



Otter



Fun Facts

Otters are members of the weasel family and most people like their friendly appearance and playfulness. The two types of otters that are common to North America include Sea Otters and North American Otters which are commonly called River Otters. Sea otters live in the Pacific ocean which has salty water. River otters live near and in freshwater rivers, lakes, ponds, and marshy areas.



River Otter

Sea otters and river otters have much in common. Otters do not have a lot of blubber (fat) to keep them warm in cold water. Instead, they have very thick fur to keep them warm. The outer fur keeps the inner and shorter fur from getting soaking wet and the inner fur traps air close to the otter's skin. This air helps to keep the otter warm and it makes it easier for the otter to float when it wants to.

Otters can hold their breath for over four minutes when diving deep to get food. In addition to having an extra inner eyelid to protect their eyes in the water, otters can also close their nose and ears during these dives.

When the water is dirty, otters use their long whiskers to help them find food. Both types of otters spend a lot of time grooming and cleaning their fur.



Sea otters and river otters are very smart. They are one of the few animals that use tools. Because the otters eat a lot of shellfish, they use a rock to break the shell open so that they can eat the meat inside the shell. If the shellfish is attached to something deep underwater, they may use the rock to break it free from whatever it is attached to. Both types of otters have a pouch under each arm. When diving deep for food, the otter places the rock in this pouch and then uses it to break the shellfish free. Otters are also known to store extra food in this pouch.

Otters often eat their meals while floating on the surface of the water. Because of the air pockets between their skin and

the shorter hair, they can easily float on their back while eating.



Sometimes, you can see them floating on their backs with the shellfish lying on their chest. Then, using their rock, they rapidly keep hitting the shell until it breaks open so that they can eat the meat inside the shell. When finished, they place the rock in the pouch for later use.



Sea otters grow larger than river otters. A female sea otter called a sow, can grow to over 70 pounds. A male sea otter called a boar, can grow to over 90 pounds. Sea otters can spend their entire life in the ocean and rarely go on land, if at all. Although they

sometimes eat fish, their main food comes from shellfish, sea urchins, and mollusks. If eating fish, they usually catch the fish with their paws that have sharp claws and are padded which makes it easier to grip the fish.

When it comes to eating, sea otters eat a lot every day. An adult sea otter can eat 25 percent of its weight each day. To give you an idea of how much food this is, a 100 pound human would need to eat 25 pounds of food every day. That's a lot to eat.

As mentioned above, sea otters live in the ocean which, unlike the freshwater lakes, rivers, and ponds throughout the United States, contains salty water. Most mammals, including humans will die if drinking too much salty water. But sea otters drink the ocean water all the time and this water does not harm them at all. That is because the sea otters have larger, special kidneys. These kidneys are designed to allow the non-salty part of the water to nourish the sea otter and get rid of the unhealthy, salty parts.

River otters live either in or near freshwater areas. Sometimes they will steal a living place from another animal like a beaver. Other times they build their own den near the water. Their den will have several holes for getting in and out and one of these doorways will lead to the water. When having babies, the pups will usually leave the den between one to two months. The pups



love the water and quickly learn how to swim better and use a rock as a tool from their parents.

The diet of the river otter is similar to that of the sea otter. However, river otters eat more fish than sea otters. Because of their webbed feet which allows them to make quick changes of direction, it is pretty easy for river otters to catch the smaller, slower fish in shallow water. They prefer the slower fish instead of the gamefish.



River otters are extremely playful animals. When not sleeping, hunting or grooming, they spend a lot of time playing with each other. It is common to see them playing tag-like games or wrestling with each other. It is also common for otters to build a slide alongside a river and then spend hours using it. These games promote bonding and also help to prepare them to be better hunters as adults.

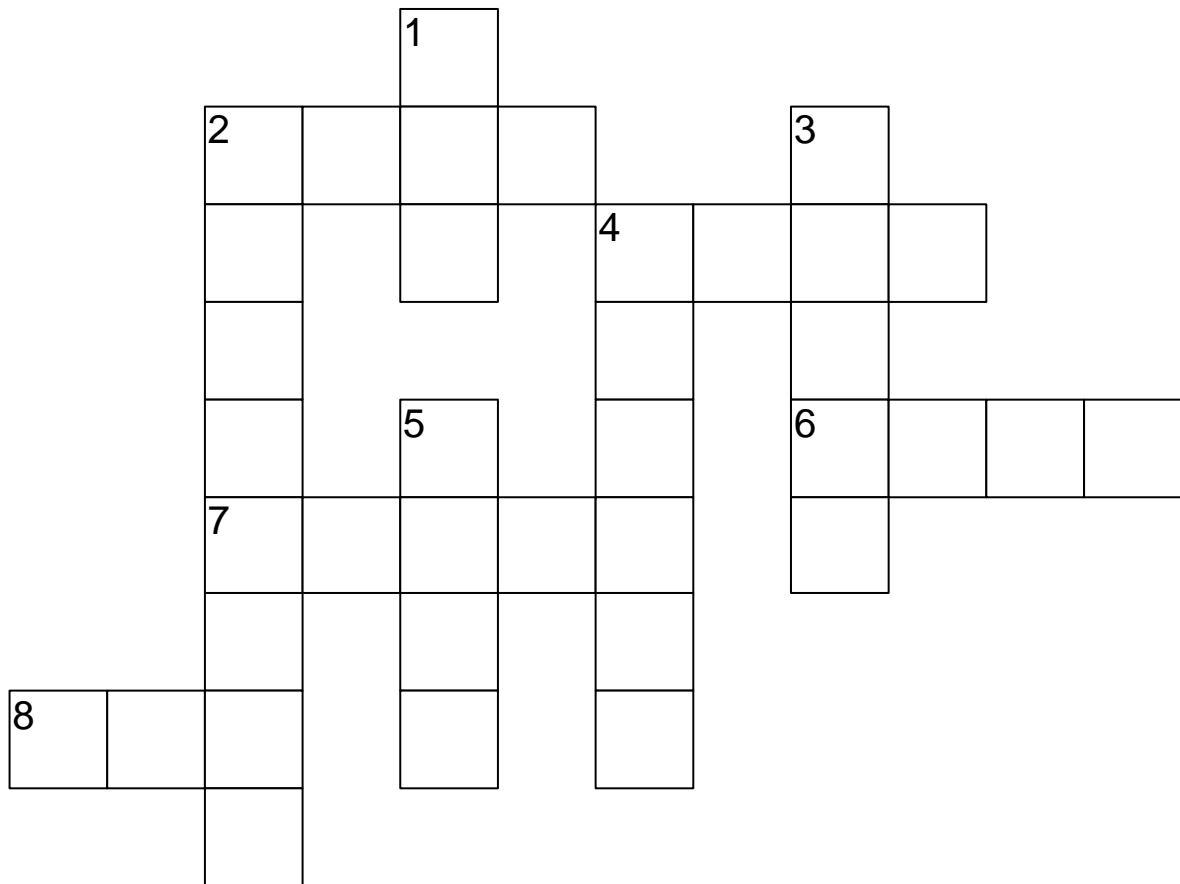
In the past, otters were hunted for their fur but that is now illegal in most states so their population is not decreasing due to hunting them. The biggest danger to river otters includes losing their habitat (place to live) and pollution. Humans need their land for buildings and the pollution kills the animals they need for food. On average, river otters live for 12 years in the wild and twice as long in captivity as in zoos.



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Otter Fun Facts

Crossword Puzzle #1



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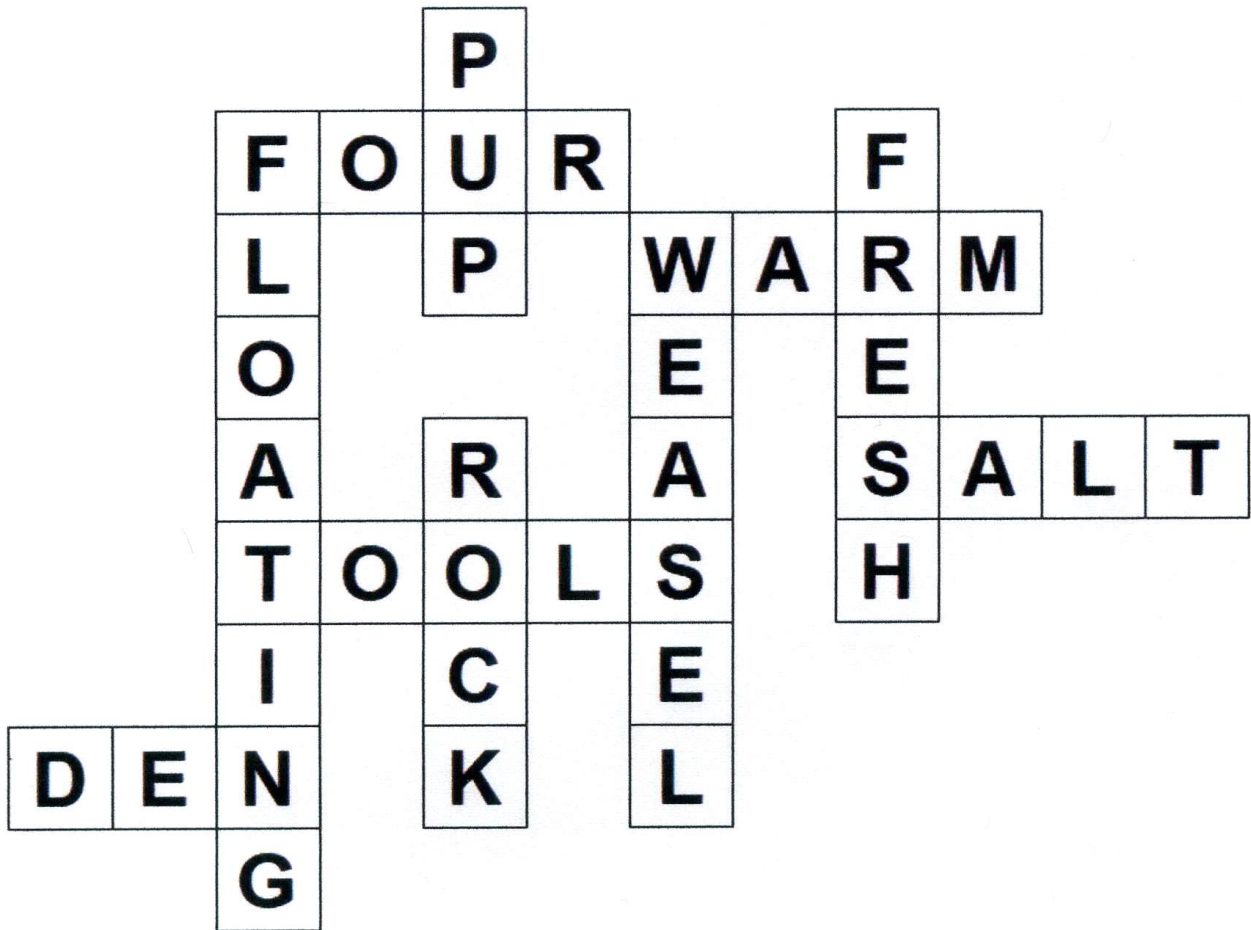
- 2 Otters can hold their breath for over _____ minutes.
- 4 The air next to the otter's skin keeps it _____.
- 6 Sea otters live in _____ water.
- 7 Otters are one of the few animals that use _____.
- 8 A river otter's house is called a _____.

DOWN

- 1 A baby otter is called a _____.
- 2 Otters often eat while _____.
- 3 River otters live in _____ water.
- 4 Otters are members of the _____ family.
- 5 Otters use a _____ to break open shellfish.

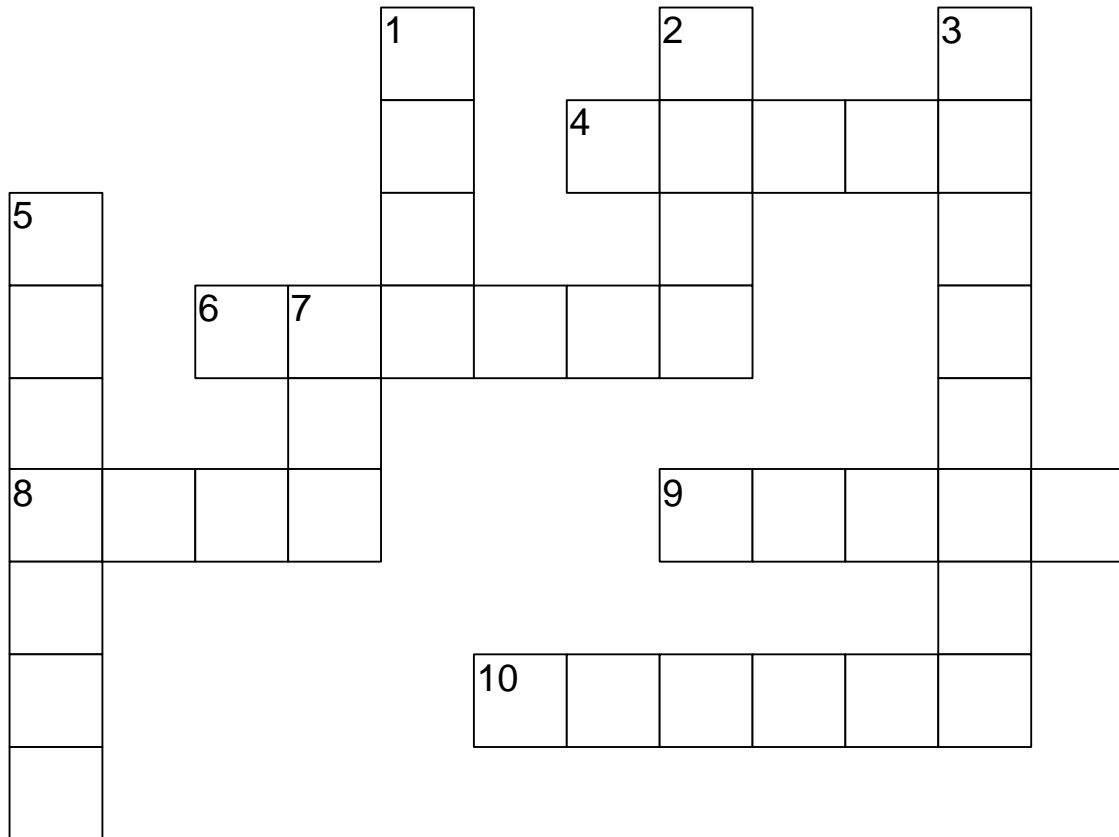
Otter Fun Facts

Crossword Puzzle #1



Otter Fun Facts

Crossword Puzzle #2



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ACROSS

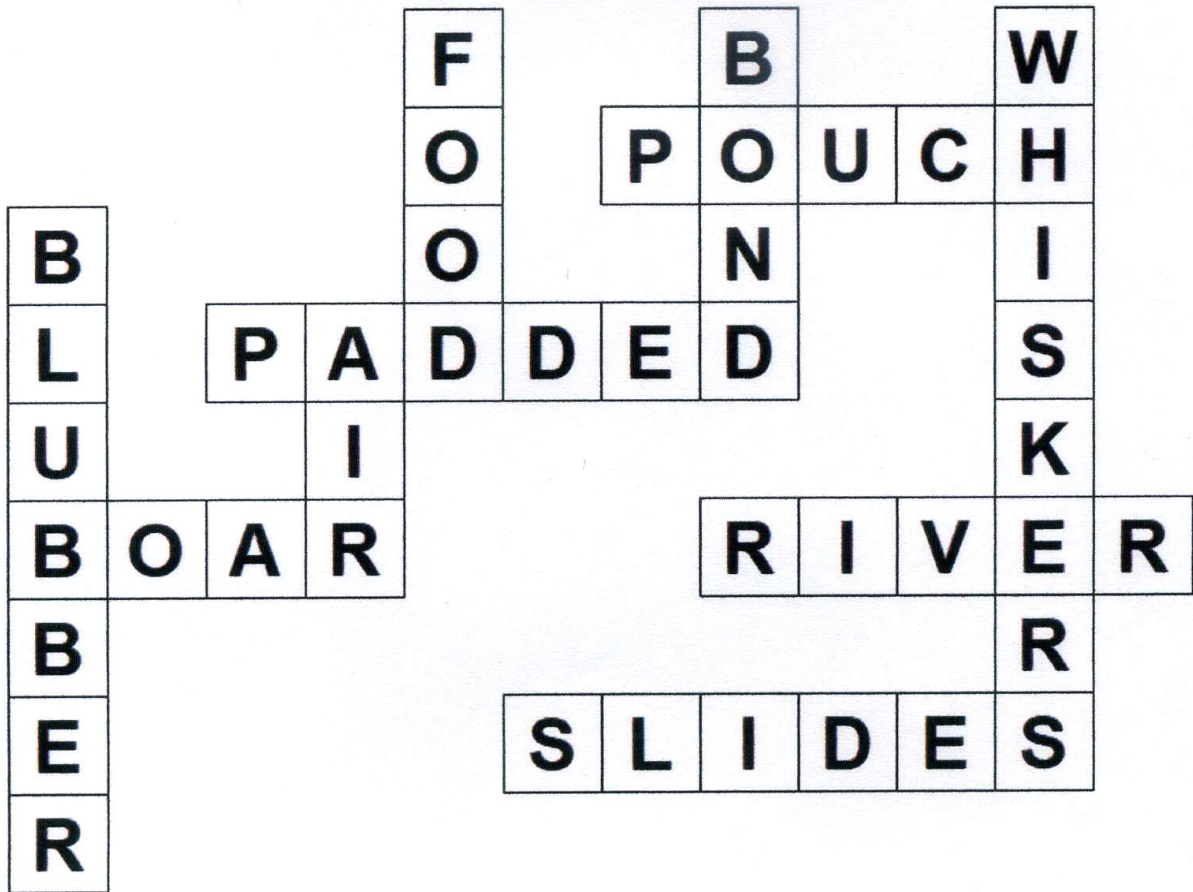
- 4 Otters store their rock in a _____.
- 6 Otter hands have _____ paws for holding onto fish.
- 8 A male otter is called a _____.
- 9 North American otters are also called _____ otters.
- 10 River otters love to build and play on _____.

DOWN

- 1 Otters store extra _____ in their pouch.
- 2 Playing games help otters to _____ with each other.
- 3 In dirty water, otters use their _____ to help find food.
- 5 Otters do not have a lot of _____ to keep them warm.
- 7 The otters inner hair traps _____ next to their skin.

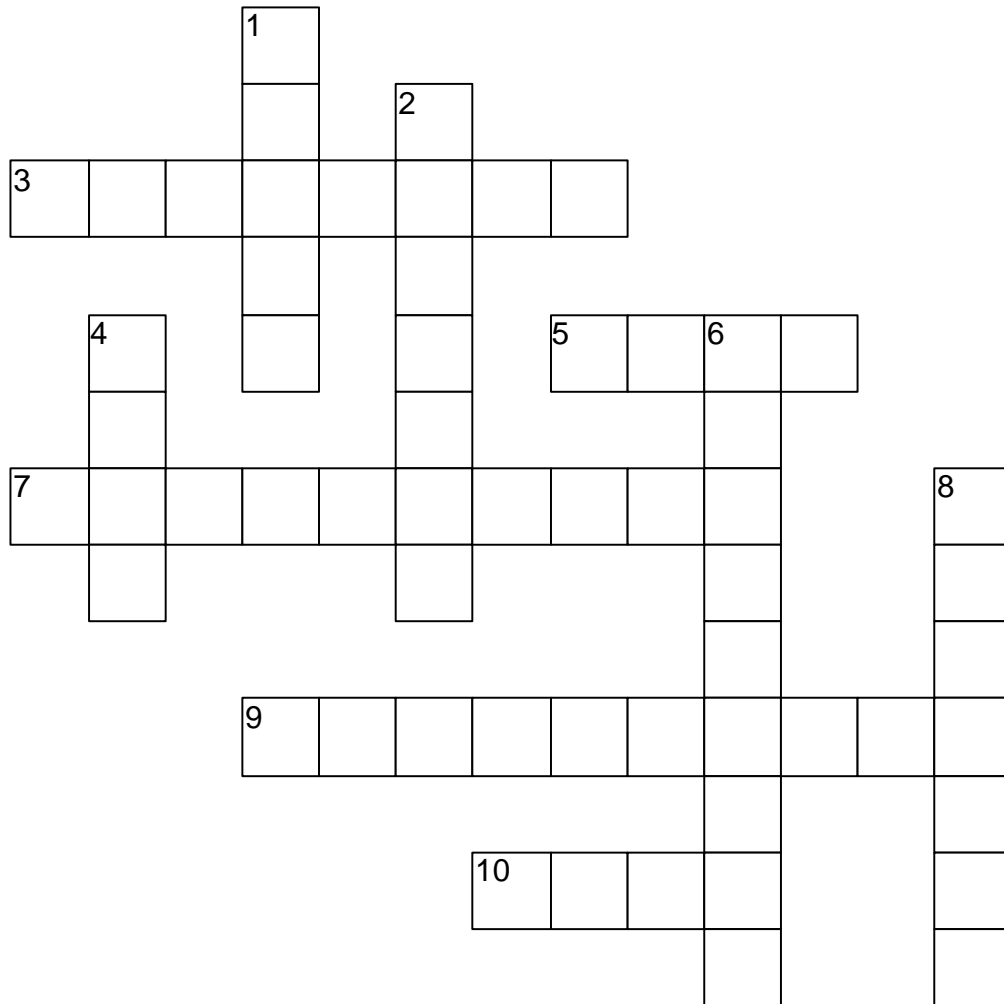
Otter Fun Facts

Crossword Puzzle #2



Otter Fun Facts

Crossword Puzzle #3



ACROSS

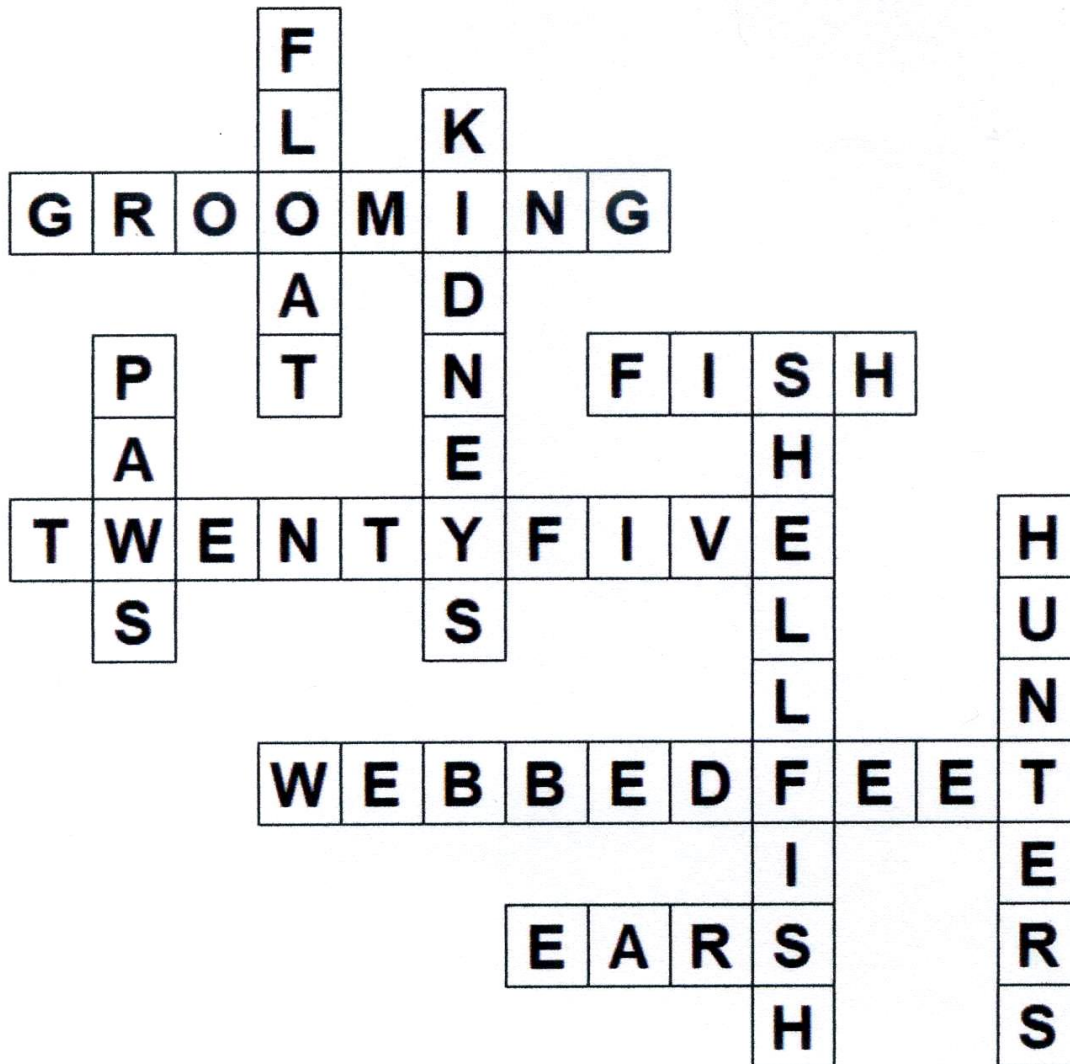
- 3 Otters spend a lot of time _____.
- 5 River otters eat more _____ than sea otters.
- 7 An adult sea otter can eat _____ percent of its weight each day.
- 9 An otter's _____ allow it to make quick turns in the water.
- 10 Otters can close their nose and _____ when diving.

DOWN

- 1 The air next to its skin helps the otter to _____.
- 2 Sea otter _____ allow it to drink salt water.
- 4 River otters catch fish with their _____.
- 6 Sea otters eat a lot of _____.
- 8 River otter games help them to become better _____.

Otter Fun Facts

Crossword Puzzle #3



Otter Fun Facts



Wordsearch Puzzle #1

W N P X P O U C H N N T Y M
J Q S H E L L F I S H T K L
Q D K K M N M O L L U S K S
S L I D E G R O O M I N G L
H U N T E R S W E A S E L L
V V J D E N T D R T T O O L
S E A O T T E R N Z G G L R
F N L P J M W H I S K E R S
L T R I V E R O T T E R T G
N M W K M A M M A L S N K M
O T T E R P L A Y F U L M M
G S O W B O A R R M T H X K
C R X K G Q Z K I D N E Y S
L N P U P B L U B B E R N R

Blubber
Boar
Den
Grooming
Hunters

Kidneys
Mammals
Mollusks
Otter
Playful

Pouch
Pup
Riverotter
Seaotter
Shellfish

Slide
Sow
Tool
Weasel
Whiskers

Otter Fun Facts



Wordsearch Puzzle #1

W N P X P O U C H N N T Y M
J Q S H E L L F I S H T K L
Q D K K M N M O L L U S K S
S L I D E G R O O M I N G L
H U N T E R S W E A S E L L
V V J D E N T D R T T O O L
S E A O T T E R N Z G G L R
F N L P J M W H I S K E R S
L T R I V E R O T T E R T G
N M W K M A M M A L S N K M
O T T E R P L A Y F U L M M
G S O W B O A R R M T H X K
C R X K G Q Z K I D N E Y S
L N P U P B L U B B E R N R

Otter Fun Facts



Wordsearch Puzzle #2

M R M B V T S G K V X T Y C
N B M O L H L T J D B J M Q
S W P A R W I O W J G Z O Q
O Z U R I J D O Y B R M L M
W K P X V L E L P L O A L V
W I W Q E S P H O U O M U O
H D E S R H L U U B M M S T
I N A E O E A N C B I A K T
S E S A T L Y T H E N L S E
K Y E O T L F E N R G S M R
E S L T E F U R F T L N T D
R G P T R I L S Y B H R N D
S H L E W S X R R C L P V E
W K Z R T H C P L W V J M N

Blubber
Boar
Den
Grooming
Hunters

Kidneys
Mammals
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Otter
Playful

Pouch
Pup
Riverotter
Seaotter
Shellfish

Slide
Sow
Tool
Weasel
Whiskers

Otter Fun Facts

Wordsearch Puzzle #2



M	R	M	B	V	T	S	G	K	V	X	T	Y	C
N	B	M	O	L	H	L	T	J	D	B	J	M	Q
S	W	P	A	R	W	I	O	W	J	G	Z	O	Q
O	Z	U	R	I	J	D	O	Y	B	R	M	L	M
W	K	P	X	V	L	E	L	P	L	O	A	L	V
W	I	W	Q	E	S	P	H	O	U	O	M	U	O
H	D	E	S	R	H	L	U	U	B	M	M	S	T
I	N	A	E	O	E	A	N	C	B	I	A	K	T
S	E	S	A	T	L	Y	T	H	E	N	L	S	E
K	Y	E	O	T	L	F	E	N	R	G	S	M	R
E	S	L	T	E	F	U	R	F	T	L	N	T	D
R	G	P	T	R	I	L	S	Y	B	H	R	N	D
S	H	L	E	W	S	X	R	R	C	L	P	V	E
W	K	Z	R	T	H	C	P	L	W	V	J	M	N

Otter Fun Facts



Wordsearch Puzzle #3

D M T J S K W T B N Z X H Z N
R X P M P E N N O F S H R B G
V I D W K O A M M O J L N W X
R P V E P G U O O A L N I Y J
H B L E N U R C T L M R R D M
T K L A R Z P O H T L M B T E
S K O U Y O H N O N E U A J D
W H F T B F T X Y M M R S L H
W H E H T B U T K P I Y F K S
N E I L U E E L E I R N N Q S
B W A S L N R R M R D K G Y P
R P B S K F T H P Y S N B R Y
M N V O E E I E L L P O E T K
R C D Q A L R S R P L G W Y J
T G X R X R T S H S L Z T H S

Blubber
Boar
Den
Grooming
Hunters

Kidneys
Mammals
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Pouch
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Whiskers

Otter Fun Facts

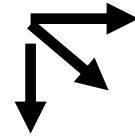


Wordsearch Puzzle #3

D M T J S K W T B N Z X H Z N
R X P M P E N N O F S H R B G
V I D W K O A M M O J L N W X
R P V E P G U O O A L N I Y J
H B L E N U R C T L M R R D M
T K L A R Z P O H T L M B T E
S K O U Y O H N O N E U A J D
W H F T B F T X Y M M R S L H
W H E H T B U T K P I Y F K S
N E I L U E E L E I R N N Q S
B W A S L N R R M R D K G Y P
R P B S K F T H P Y S N B R Y
M N V O E E I E L L P O E T K
R C D Q A L R S R P L G W Y J
T G X R X R T S H S L Z T H S

Otter Fun Facts

Wordsearch Puzzle #4



K B G N M J N T M A M M A L S M
N W H M K O T D T Q M F K C L G
W Q F Q B O L Z M J R R I D C T
Q H C J T T H L J G P P D S K T
H R I T R T P U U Y U M N H L M
Y M T S D E P O N S P K E E G M
R L Q R K R S K U T K L Y L L N
B L U B B E R E C C E S S L G V
S L I D E T R B A X H R K F K Y
C M Q F J Q M S O O M N S I D L
X W E A S E L W K A T P Y S E Y
J S T J K T X R Y Y R T K H N V
X K O G R O O M I N G R E P T L
K L L W N O J K W W X T R R H R
N G F G P L R I V E R O T T E R
Y H H F M X K G P L A Y F U L J

Blubber
Boar
Den
Grooming
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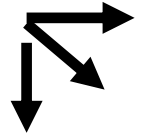
Kidneys
Mammals
Mollusks
Otter
Playful

Pouch
Pup
Riverotter
Seaotter
Shellfish

Slide
Sow
Tool
Weasel
Whiskers

Otter Fun Facts

Wordsearch Puzzle #4



K	B	G	N	M	J	N	T	M	A	M	M	A	L	S	M
N	W	H	M	K	O	T	D	T	Q	M	F	K	C	L	G
W	Q	F	Q	B	O	L	Z	M	J	R	R	I	D	C	T
Q	H	C	J	T	T	H	L	J	G	P	P	D	S	K	T
H	R	I	T	R	T	P	U	U	Y	U	M	N	H	L	M
Y	M	T	S	D	E	P	O	N	S	P	K	E	E	G	M
R	L	Q	R	K	R	S	K	U	T	K	L	Y	L	L	N
B	L	U	B	B	E	R	E	C	C	E	S	S	L	G	V
S	L	I	D	E	T	R	B	A	X	H	R	K	F	K	Y
C	M	Q	F	J	Q	M	S	O	O	M	N	S	I	D	L
X	W	E	A	S	E	L	W	K	A	T	P	Y	S	E	Y
J	S	T	J	K	T	X	R	Y	Y	R	T	K	H	N	V
X	K	O	G	R	O	O	M	I	N	G	R	E	P	T	L
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N	G	F	G	P	L	R	I	V	E	R	O	T	T	E	R
Y	H	H	F	M	X	K	G	P	L	A	Y	F	U	L	J

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