

Sample Report

Sea Otters

The sea otter is a member of the weasel family. Some people call the sea otter "the teddy bear of the sea." For centuries, hunters killed sea otters for their soft, thick fur. In 1989, the biggest oil spill in U.S. history killed thousands of sea otters.

Sea otters weigh up to 39 kg and can reach up to 1.5 m in length. Sea otters have very thick fur. They have as many as 18 hairs emerging from a single hair follicle. Sea otters do not have blubber found in all other marine mammals. They have a streamlined appearance. Sea otters have small round heads and a long heavy body. They have a thick tapering tail that is flat on the bottom and their eyes are dark. Their noses are a flat diamond shape. They have little pointed ears which close when they dive.

Sea otters once lived off the Pacific coast as far south as California. The sea otters' habitat is where the water is about 15 to 23 m. The area is a place where the sea otter will be protected from harsh winds and other weather conditions. Islands, rock reefs, and kelp forest are some of the barriers that help calm the water.

Sea otters eat sea urchins, molluscs, crustaceans, and fish. Sea otters break shells of invertebrates with rocks they bring from the ocean floor. The sea otter floats on its back and balances the rock on its chest and pounds the shell on the rock until the shell breaks. Mating occurs in spring and summer and the young are born the following spring. When the sea otter is ready to dive, it takes a deep breath of air and rolls forward into the water and holds its paws across its chest as it moves its body up and down.

Did you know that sea otters are dying in large numbers? We are building our homes, farms, and industry over their habitat. However, if we want to protect the sea otter, we have to make sure that it has a place to live.