gripper - an additional safety clamp device for setting body-gripping traps (see Figure 1).

- **Snares:** Snares are legal in water sets only.
- **Foothold traps:** (recommended for experienced trappers only). Size must be smaller than 6 1/2" inside jaw spread for water sets and 5 3/4" for land sets (see Figure 2 below). Should be used only as a submersion set.
- **Live traps:** (cages, Bailey & Hancock Traps). *The relocation of live beavers is illegal!*

Figure 1. Body-gripping (Conibear) trap diagram (shown in the set position)



DNR publishes a separate Beaver brochure with biological information and additional control tips. This is also available online at: <http://www.dnr.sc.gov/wildlife/beaver/beaver>

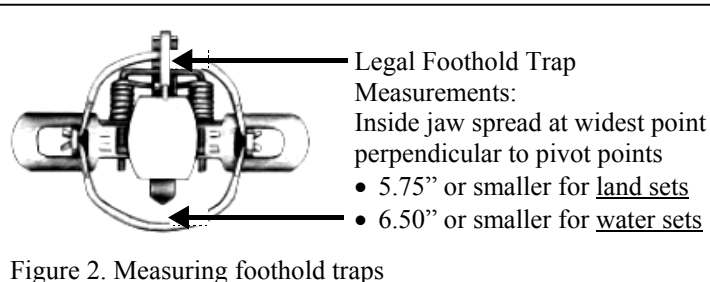
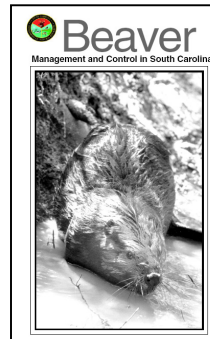


Figure 2. Measuring foothold traps



**Depredation Permits:** A depredation permit allows a property owner (or their designee) to trap or shoot damage-causing beavers without any kind of license or season restrictions. The permit is FREE and available from any of DNR's offices or conservation officers. These permits may also be obtained over the phone. This permit will be good for one year for a specific site (such as Mr. Smith's farm).

**The 100-yard Exemption:** Within 100-yards of the property owner's residence (so long as you are still on your own property), beavers may be trapped or shot (if it is legal to discharge a firearm at the property's location) **WITHOUT ANY KIND OF LICENSE OR PERMIT**. This exemption applies to the property owner or their designee (such as a friend, relative, or any other person designated by the property owner).

**Depredation Permits to shoot at night:** A depredation permit to shoot beavers at night **MUST** be obtained from a local DNR conservation officer. If you do not know a local DNR officer, contact the DNR at 803-955-4000 or 1-800-922-5431 and ask to have a local DNR officer contact you.

**Beaver Dams:** Beaver dams and other woody debris can be removed from any waterway at any time in SC. A sturdy potato rake and working from the downstream side will aid in dam breaching and debris removal.

**Non-Lethal Options:** These options are for reducing beaver damage without removing the beaver.

- **Water Control Devices:** Several non-lethal water control devices are available that may be helpful in maintaining water flow or keeping water control devices free of debris (periodic maintenance is usually required). The Clemson Beaver Pond Leveler is one commonly used design. On the Internet see: <http://masterwildlifer.org/beaver%20pond%20leveler.pdf> (or contact your local Clemson Extension office for design plans).
- **Wire Barriers:** Hardware cloth can be wrapped around individual trees for protection against gnawing. Wrap from the base up to about 3 feet. Fences and fencing can also prevent beavers from entering an area.

**Wildlife Control Operators (WCOs):** For those property owners that wish to pay someone to trap beavers for them, the list of Wildlife Control Operators is available from any DNR office or online at <http://www.dnr.sc.gov/wildlife/nwco.html>. These companies and individuals perform wildlife control services on a contract-fee basis. WCOs are not DNR employees and are not affiliated with the DNR. It is important to ask for references before hiring a WCO. Have all fees and guarantees in writing.

**Questions:** about beavers, legal issues, control techniques, trapping advice, or anything else beaver-related, contact the DNR Furbearer Project at 803-734-3609.