

# Sea Otter Pup

## TEACHER'S NOTES

by Victoria Miles, illustrated by Elizabeth Gatt

*Sea Otter Pup* describes a day in the life of a young sea otter as he is fed and groomed by his mother, learning the skills he will need to survive on his own. Watercolour illustrations stretch across facing pages effectively depicting the otter's habitat.

This is a beautiful book that is most suitable for use in primary classrooms. The story format conveys much information about sea otters in a manner that is entertaining to young students. The full page watercolour illustrations complement the text and add to the appeal of the book. Useful for reading aloud by teachers and independent reading by students.

### CURRICULUM INTEGRATION

*Language Arts*—listening for information, reading for information, research, vocabulary development, story writing, discussion

*Science*—sea otter, marine habitats, conservation of species, marine mammals

*P.E./Drama*—creative movement

*Art*—drawing, painting, dioramas

*Healthy Living*—families

### SPELLING/VOCABULARY LIST

forest	kelp
seaweed	searches
high	waiting
wrapped	piece
drift	floating
front	paws
hind	flippers
water	dry
hungry	anxious
return	crying
voice	seagulls
soar	suddenly
swims	tucks
rolls	chest
purple	sea urchins
share	hungry
snatches	spines
sharp	watches
favourite	using
cracks	shell
slurps	tasty
shares	gobbles
messy	somersaults
once	twice
washes	copy
finished	grooming
squeezes	combs
fluffs	yawns
afternoon	snuggles
moment	molluscs

# BEFORE YOU READ

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## *Brainstorming*

Before reading the book aloud, brainstorm with your students and use the chalkboard or chart paper to record information under the following headings: “What We Know About Sea Otters” and “What We Want to Know About Sea Otters.”

## *New Vocabulary*

Introduce words from the spelling/vocabulary list that may be new to your students. Use your selected list to teach phonics or appropriate word attack skills.

## *Bulletin Board Display*

Try to locate photographs of sea otters to display on a bulletin board. These animals are so appealing, pictures will surely spark your students’ interest.

## *Marine Mammals*

Discuss the term “marine mammals” with your students. Write a definition of the term and compile a list of marine mammals. This list could be used as topics for research projects after reading *Sea Otter Pup*.

## *Related Resources*

(also available from Pacific Edge Publishing)

*The Nature Of Sea Otters* by Stefani Paine

*Jason and the Sea Otter* by Joe Barber-Starkey

*Spotted Owlets* by Victoria Miles

*Cougar Kittens* by Victoria Miles

*Bald Eaglets* by Victoria Miles

# AS YOU READ

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## *What We Learned About Otters*

As you read new information about sea otters in *Sea Otter Pup*, add to the brainstorming chart that you started before reading, or compile a new list of statements under the heading “What We Learned About Sea Otters.” Locate other sources of information to answer questions not addressed in *Sea Otter Pup*.

## *Information from Illustrations*

Ask your students to pay attention to the illustrations as you read, to find additional information about sea otters and their habitat.

## *Vocabulary Development*

Reread *Sea Otter Pup*, stopping to discuss vocabulary that might be new or poorly understood. Ask your students to suggest other words that could be used in place of the words being discussed.

## *Listening for Information*

Write the following questions on the blackboard or use the master provided and ask your students to listen for information while you read the book aloud.

1. What are baby sea otters called?
2. How does a mother help her baby?
3. Where do sea otters find their food?
4. What do sea otters eat?
5. How does the baby keep from getting lost while his mother is searching for food?
6. How do otters wash themselves?

Discuss the students’ answers to the questions.

## *Comparing and Contrasting – Families*

Ask your students to think about how the sea otter family in the story is similar to and different from their own families. Use a chart or Venn diagram to record your students’ observations.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

## SEA OTTER PUP

*Print a sentence to answer these questions.*

1. *What are baby sea otters called?*

\_\_\_\_\_

2. *How does a mother help her baby?*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. *Where do sea otters find their food?*

\_\_\_\_\_

4. *What do sea otters eat?*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. *How does the baby keep from getting lost while his mother is searching for food?*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. *How do otters wash themselves?*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# AFTER YOU READ

## LANGUAGE ARTS

### *Cloze Activity*

After reading *Sea Otter Pup* several times, distribute copies of the cloze exercise provided. This could be an individual or group activity. Copies of the book or the following word list could be provided for reference: *seaweed, bottom, food, wrapped, drift, hungry, crying, waves, tucks, rolls, chest, urchins, snatches, sharp, careful, favourite, teeth, shares, gobbles, messy, somersaults, grooming, combs, fur.* (The words are listed in the order they appear in the exercise.)

### *Reading for Information*

Use the questions provided for the listening activity for independent reading and writing work rather than for listening.

### *Vocabulary Development – Crossword Puzzle*

Discuss the meaning of the following words before assigning the crossword puzzle for independent or partner work:

*otter, seaweed, bobs, soar, urchin, spines, somersault, groom, mollusc, hind, water, tasty.*

### *Story Writing*

Ask your students to write another story about the sea otter pup. Discuss possible adventures an otter pup might have before your students begin writing. (e.g. becoming unwrapped from his kelp anchor and floating away, getting caught in a storm, getting caught in a net, escaping capture by an eagle)

### *Spelling/Vocabulary List*

Use the spelling/vocabulary list to design exercises to practise alphabetical order, affixes, rhyming words, spelling, sentence structure, etc.

## SOCIAL STUDIES

### *First Nations Culture*

Read *Jason and the Sea Otter* aloud and use the story to lead into discussion and further learning about the culture of the First Nations people of the west coast of Vancouver Island.

### *Discussion*

Explain the history of hunting the sea otter in the Pacific Northwest. Discuss the dangers that otters face today. (See the note on the last page of *Sea Otter Pup*) Discuss why it is important to preserve species from extinction.

## SCIENCE

### *Research*

Encourage individual students or small groups to locate more information about sea otters or other marine mammals and report their findings to the class.

### *Animal Babies*

With your students, compile a list of animals and the words used to name their babies.

## P. E.

### *Creative Movement*

Use the warm-up time of your gym period to encourage your students to move like otters—diving, floating, bobbing, playing, escaping.

## ART

### *Illustrating*

Focus on the illustrations in *Sea Otter Pup*. Discuss the physical characteristics of sea otters. Ask your students to draw a close-up picture of a sea otter. Discuss how they might make their otters look furry.



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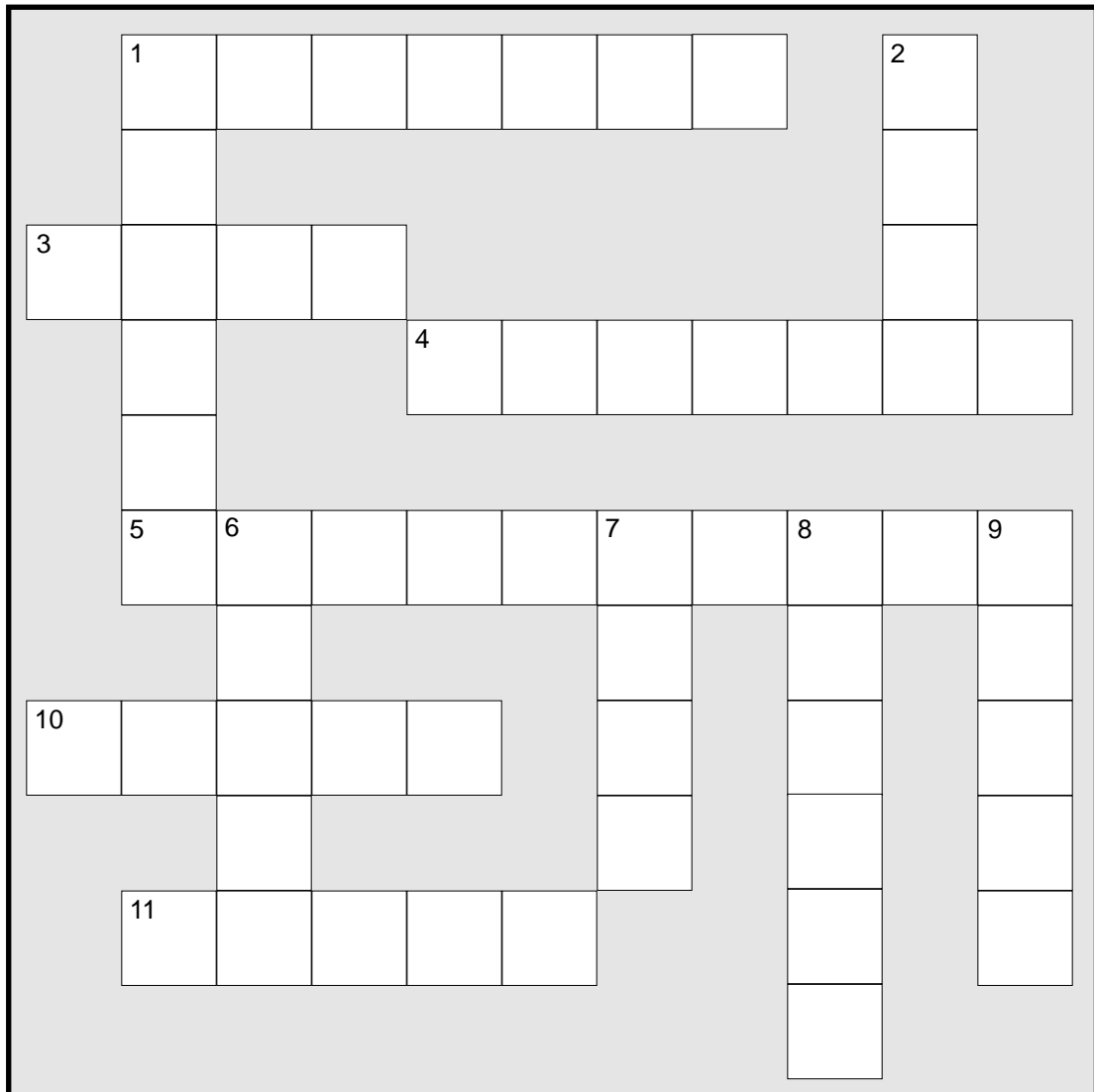
# SEA OTTER PUP

## ACROSS

1. a plant that grows in the sea
3. at the back
4. a sea animal with an outer shell
5. flip head over tail
10. a sea otter's environment
11. clean and comb fur

## DOWN

1. a sea urchin is covered with \_\_\_\_\_
2. floats up and down in the water
6. a mammal that lives in the sea
7. fly high in the sky
8. mother sea otter's favourite food
9. yummy



## SEA OTTERS

*The sea otter is a remarkable animal not often seen by people because it lives in the sea. It eats, sleeps, and gives birth to its babies without ever needing to come on land. It does not need to drink fresh water. It can't live everywhere in the ocean, however. It needs a supply of food close by. It needs protection from the wind and waves to rest and groom itself.*

*The sea otter weighs 20 to 40 kilograms. Its hind feet look like swimming flippers with long webbed toes. It has large lungs. These help to keep the animal afloat when it is resting on the surface. They also provide oxygen for diving underwater.*

*The sea otter gathers its food from the bottom of the sea. It eats any marine animal it can find: sea urchins, clams, snails, crabs, limpets, mussels, sea stars, chitons, abalone, scallops, flatfish and tube worms. It eats on the surface, floating on its back and using its chest for a table. Often it will hold a rock on its chest, banging a shell against the rock until it breaks.*

*Sea otters are strong swimmers and good divers. They can hold their breath for as long as five minutes but they usually stay underwater for only a minute or so.*

*The sea otter has an amazing coat! There are long guard hairs on top and a thick layer of fine, soft fur underneath. The guard hairs are like a raincoat, keeping water away from the warm, fluffy underfur. There are up to 164,000 hairs on every square centimetre of a sea otter's body. An average human head has only 100,000 hairs in total!*

*The sea otter's fur can only form a waterproof barrier if it is absolutely clean. If the hairs are dirty and stick together in clumps, the cold ocean water seeps through to the underfur. Then the sea otter gets cold and dies. That is why sea otters are always grooming their coats. They scrub, lick and comb the fur and blow on the underfur to keep it fluffy and dry. The sea otter's coat is large and loose. Every part of it can be pulled around to be licked and combed.*

*The sea otter's closest relatives are weasels, mink, skunks and other kinds of otters. Their natural enemies are sharks, eagles and land predators at the times when they venture ashore. Humans are the sea otter's biggest enemy. In the past, people hunted otters for their fur until they were nearly extinct. We pollute their habitat. We fish for the same food and kill the otters when we think they're eating too much. Sea otters are wonderful animals that need our help to survive in the modern world.*

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Sea Otter Pup

There is a forest of \_\_\_\_\_ in the ocean. At the \_\_\_\_\_ of the kelp forest, mother sea otter searches for \_\_\_\_\_. Her pup is waiting up above, \_\_\_\_\_ in a piece of kelp so he can't \_\_\_\_\_ away. Pup is \_\_\_\_\_ and he begins to make \_\_\_\_\_ sounds, calling for his mother. Suddenly Mother pops her head up above the \_\_\_\_\_. She swims to Pup and \_\_\_\_\_ him under her arm. Then she \_\_\_\_\_ onto her back and Pup lies on her \_\_\_\_\_. Mother has two purple sea \_\_\_\_\_ for them to share. Pup is so hungry he \_\_\_\_\_ one of the urchins and bites it. The sea urchin's spines are \_\_\_\_\_. They hurt his mouth. Mother is more \_\_\_\_\_ and she knows how to eat her \_\_\_\_\_ food. She cracks the hard shell with her \_\_\_\_\_ and slurps out the tasty urchin. She \_\_\_\_\_ a piece with Pup and he \_\_\_\_\_ it down. Eating sea urchins is \_\_\_\_\_. Mother \_\_\_\_\_ in the water three times and then she washes herself. When Mother is finished with her own \_\_\_\_\_, she squeezes the water out of Pup's fur. She \_\_\_\_\_ him with her claws and fluffs his \_\_\_\_\_. Then Pup snuggles against Mother's chest in the warm sun and falls asleep.