

River Otters

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Otters

An otter is an aquatic member of the weasel family. There are two types of otters common to the United States, the sea otter and the North American river otter. Otters are a type of **mammal** and live to be about 8 to 9 years old.



Personality



River Otters do almost as well on land as they do in water. They can run and bound on land as well as swim very effectively.

Otters are known to be very playful, enjoying sliding down snowy hills, splashing in the water, and playing with their otter families.

Habitat

The river otter lives in the rivers of Northern



America as well as streams, lakes, and **reservoirs.**

The main habitat of otters is in the water, but they go onto land as well. They

make their homes in burrows on the water's edge. Their homes feature many tunnels that

allow the otters to come and go as they please.

Diet

Otters hunt at night and eat most anything they can find. Otters are mostly **carnivorous**, and fish are their favorite food, but they will also eat turtles, insects, **amphibians**, crustaceans, and crayfish.



Traits

Otters swim by using their powerful tails to propel themselves and then wiggling their bodies back and forth. They also have **webbed** feet for swimming and water repellent fur to help keep them warm and



dry. When they swim their nose and ears close to keep the water out. They can hold their breath under water for up to eight minutes.

Families

Females have 1 to 6 babies in their underground **den**. Male otters do not help raise their young. When otters become two months old they get their first swimming lesson. Their mother pushes them into the water. Otters are natural swimmers and learn how to swim very quickly.



Questions:

1. Where do North American river otters live?
2. What is an otter's favorite food?
3. What otter family member does not help to take care of its young?
4. What closes over on the otter's body when swimming so that they won't get water in them?
5. How long do otters usually live?

Answers:

1. In rivers, streams and reservoirs
2. Fish
3. Fathers
4. Their nose and ears
5. 8 to 9 years

Glossary

Mammals: Animals that nurse their young and are most often covered in fur.

Reservoirs: Artificial lakes that are a large store of water.

Carnivorous: Eat only meat and other animals.

Amphibians: Animals that can live both on land and water.

Webbed feet: Having skin that stretches in-between the toes.

Den: The home of animals; usually a small hole in the ground or home underneath the earth.

Works Referenced

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Common Core State Standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.1

Ask and answer questions
about key details in a text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.4

Ask and answer questions to
help determine or clarify the
meaning of words and
phrases in a text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.7

Use the illustrations and
details in a text to describe its
key ideas.

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