

Introduction to Beaver Teeth

Beaver teeth are remarkable and play a crucial role in their survival and behavior. Beavers are rodents known for their ability to cut down trees and build dams, and their teeth are specially adapted for this purpose.

Structure of Beaver Teeth

Beavers have two large, strong incisors on the top and bottom of their mouth. These incisors are bright orange in color due to the presence of iron in the enamel, which makes their teeth very hard and resistant to wear. Behind these incisors are their molars, which are used for grinding plant material.

Continuous Growth

One of the most fascinating features of beaver teeth is that their incisors grow continuously throughout their life. This continuous growth is essential because beavers use their teeth constantly to gnaw on wood, which would wear down normal teeth. The continuous growth ensures their teeth stay sharp and at the proper length.

How Beavers Use Their Teeth

Beavers use their sharp incisors to cut down trees and branches, which they use to build dams and lodges. They also strip bark from trees for food. The tough enamel on the front of their teeth allows them to gnaw through wood effectively without dulling quickly.

Self-Sharpening Mechanism

Beaver incisors have a unique self-sharpening mechanism. The front surface of their teeth has hard enamel, while the back surface is softer dentin. As the teeth wear down naturally during gnawing, the softer dentin wears away faster than the enamel, creating a sharp, chisel-like edge.

Importance in the Ecosystem

By cutting trees and building dams, beavers create wetlands that benefit many other species. Their teeth enable this behavior, making them key contributors to ecosystem health.

Summary

- Beaver incisors are large, orange, and highly durable.
- Their teeth grow continuously to compensate for constant gnawing.
- Beavers use their teeth to cut wood for building and food.
- The teeth have a natural self-sharpening design to stay effective.
- These adaptations help beavers shape their environment and support biodiversity.