Beavers support turtles



Turtles regulate their body temperature using their surroundings. In warmer months, this means finding safe basking spots where they can warm up in the sun. In winter, turtles sink into the muddy bottoms of ponds where the cold temperatures help them wait out the coldest months without food. Beaver ponds provide ideal conditions in both seasons:

In summer, turtles hang out on beaver lodges, dams, and abundant downed trees. Basking spots surrounded by water are safer from predators than spots on the bank.

In winter, beaver ponds are reliably deep, cold, and oxygen-rich. Temperatures at the bottom consistently remain just above freezing — perfect for slowing a turtle's heart rate and metabolism without the risk of being frozen.



Little turtles, who find logs too hard to climb up on, will bask on top of the abundant aquatic vegetation and tangles of beaver sticks.

Old ponds have more turtles

Older beaver wetlands support more turtles, though it's not yet clear why. Current theories speculate that many factors play a role. As beaver wetlands age, they create more habitat, including more logs in the water for basking, lots of established aquatic vegetation to eat, and reliable water levels. All these factors add up to more baby turtles surviving to maturity.

The evolution of these turtle species has been influenced by beaver habitat: *Actinemys marmorata, Chelydra serpentina, Chrysemys picta, Clemmys guttata, Emydoidea blandingii, Emys orbicularis, Glyptemys insculpta, Graptemys geographica, Sternotherus odoratus, Trachemys scripta.*

For more information and references visit: projectbeaver.org

PROJECT BEAVER