



Sea Otters

Enhydra lutris

Family: Mustelidae



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Behavior

- Very social – not like river otters
- Form rafts
- At least 10 different types of vocalization
- Males and females separate except during mating
- Females spend a lot of time with pups



KEYSTONE SPECIES:

- Kelp is vital to marine ecosystems
 - Protects coastal erosion
 - Habitat for many marine species
 - Carbon dioxide consumer
- Urchins
 - Feed on kelp
- Sea Otter/urchin/kelp paradigm
 - Sea otters are main consumer of sea urchins
 - Decrease of urchins → increase of kelp forests → happy ecosystem
- Indicator of health of marine ecosystems

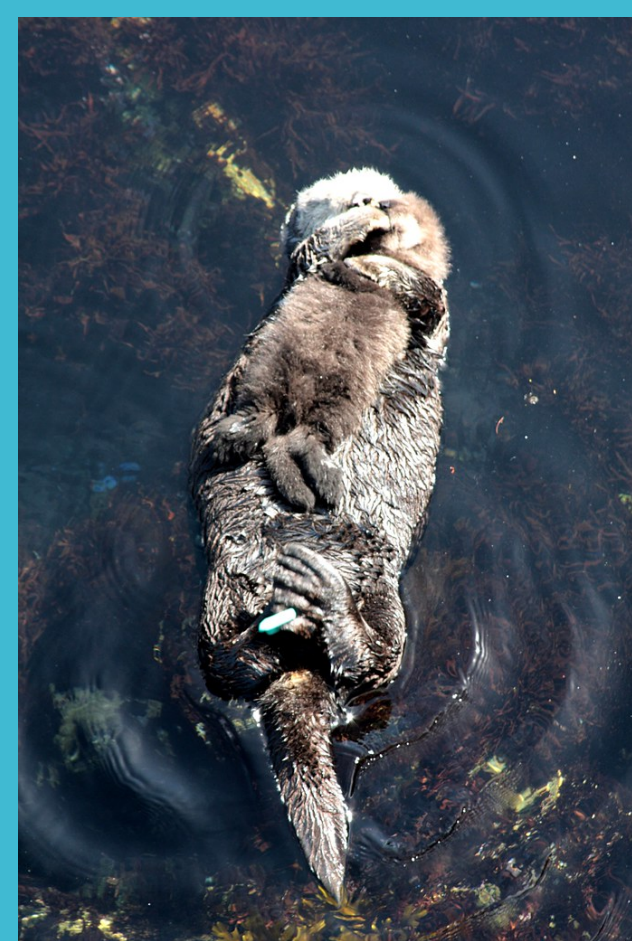
Locomotion

- Natatorial adaptations – hind flippers, shortened femurs, webbing, etc.
- Mainly stay in water, but sometimes go on land
- Surface swimming and submerging



Parental Care

- No paternal care
- Mother rarely leaves pup, except to forage
- Stay with mom until 6 months old



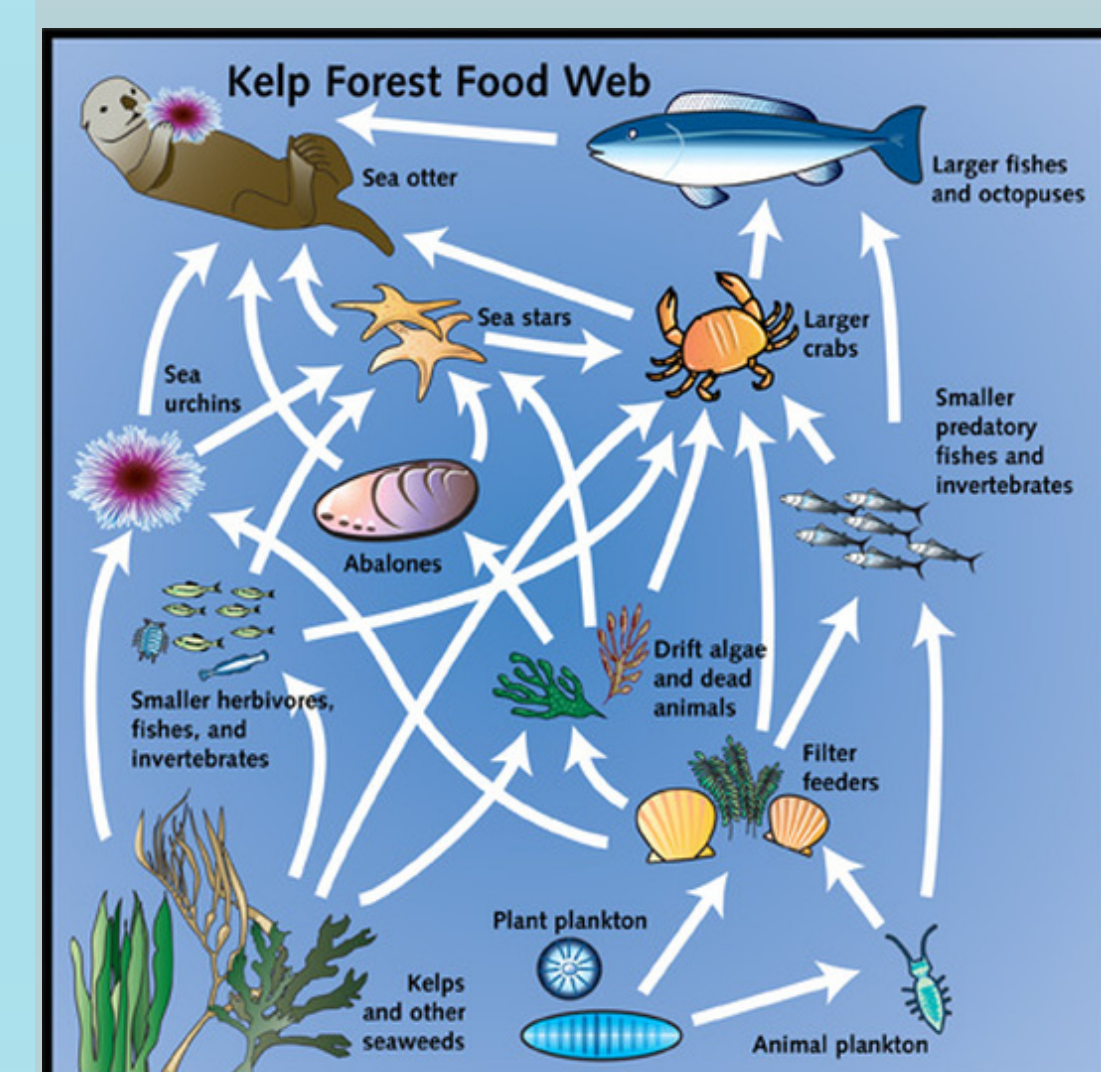
Eating habits

- Carnivorous
- Foragers
- Folds in skin to use as pockets to store food as they forage
- Only marine mammal that uses tools
 - Keep a rock to break their food apart
 - Break food apart when floating on their backs



Reproduction

- Male and female get flirtatious or violent with each other
- Spend three days together before mating
- Male holds onto the female's face with his mouth and teeth to mate
- Females can only sustain one pup at a time
- Gives birth in water – rolls around and pulls pup out



"OTTER" FUN FACTS

- Really dense fur – creates air bubble to keep otter dry and warm
- Along north and central Pacific coasts
- FRICKIN' ADORBALE AND FUN TO WATCH!!!

