



## *Amik* (beaver)

Beavers are the largest member of the rodent family in North America. They were an important animal for the fur trade, when they were trapped and their pelts traded or sold to make hats and goods. Traditionally, Native people caught them for food and other items.

Beavers alter the places they live by cutting down trees with their teeth to build their homes. Their front teeth are orange from an iron coating that makes them stronger and holds a sharp edge. Did you know they can cut down a six-inch-thick tree in fifteen minutes? Beavers raise their families in lodges they build of sticks and mud. They escape predators by swimming into their den through underwater openings. They have special coverings, like goggles, for their eyes and close their nose and ears to be able to stay underwater for as long as twenty minutes!

Beaver lodges block streams and trap water to make ponds. These ponds can be homes for other animals and fish. Beavers work hard to plug holes to keep their lodges dry inside and maintain the ponds. If beavers leave an area, their lodges fall apart, the ponds disappear, and the remaining area dries into a fertile meadow. These meadows act as sponges, absorbing flood waters that later serve as caches in times of drought.



