



# Sea Otter Unit Teacher's Manual



# Sea Otter Unit

## Lesson Plans

### 1. Introductory Activity

Sea Otter Quiz

### 2. Reading

Lesson Plan

Sea Otter Background Information Articles

1. Sea Otter History
2. Sea Otter Distribution
3. Sea Otter Evolution
4. Vital Statistics
5. Web of Life
6. Sea Otter Social Structure and Behavior
7. Sea Otter Foraging Behavior
8. Threats to Sea Otters
9. Sea Otter Conservation

### 3. Technology

Using the Web as a Sea Otter Research Tool

### 4. Writing

Fact and Opinion in Persuasive Writing

### 5. Social Studies

Community in Crisis: An Exercise in Conflict Resolution  
Perspective Cards

### 6. Conservation Activities

### 7. Maps

### 8. Glossary

### 9. Additional Resources

## **Note to Teachers: How to Use the Sea Otter Unit**

The lesson plans in the Sea Otter Unit are geared to and meet the state standards required for middle school students in California, Washington and Oregon, but can be easily modified for older and younger students and for students in other states. The lessons include both individual and group learning activities and are designed to integrate reading, writing, social studies, and technology into your science curriculum. Teacher notes and materials lists are provided at the beginning of each lesson. The goals of the sea otter unit are: provide students with background information about sea otters including the biology and ecological significance of sea otters, history, evolution, behavior and conservation; reading for comprehension; analysis and evaluation of reading materials; to determine the credibility of a website; writing strategies (writing for different audiences and purposes, writing a clear, focused and coherent essay); understanding the social implications and conflict surrounding sea otters, conflict resolution; empowering students to make their own choices about the tough issues surrounding sea otters.

The Introductory Activity encourages students to assess what they know about sea otters and can also be used when the unit is completed to evaluate what students have learned. The Reading lesson consists of nine short readings that can be assigned in advance or read and discussed in class. Each of these readings provides background information on sea otters and is followed by a vocabulary and “Check Your Reading Skills” quiz to help students gauge their mastery of the material. The Writing, Technology and Social Studies lessons delve into the biology of sea otters, including the role of the sea otter in the ecosystem and conservation issues. The social studies lesson even gives students an opportunity to tackle the tough issues related to sea otter conservation through a conflict resolution role -playing lesson. The unit concludes with a glossary, which we suggest you have a class copy available or copy and distribute to your class before beginning the unit. It might also be helpful to invest in a biological dictionary for reference. In addition, to save on money and resources, it is recommended that you make a limited number of copies of the material you intend to use and have groups of students share.

Your feedback is important to the success of the sea otter unit and we value your input. Please take a few minutes to complete our easy to use Evaluation form at the end of the unit.

This sea otter unit can be complemented with Defenders of Wildlife’s Sea Otter Discovery Trunk. The Sea Otter Discovery Trunk is a traveling education kit, complete with hands-on materials to complement the lesson plans. The Sea Otter Discovery Trunk is available for loan through Defenders of Wildlife, California Program. If you are interested in borrowing a trunk, please email [defenders@mail.defenders.org](mailto:defenders@mail.defenders.org). Below is a list of items included in the Sea Otter Discovery Trunk:

**Hands on Items**

“Keep Sea Otters in the Picture” poster

Sea otter puppet

Prey items

Sea otter skull replica

Sea otter tracks and molds

**Books**

*Sea Otters* by Glenn VanBlaricom

*Sea Otters* by Peter Murray

*Saving Sea Otters: Stories of Survival* by Elin Kelsey

*Sea Otters* Zoobook

*Sea Otters* by Marianne Riedman

*The Sea Otter* by Alvin, Virginia and Robert Silverstein

*The Monterey Bay Shoreline Guide* by Jerry Emory

\* Note - Standards are listed in each lesson plan.

Defenders of Wildlife values your opinion. Please take a few minutes to complete this evaluation form. Your comments and suggestions will help us improve the quality of the Sea Otter Unit. Thank you for your time!

Please complete the form and mail to:

Defenders of Wildlife  
Attention: California Program Associate  
1303 J Street, Suite 270  
Sacramento, CA 95814

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## SEA OTTER UNIT EVALUATION FORM

Please rate the following items on a scale of 5 (superior) to 1.

Introductory Lesson

Reading Lesson

Technology Lesson

Writing

Social Studies Lesson

Conservation Activities

Glossary

Additional Resources

Evaluation Form

Comments and/or Suggestions:

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May we contact you for further input?

No\_\_\_

Yes\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_