How Do We Study River Otters? And Why?

We look for signs of otters near water, like tracks and rolling places.

We collect otter scat to see what they are eating in different seasons. Otter scat can also tell us about family relationships and health!

We put up trail cameras to capture video of them. Videos can help us see how many otters, how many otter pups, and how they behave.

We put everything we find out into our computers. We use mapping and databases to put all our information together.

Soon, we will know where, how many, relationships, and eating habits of Bay Area River Otters. This will help us know how to protect and conserve watersheds for the otters and for other plants and animals, including us!

Healthier Watersheds = Healthier animals, plants and humans!
What Do River Otters Eat?

Mostly slow-moving fish, but also: crustaceans, insects, trout and salmon, birds, reptiles and amphibians.
River Otter? Sea Otter? Do you know the difference?

Here are some hints:

River otters may be in the ocean, bay, river, pond, lake or on land. They can run pretty fast! But sea otters are almost always in the ocean, bays or sloughs. They’re very clumsy on land.

River otters sleep on land, in dens, but sea otters sleep floating in the ocean. Sometimes they hold hands to stay together.

River otters usually swim belly down, with only a little of their bodies out of the water, but sea otters more often swim belly up, with a lot of their bodies above the water.