

Sea Otter

Enhydra lutris

RED LIST STATUS

ENDANGERED



The skull and teeth of sea otters can stain purple by their favourite prey, the purple sea urchin, that contain a substance called echinochrome!

ALIAS: Kamtchatka otter, sea beaver

PREDATORS: orcas, great white sharks, eagles, bears

THREATS: poaching, accidental trapping, pollution, oil spills

SIZE: 67-163 cm (body 55-130 cm tail 12-33 cm); 23-36 kg

A top favourite among otters, the sea otter is the international ambassador species for otters, being the first to have been nearly hunted to extinction and saved in the nick of time. Sea otters, unlike all other marine mammals, have no blubber to protect them from hypothermia - instead, they have the thickest, densest fur of all mammals: 500,000 hairs per square centimetre!. It was this feature that made its fur so desirable and nearly caused its demise. Even though sea otters have made a remarkable recovery in Alaska and the Northeast Pacific, they are still in danger from predators like orcas, poachers, and water-borne toxins that are increasing due to warmer water temperatures. Sea otters are social, living in single sex groups, unlike other otter species. They rarely come ashore but float together instead, diving to retrieve clams, crabs, and urchins.