Sea otter fact sheet

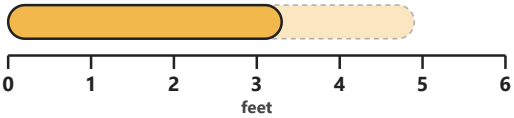
True facts about real sea otters



Fact card

Kind of animal	Mammal. A member of the weasel family.
Scientific name	Enhydra lutris
Length	1 to 1.5 m (about 3.3 to 4.9 feet)
Weight	14 to 45 kg (about 31 to 99 pounds). Males are heavier than females.
Lives in	Along the coasts of the North Pacific: California, Washington, British Columbia, Alaska and Russia
Eats	Sea urchins, crabs, clams, mussels and snails
Babies	Called pups. One at a time.
Fur	The thickest of any animal: up to about a million hairs in one square inch
Lifespan	15 to 20 years, says the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The oldest wild ones may reach 23.
Status	Endangered on the IUCN Red List. Protected by law in the United States.

How big is a sea otter?



An adult sea otter is about 1 to 1.5 m long, which is 3.3 to 4.9 feet. The dark part of the bar is the shortest adult and the light part is the longest.

Why two numbers?

Where sources give different numbers, this sheet gives the range. That is how scientists do it too.

My notes

8 true sea otter facts

1. Sea otters have the thickest fur of any animal: up to about a million hairs in one square inch.
2. They don't have a thick layer of blubber like seals. Their fur and the air trapped in it keep them warm.
3. They eat about a quarter of their body weight in food every day.
4. Many sea otters use rocks as tools to crack open hard shells.
5. They have a loose pouch of skin under each front leg where they can stash food and a favorite rock.
6. A group of resting sea otters is called a raft.
7. Baby sea otters are called pups. They ride on their mother's belly.
8. By eating sea urchins, sea otters help kelp forests grow, which helps lots of other sea life.

Sources: National Park Service; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Alaska Department of Fish and Game; Animal Diversity Web; Monterey Bay Aquarium; The Marine Mammal Center, and 3 more. Every source and link: lumiscove.com/otter-facts

For personal and classroom use.

Sea otter quiz and report

Page 2. The answers are upside down at the bottom.

Name: _____

True or false?

Circle your answer. Try it before you look at the fact sheet.

1. Sea otters have the thickest fur of any animal. **True** **False**
2. Sea otters stay warm with a thick layer of blubber. **True** **False**
3. Many sea otters use rocks as tools. **True** **False**
4. A group of resting sea otters is called a herd. **True** **False**
5. Sea otters are part of the weasel family. **True** **False**
6. Sea otters eat mostly kelp. **True** **False**

My sea otter report

A sea otter is a kind of

_____

Sea otters live in

_____

Sea otters eat

_____

My favorite fact

_____

_____

One thing I still wonder

_____

_____

Draw a sea otter

Answers: 1. True. Up to about a million hairs in one square inch. 2. False. Their fur and the air trapped in it keep them warm. 3. True. They crack open hard shells with them. 4. False. It is called a raft. 5. True. 6. False. They eat sea urchins, crabs, clams, mussels and snails.

For personal and classroom use.