Introductory Issue

Well, this is it. The first issue of The Otter Pup. We hope you have as much fun reading it as we had putting it together. Kind of like taking your medicine with a piece of candy, this newsletter for kids about sea otters is full of entertaining, yet educational information.

And The Pup is only going to get better. The fall issue, already in the works, will double the amount of information presented here and will offer a wider range of games, puzzles, jokes, cartoons, and most importantly up-to-date facts on otters for our new young subscribers.

This newsletter didn't happen without the assistance of a lot of people. We extend our thanks and appreciation to all who have helped get this project off the ground.

And we're counting on the help of you, our readers, to ensure the continued success of The Pup. Send us your questions, comments, input, ideas, remarks, suggestions — we're interested in just about anything you care to tell us and we'll try our best to incorporate your ideas into the upcoming issues.

Keep in touch.
— The Editor

Sea Cliffs, a state-of-the-art marine mammal habitat, just opened at New York's Aquarium for Wildlife Conservation in Brooklyn, NY.

Sea Otters Spotted in Brooklyn, New York

Sea Cliffs, the Aquarium for Wildlife Conservation's most ambitious expansion project ever, opened on Earth Day, April 22, 1993. A 300-foot long re-creation of the rocky, Pacific coastline, Sea Cliffs provides 60,000 square feet of naturalistic habitat for walruses, seals, sea otters, and black-footed penguins. It roughly doubles the available visitor space at the Aquarium, and is a striking visual symbol of the New York Zoological Society's enduring commitment to save marine mammals and their habitats from destruction by humans.

The Southern sea otter exhibit at Sea Cliffs is the first on the East Coast.

Once endangered, Southern sea otters have made a dramatic comeback through protection efforts in California. Bunky and Elsa, juvenile male and female otters, were rescued by the Monterey Bay Aquarium. These two have been a delightful addition to the Aquarium's collection since September 1992, and are the only Southern sea otters outside of California.

Sea Cliffs is a great exhibit for sea otters. The tunnels and variations of the rocky areas allow the animals many spaces to explore and others on which to haul out. A hydraulically-powered underwater system places food

Continued on page 4
What is a Sea Otter?

A sea otter is a marine mammal that lives in coastal waters of the northern Pacific Ocean. It is the smallest marine mammal in North America and is about 4 feet long. Female otters weigh an average of 45 pounds and male otters weigh an average of 65 pounds. Sea otters live an average of 10-11 years.

What do sea otters eat?

Sea otters eat clams, crabs, snails, starfish, abalone, and 40 other marine animals. Sea otters dive up to 120 feet to find their food. Their average dive lasts about a minute and the longest dive recorded lasted 4 minutes.

When sea otters come to the surface they lie on their backs and use their stomachs as a table. Sometimes they use a tool, such as a rock, to help them open the hard shells of their prey. They bang the hard shell on the rock until it breaks open.

Sea otters must eat 25% of their body weight each day in order to stay alive. That means a 40-pound sea otter must eat 10 pounds of food each day!

How do sea otters swim?

Sea otters usually swim on their backs at the water's surface. They use their rear flippers to move and their tails to steer. They don't swim very fast (about 1 1/2 miles an hour). If otters are frightened they will flip over on their stomachs and swim away. Sometimes they will dive under water to get away.

How do sea otters stay warm?

The water that Southern sea otters live in is a chilly 30-50 degrees Fahrenheit — much too cold for humans. Otters don't have blubber to keep them warm like other marine mammals. Instead, they rely on their thick fur coat.

Sea otter fur is the thickest fur of any animal. Sea otter fur has 600,000 to 1 million hairs per square inch — humans only have 20,000 hairs on their whole head! It is important for otters to keep each individual hair clean. If the fur isn't clean it gets matted and otters can die from hypothermia.

Why aren't there more sea otters?

Two hundred years ago, a million otters may have ranged along 6,000 miles of Pacific coastline from northern Japan, through the Aleutian Islands of Alaska, down the coast of California to Baja Mexico.

Because the pelts of sea otters are thick, warm and beautiful, fur hunters killed hundreds of thousands of sea otters — until not a single otter was visible along the entire California coastline.

The Southern sea otter was thought to be extinct. Then, in 1938, a raft of 300 otters was discovered off the coast of Big Sur. This group is now found

Continued on page 4
What's Your Favorite Joke?

Do you have a favorite marine or animal joke? Tell us and you could win a Friends of the Sea Otter T-shirt! Each entry received is entered into a drawing for a free T-shirt and the Grand prize winner will receive a poster plus a T-shirt. It's as easy as 1-2-3.

1. Write your joke on a 3-inch by 5-inch postcard.
2. Be sure and list your name, address, and age.
3. Send the card to:
   The Otter Pup
   c/o Friends of the Sea Otter
   140 Franklin, Suite 309
   Monterey, CA 93940

Winners will be announced in the next issue of The Otter Pup and the top jokes will be published.

Find And Color

Look at the picture on page 2 and find and color the following:

- BARNACLES
- CHITON
- CLAM
- CRAB
- FISH
- KELP
- SEA ANEMONE
- SEA OTTER
- SHARK
- SNAIL
- SQUID
- STARFISH

Word Search

See if you can find and circle the following words hidden in the puzzle above. Then, describe the relationship between that word and sea otters.

Hint: read the story What Is A Sea Otter on page 2.

If you would like to receive a copy of the answers, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to:

The Otter Pup
   c/o Friends of the Sea Otter
   140 Franklin Street, Suite 309
   Monterey, CA 93940

BIG SUR
CALIFORNIA
CLAMS
CRABS
DIVE
FISHING NETS
FLIPPERS
FOOD
FUR COAT
HYPOTHERMIA
KELP FOREST
MARINE MAMMAL
OIL SPILLS
OTTER
PACIFIC OCEAN
PELTS
POLUTION
RAFTS
SNAILS
STARFISH
SWIM
TAILS
TOOL
WATER

You Otter Know!

Oh sure, we sometimes compete for the same food.

And yes, they do tend to overpopulate an area.

But you gotta admit...

Brown '93 just do the Cutest Things!
All About Sea Otters

Continued from page 2

along 200 miles of California coastline, but its population is still small — only about 2,000. Southern sea otters are now protected by the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act, so they cannot be hunted.

Where do Southern sea otters live?

Southern sea otters are found in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Central California. They range from Año Nuevo (9 miles north of Santa Cruz) to Purisima Point (just north of Point Conception). Additionally, there is a small colony on San Nicolas Island off Santa Barbara.

Usually sea otters stay close to shore, but sometimes they are found out as far as 3 miles from shore. Otters rest in kelp forests, in groups called rafts. Often they will drape the kelp over their bodies to keep from drifting away.

Now there are other threats to otters. Oil spills can be fatal to the sea otter and could cause this species to become extinct. Oil coats the fur, destroying the blanket of air that keeps the animal warm. This causes chilling and death (hypothermia).

Increased pollution in our oceans is also a threat to sea otters. Fishing nets are another cause of sea otter deaths. Sea otters become caught in the nets and drown. Laws have been passed to limit the use of fishing nets along the coastline. This has helped sea otter populations.

Sea Otters in New York

Continued from page 1

under rocks in the exhibit so the otters can make use of their natural instinct to forage for food. Sea Cliffs is one of a few exhibits in the world where sea otters can be seen feeding underwater, just as they would in the wild. The three inter-connecting pools are 10 to 12 feet deep and may be isolated to provide the animals with variety and privacy when necessary.

Bunky and Elsa continually delight audiences who observe them swimming, grooming, feeding, and chasing after each other. Though she is shy, the rough "play" of courtship is often precipitated by little Elsa who is also very speedy and agile. Both the animals have been taught several voice commands and hand signals for ease of handling and management. Elsa has been trained for "belly presents" so the keepers can examine her mammary glands and genitalia without stress. This will be especially important in the event of her pregnancy.

We are proud to have Bunky and Elsa in Sea Cliffs at the Aquarium for Wildlife Conservation. A dedicated staff and a unique exhibit stand ready, willing, and able to accept future stranded Southern sea otters who need a home.


Visit Sea Otters In 7 Cities In North America

Seven cities in North America have marine institutions that have sea otter exhibits. Following are locations and visiting hours (admission fees vary):

Monterey Bay Aquarium
Southern sea otters
Monterey, California
(408) 648-4888
10 a.m. - 6 p.m. (daily)
9:30 a.m. - 6 p.m. (major holidays)

Aquarium for Wildlife Conservation
Southern sea otters
Brooklyn, New York
(718) 265-3474
10 a.m. - 5 p.m. (daily)

Point Defiance
Zoo & Aquarium
Alaska sea otters
Tacoma, Washington
(206) 591-5333
10 a.m. - 4 p.m. (weekdays)
10 a.m. - 6 p.m. (weekends)

Seattle Aquarium
Alaska sea otters
Seattle, Washington
(206) 386-4320
10 a.m. - 8 p.m. (5/31 - 9/7)
10 a.m. - 5 p.m. (9/8 - 5/30)

John G. Shedd Aquarium
Alaska sea otters
Chicago, IL
(312) 939-2438
9 a.m. - 6 p.m. (daily)

Sea World, San Diego
Alaska and Southern sea otters
San Diego, California
(619) 222-6363
10 a.m. - 6 p.m. (winter)
9 a.m. - 10 p.m. (summer)

Vancouver Public Aquarium
Alaska sea otters
Vancouver, British Columbia
(604) 685-3364
9:30 a.m. - 8 p.m. (6/28 - 9/6)

Subscribe today!

Name ____________________________
Address ____________________________
City __________________ State ______ ZIP _____
Country ____________________________
Telephone ____________________________

One-year (two issues) subscription rates are $7.00 (U.S. only) and $10.00 (foreign). Send your check and order form to:

Friends of the Sea Otter
The Otter Pup
140 Franklin, Ste. 309
Monterey, CA 93940

Total enclosed: ___________________