North American River Otter

River Otter | *Lontra canadensis (Schreber, 1777)*



BESIDE THE STREAM

A quiet moment *together*

On a mossy rock beside a British Columbia stream, two river otters pause together. Their dense, water-repellent fur keeps them warm, while sensitive whiskers help them locate prey beneath the surface.

THROUGH THE SEASONS

Active throughout the year, river otters shelter their young in secluded dens, typically in late winter or early spring.

WHERE IT LIVES

Found across BC in rivers, lakes, wetlands, estuaries and coastal waters. Rocky banks and shoreline cover provide places to rest.

SHARING THE SHORE

Give wild otters space and keep dogs leashed. Protect streamside vegetation, and never disturb a den or its young.

FIELD NOTES

RECOGNIZE IT

Look for a sleek body, small rounded ears, pale whiskers, webbed feet and a thick tail tapering to a point.

FISH AND MORE

Otters hunt fish, including salmonids, alongside crabs, amphibians and other aquatic animals. Diet varies by habitat.

RIVER OR SEA OTTER?

River otters swim belly-down and often come ashore. Sea otters commonly float on their backs and have broad hind flippers.

Sources: BC Conservation Data Centre; BC Ministry of Forests; E-Fauna BC; BC SPCA.