

PRESS RELEASE

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Media contact: Gigi Allianic, Meghan Sawyer
206.548.2550 | woodlandparkzoopr@zoo.org

Video of river otters: <https://youtu.be/rS1g9MVUZf0>

Celebrate awesome otters on World Otter Day, May 27

SEATTLE—*Happy World Otter Day!* Woodland Park Zoo is home to the North American river otter and Asian small-clawed otter. In honor of the 13 species of otters worldwide, the zoo would like to spotlight the North American river otter, a local symbol and sentinel of a healthy habitat and Pacific Northwest conservation.



North American river otters are playful, adorable animals full of that Pacific Northwest energy...but their presence is also an indicator of good, clean water and a healthy ecosystem.

River otters live in both freshwater and marine environments all over Washington state—coastal areas, estuaries, freshwater lakes, streams and rivers. These ecosystems are important to river otters, but also to people. Drinking water comes from surface water such as streams and rivers. Keeping these waterways clean is critical for human health, too.

Seeing a river otter is auspicious. Their presence is a symbol of a healthy habitat, an abundance of food and clean water.

Otter Fun

- The otter is the largest member of the weasel family.
- Otters can swim up to 7 mph, hold their breath for up to 8 minutes while under water and dive to a depth of 60 feet.
- Otters have the thickest fur of any mammal, having as many as 850,000 hairs per square inch.
- These animals have boundless energy due to their very high metabolism. This means they have to eat a lot during the day!
- Otters are playful animals, and indulge in water play, mud/snow sliding and burrowing through snow. Many "play" activities serve a purpose, such as strengthening social bonds, practicing hunting techniques and scent marking.

Otter Action

- Become a carnivore spotter and report sightings, interactions, and vocalizations of regional carnivores, including river otters, using the web-based tool, Carnivore Spotter: www.zoo.org/carnivorespotter
- Keep local watersheds clean from litter and pollution.

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