



<http://www.wildernessclassroom.com/amazon/1.jpg>

OTTERS

An Endangered Species

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Names

There are many different names for the otter. The two main otters are the sea otter and the River otter. The scientific / latin name for the river otter is *Lutra Canadensis*. The scientific / latin name for the sea otter is *Enhydra Lutris*. These names are the main things you would call these two kinds of otters.



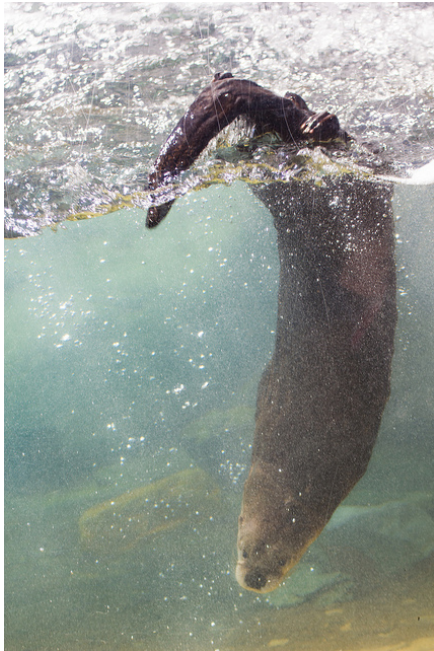
River Otter

http://www.nopnatureimages.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/River_Otter_0931sm.jpg



Sea Otter

<http://www.tuceyphotography.com/blog/wp->



http://farm8.staticflickr.com/7041/6974443291_52fc160f91_z.jpg

Description

Otters have a unique appearance. Otters have long, dark brown fur and a light brown belly. Some older sea otters will have white fur. Sea otters can weigh from 43-82 pounds about the weight of a nine year old human. River otters can weigh from 20-82 pounds. Otters can be 43 inches. from the tip of their nose to the end of their tail. Sea and river otters ears and nostrils will close up when they dive and swim underwater. The male and female otters have a very different way of getting to know each other, compared to humans. Both sexes of the otter will play with each other by rolling on the grass and somersaulting in the water. This will continue for a while or until they feel comfortable mating. When the female is ready to mate, she will roll onto her back with her paws in the air.

Baby otters, also known as pups, are very playful. Baby otters are in their mother for nine weeks before birth. The otter pups are born with their eyes closed, but after one month their eyes will open. Pups stay close to their mother for warmth, because their fur is thin and doesn't give much warmth. These little pups are very fun and frisky.



Mother otter and her young

[http://www.acsalaska.net/~hiadaway/images/Sea Otter Coat Vest.jpg](http://www.acsalaska.net/~hiadaway/images/Sea%20Otter%20Coat%20Vest.jpg)

Habitat

Otters have homes just like us. A river otter will sometimes use an old beaver den as a home to raise her young. Sea otters often sleep together in groups called rafts. Sea otters will eat clams, sea urchins, fish, and eels. The river otter will eat mice, fish, and if they're lucky they'll grab an eel, their favorite snack. Otters will eat the whole fish, even the bones, using their sharp teeth. Clearly otters have a wide variety of food and shelter.



Old beaver den

http://newyorkoutdoors.files.wordpress.com/2007/11/beaver_lodge1.jpg



Raft of Sea Otters

<http://savannahriveroutfitters.files.wordpress.com/2012/02/sea-otter1.jpg>

Range and Population

Ever wonder where in the world the otters live? Sea otters live on the coasts of Asia and North America. They also live in the Pacific Ocean. River otters are more spread out than sea otters. River otters live on five of the seven continent. They don't live in Australia or Antarctica.



Range of the river otter in north america

http://atowhee.files.wordpress.com/2011/11/rangemap_river_otter_550x400.jpg?w=500&h=363



Range of the Sea otter

http://www.otterproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/sea_otter_range_map.jpg

Threats

Sadly, these little critters are being threatened almost to extinction. Otters are being killed by polluted water and fish that have been poisoned by pollution. The great oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 1989, killed a lot of sea otters. Otter pups can be eaten by owls, foxes, and alligators. Stop what can be stopped. A lot of people are buying and selling these animals. Sea otters are hunted for their fur. Otter fur is warm and water proof, so people use it for coats. Trappers will catch and kill as many otters as they need to make a coat sometimes more. It takes a lot of otters to make one coat, that's a lot of killing.



A coat made from otter fur

http://www.acsalaska.net/~hiadaway/images/Sea_Otter_Coat_Vest.jpg

Solutions

Ever wonder how you can help? There are many ways you can help otters like help pick up garbage that has been collected in a river. Stop polluting the water so the otters can swim and eat the fish. Don't pollute the air because it makes ice melt and water to be hotter and otters love to swim in cold water. One person can help by using environment friendly gas and to drive as little as possible. Try to help out and save an animal from extinction.



<http://img.printfection.com/14/171108/yHQdK.jpg>



http://farm1.staticflickr.com/80/219506157_045c4d2282_z.jpg

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