

# Nat Theo Club

## FIELD NOTES

ISSUE 36



## River Otter

AQUATIC MAMMAL

### HABITAT

Live by rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds. They can also frequent ocean coastlines and intertidal zones. Live in dens made of logs or rocks with underwater entrances, or burrows. Eat fish, crustaceans, mollusks such as snails, clams, and muscles, and amphibians.

### FUN FACTS

You might think of river otters as freshwater animals, but they can also live by saltwater, like the ones in the image below that we found at the Pacific Ocean. Otters use tools to get at their food, like using rocks to smash open mollusk shells.



### HAVE YOU EVER SEEN AN ANIMAL IN THE WILD THAT YOU REALLY WANTED TO SEE?

This happened to my son yesterday. We spent the past ten days at the Puget Sound on the coast of the Pacific Ocean exploring beaches and tide pools. My son's biggest hope for our ocean adventure was to see an otter. He was thrilled when we got to see them at the Seattle Aquarium. However, God had an even greater surprise waiting. Yesterday on our very last walk along the beach, while we were looking for shells and sea glass, we happened upon three playful river otters in the wild! They were fishing and caught a flounder. You can see the photo I took of them in the image on the bottom left. We watched them fighting over the fish up on a rock and swimming around looking for more food. They were very close to us and we got to observe their natural behavior in their habitat. It was amazing to see their fur coats. Otters are known for their fur. They spend a lot of time in the water, and God equipped them with a way to waterproof themselves. They have oil glands which they use to coat their fur in oil to keep their skin dry. The river otters we saw have around 375,000 hairs per square inch of skin. Sea (not river) otters have the most dense fur of all animals with up to one million hairs per square inch of skin. That is a lot of hair! For comparison, humans have around 100,000 – 150,000 hairs on their entire head. God created otters just right for their water habitats.

The Bible uses the image of hairs on our heads to show how well God knows us. Luke 12:7 says, "But God even knows how many hairs you have on your head." That is pretty incredible! Because God knows everything, He also knows how many hairs an otter has on its body. God knows His creation incredibly well because He designed it all. He made everything in nature and called it good. But He cares for you even more than the plants and animals. Take comfort in thinking about how well God knows you and loves you.

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