

# Beavers in Culture

## Oregon State Animal

The beaver was declared Oregon's official state animal in 1969 (State Symbols, USA). Oregon has also been nicknamed "The Beaver State," coming from Oregon's history of 19<sup>th</sup> century fur trading. The symbol appears on the back of the state's flag. Oregon State University, one of Oregon's top colleges adopted the beaver as their official mascot, with the name "Benny the Beaver."



Image by Wikimedia



Photo taken by Anonymous 2006

## New York City

The official flag of New York City has a beaver, if one looks carefully. The meaning of the beaver comes from the Dutch East India Company (NYC.gov). The Dutch East India Company is considered to have been the first corporation of the world and the first company to issue stock (Exchanges Handbook, 2011). The beaver is associated with the fur trading that took place at the time.



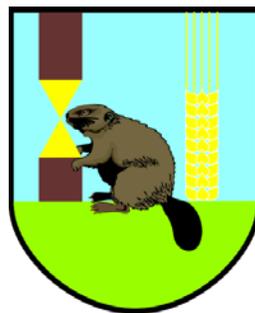
City of New York, 2010

## The Coat of Arms

The beaver is found in many Coats of Arms. The Coat of Arms was used by knights in the Medieval Era (5<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> Century) to protect them during battle. The symbol on the Coat of Arms represented family names, hierarchies, states, and regions.



Coat of Arms ~ Brevedent Harnosand  
Sweden



Coat of Arms ~ Loma Commune  
Poland



Coat of Arms ~ Saint Larent  
France

## **Canada**

The beaver has been upheld in symbolism in Canada for decades. It became designated as the national animal in 1975, has appeared on the Coat of Arms for Hudson Bay Company, was on the five-cent piece in the mid 1800's, and appeared on the first pictorial postage stamp (Shelley, White, 2011). The beaver is so famous, it also was chosen as the mascot for the 1976 Summer Olympics which were held in Montreal. It was assigned the name "Amik," the Ojibwa tribes name for beaver.



Picture by Zidbosko

## **International Beaver Day**

The first International Beaver Day was declared in 2008 and is held every year on April 7<sup>th</sup>. The date was chosen in honor of Dorothy Roberts (1894-1985) who spent most of her life studying, educating and living with the beavers. She was called the "Beaver Woman," (Beavers Wetlands & Wildlife) and created the Friends of Beaversprite a 1,400 acre Sanctuary located in New York which continues her legacy of protecting and living with the beaver and their habitat. How would you celebrate International Beaver Day?