North American River Otter

Lontra canadensis

FactSheet

The North American River Otter is an elusive, semiaquatic member of the Mustelid family. They thrive in healthy watersheds where they can be found individually or in small social groups.

Habitat: A wide variety of aquatic environments, including rivers, lakes, estuaries, marshes and more.

Oceans & Bays

They forage and travel in salt water too!

26-42 Inches

Males and females look similar. Adult males are slightly larger

Scat

Flaky scat with bits of crustacean shell, fish scales and bones. Scat is found at latrine sites on shore.

Tracks

Five toes front and back. Webbed, tracks on sandy beaches often include tail drag

? River Otter or Sea Otter?

You can encounter both otters in salt water. How do you tell them apart?

- Sea Otters float on their backs, River Otters don't.
- In the water, River Otters are always active and moving quickly.
- Sea Otters are clumsy on land and rarely seen on shore. River Otters are agile both in and out of the water.

That's a Sea Otter! →

Diet

Fish, fish fish!

Crustaceans, insects, amphibians and occasionally birds and small mammals may be part of the diet.

Small prey is eaten at the water's surface, large prey is taken to shore.

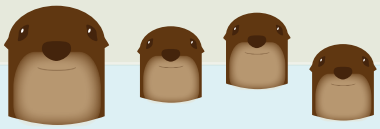
Range

Reproduction

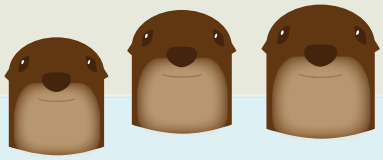
Breeding takes place from December-April. 1-5 blind, helpless pups are born in an on-shore den between February and April. Pups are raised into adulthood by the mother. At two months old she teaches her playful pups to swim.

Social Groups

Family Group (Female with offspring)



Males can form groups of 2-17 individuals



Visit **www.riverotterecology.org** for more information, to report your otter sightings and to support local River Otters!

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