

Name _____

Tell what you Know about otters and what you Want to know. Then, read Baby Otter Grows Up and write what you Learned about them.

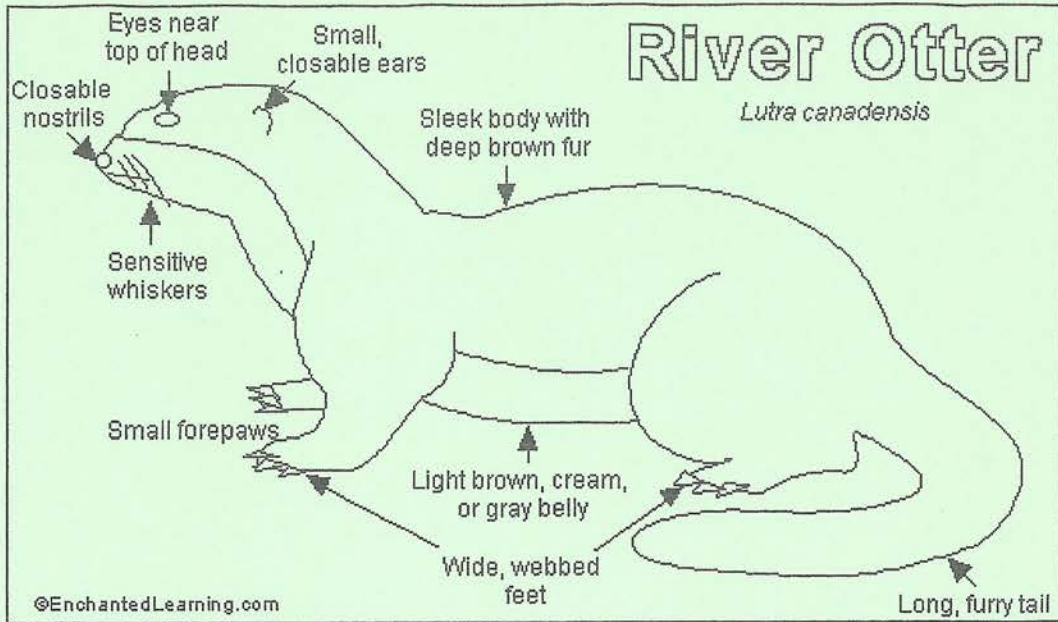
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Name: _____

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River Otter



River otters are sleek, furry, streamlined aquatic mammals that live in rivers, streams, ponds, and marshes in Canada and the USA. They are a large type of weasel (a member of the mustelid family). Their scientific name is *Lutra canadensis* (Genus, species). The river otter is an endangered species because of overhunting (it was hunted for its beautiful, dense fur).

River otters are nocturnal (most active at night). During the day, they rest in underground dens.

Anatomy: River otters are from 3 to 4 feet (0.9-1.3 meters) long and weigh about 44-82 pounds (20-37 kg). The tail is 1 to 1 1/2 feet (30-45 cm) long. Webbed feet help the otter swim. These sleek mammals have short legs and semi-retractible claws. Both the ears and the nostrils close when the animal is under water.

Fur: River otters are kept warm by their dense fur and high metabolism. They are active all year long, even through very cold winters. Careful grooming with their forepaws keeps the fur waterproof.

Diet: River otters are carnivores (meat-eaters). They eat crustaceans (like crayfish), slow-swimming fish (like trout), amphibians, insects, small mammals and birds. They hunt for their prey in the water and on the land. These intelligent mammals have a keen sense of smell; they use their sensitive whiskers to help find prey in muddy water.

Predators: River otters are preyed upon by the bald eagle, some bears and coyotes.

Classification: kingdom Animalia, Phylum Chordata, Class Mammalia (mammals), Order Carnivora, Family Mustelidae (weasels, ferrets, minks, skunks, otters, badgers), Genus Lutra.

Name _____

Baby Otter Grows Up

The baby otter and his mother are swimming with words.

Find oa words.

Find ow words.

Find ing words.



Write about how the kit learned to swim.
