



CELEBRATE SUCCESSES, FOR THEY GIVE US THE FORTITUDE TO MOVE THROUGH CHALLENGING TIMES

## We're Taking a Stand

During the past months, we've witnessed never-before-seen shocks to our democracy. We have hope and confidence that democracy will prevail in the end, and we understand this will be a long and difficult fight. We must preserve all we can of the natural world and move forward with actions to solve environmental problems from climate change to pollution. The current administration is already gutting the federal functions we depend upon for clean waters, healthy humans, and habitat for wildlife. We will, of course, continue to support clean waterways, diversity, equity and inclusion, and healthy habitats for all of us. Our work will continue and will always be based on shared values.

Funding is always tight for small nonprofits, and we expect it to become tighter than ever as the government shuts down needed

programs and nonprofits are forced to depend even more upon our private donors. We are grateful to have a loyal and generous group of supporters. You supported us more robustly than ever before during 2024 and gave us a good boost for what is likely to be a wild year. You make it happen!

We're not giving up our values, research, education or advocacy. We're taking a stand, and we trust you will continue to stand by us.



*Megan Isadore*  
Megan Isadore,  
Executive Director

# DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

## Are vital to our organization



Photo by Megan Joseph



Photo by Megan Joseph

**During November of 2024** our board of directors met to hone and update our direction and policies, guiding our forward movement on diversity, equity, and inclusion activities based on shared values. Our lively discussion and brainstorming produced key shifts we agreed upon to make progress. We remain undeterred by our organization's small size. As we grow, the decisions we made in November will form the bedrock of our work to ensure we remain a welcoming, diverse group.

**As a result** of the meeting, we have added to our mission statement to reflect our commitment to serving all people. We are completing our values statement to help people understand who we are and what we care about. We are working on ensuring that our organization shows our commitment to diversity in staff, volunteers, and board members. Expect to see more progress over time. We welcome your thoughts.

*Supported by Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment and Balance Hydrologics*

# RESEARCH

## Coastal river otters provide ecological insights



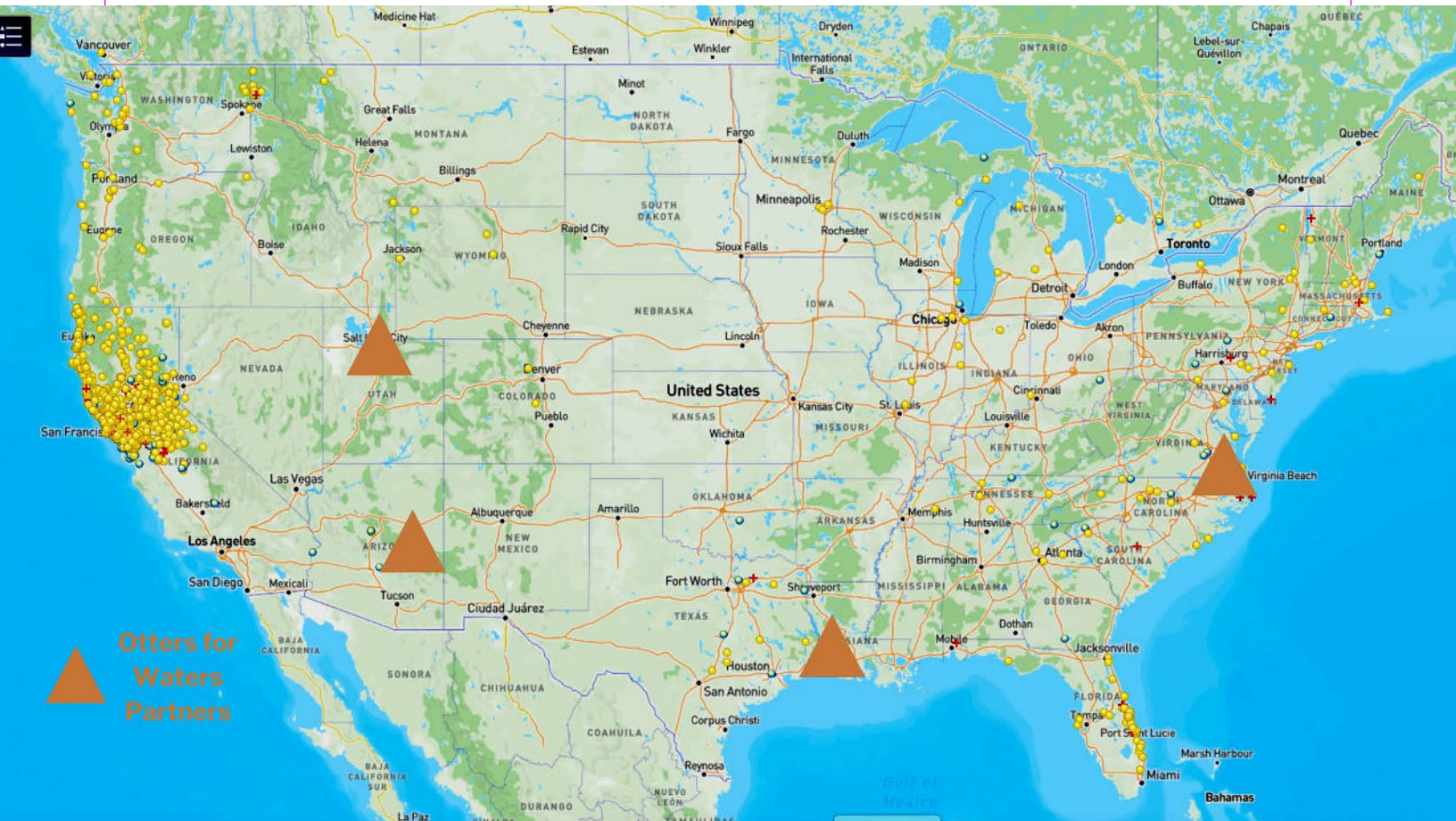
**This spring**, results from our otter predation study will be published by the IUCN Otter Specialist Group bulletin. The paper, entitled North American River Otter (*Lontra canadensis*) Predation on Brown Pelicans (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) at Abbotts Lagoon, Point Reyes National Seashore explores the new phenomenon of river otter predation on pelicans. Thankfully, otter predation did not affect pelican abundance at the site. Since that study, the pelicans appear to be responding to the predation (as they did not at first) by flying off when they see the river otters approach.

**We worked with biologist** Frankie Gerraty to publish a paper detailing the fascinating interactions between coyotes and the pelican-eating river otters. Coyotes observe the otters preying on pelicans, then wade into the shallows or head to the beach to feed on otter-caught pelican carcasses. This is one way in which river otters provide extra nutrition to other carnivores (certainly not on purpose). The new behavior is an addition to our understanding of river otters' effects on coastal ecology.

**2024 marked our thirteenth year** of monitoring river otters in Marin County, California. That noninvasive monitoring using trail cameras and sample collection, has given us insight into river otter recovery in coastal and bayside Marin as well as new understanding of health issues, behavior, prey species, and movements. Among our most interesting findings are the wide variety of prey species taken and the fascinating interactions among river otters and their neighbors like coyotes, bald eagles, fox, beaver, puma, and bobcat. We are grateful to our skilled, seasoned field volunteer cohort!

*Supported by Point Reyes National Seashore Association, IUCN SSC Otter Specialist Group*

# OTTER SPOTTER Grows into for Otters for Waters



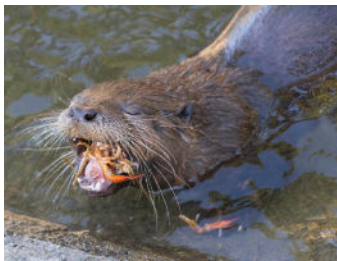
During 2024 we stretched and spread our wings, grew our impact and reach and added partners in two new states to enhance efforts to protect waterways.

We're thrilled to welcome the Loveland Living Planet Aquarium in Utah and Audubon Nature Institute in New Orleans to our Otters for Waters program. Now we support waterway conservation and stewardship through the hopeful story and inspiration of otter recovery in California, Virginia, Arizona, Utah, and Louisiana. We are already seeing results: look for findings and impacts in our May newsletter.

# Otter Ambassadors

During 2024, we expanded our Contra Costa Ambassadors program to Marin County and sent our ambassadors out to talk to people along trails in the national and state parks and at farmers markets. Expanding into Marin helped us reach many more people. Meanwhile, the river otters inexplicably deserted the Contra Costa Canal last year. We hope to see them back this year and will survey for their presence. If you see a river otter, please don't forget to input your sighting on our easy online form.

*Supported by Marin County Community Services Nonprofit Fund*



**SEEN A RIVER OTTER?  
REPORT YOUR SIGHTING  
AND CONTRIBUTE TO  
OUR WORK PROTECTING  
OUR SHARED WATERS!**



We research, teach, and advocate for a safer, thriving planet for all. Please join us!

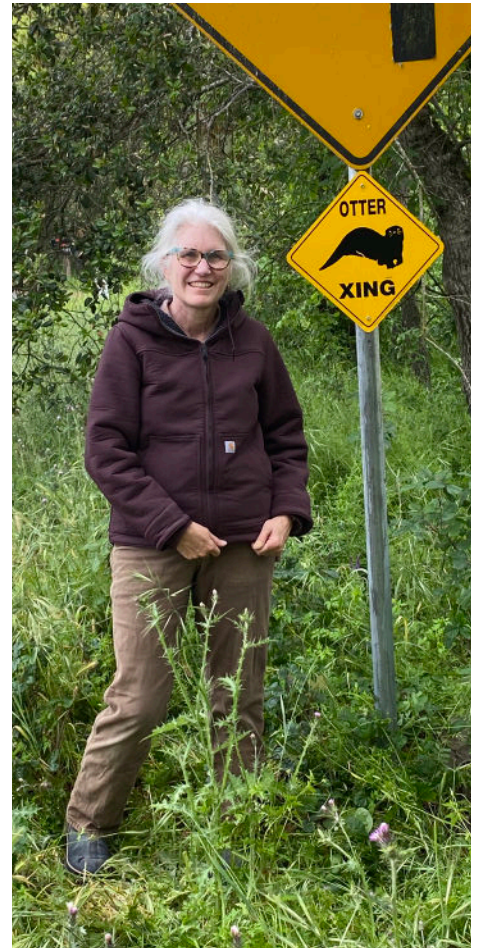
[www.riverottterecology.org](http://www.riverottterecology.org)

Input your sighting using this QR code!



## Otter Spotter of the Year

Louisa Morris and Bob Neale



We were thrilled to present our Patrick Mitchel Memorial Otter Spotter of the Year award to Louisa Morris and Bob Neale for their work getting signage up at a wildlife crossing hotspot in Santa Rosa.

# ADVOCACY

## We are not helpless



Photo: Steve Pearce

**Advocacy efforts** during 2024 have addressed two wildlife fatality hotspots in Marin County, CA where the death of wildlife by car strikes could be reduced with signage, lower speed limits, and better wildlife crossings. Cal Trans has supported our efforts and promised fencing to guide wildlife away from crossing the road and toward a culvert along Highway 37 where they can cross safely between the Bay and associated wetlands.

Advocacy also included work to keep dogs out of fragile wetlands in Larkspur, CA, protecting Tomales Bay from shellfish practices that harm eelgrass and seals, changes to the California Coastal Act, protecting elk in Pt. Reyes National Seashore, and more.

Many of our advocacy efforts are accomplished in concert with many other people and groups speaking up for our natural spaces. Some are our own, based on our research and field observations.

*Supported by the Rose Foundation Wildlands Grassroots Fund*

# EDUCATION

## The future of our waterways



**During 2024** we reached more than 2,300 people through in-person presentations, webinars, walks, classroom events for high school and college students, and trained both our Loveland Living Planet Aquarium and Elizabeth River partners on camera trapping techniques and uses in conservation and in the classroom.

**We continued our work** with Tomales High School, offering 34 ninth graders a “mini science symposium” which offered the newly-minted high school students a chance to present their projects with posters in a low-key setting, then get feedback from their older peers. All our student participants enjoyed the process and felt that it was helpful to have a mini-version of the larger event for juniors and seniors. We plan to welcome them back in two years to participate in the spring symposium.

**We presented** to 100 new Otter Spotters at the Elizabeth River Project, our first Otters for Waters partner, took a group of eager Spotters on a river walk to seek signs of otters, and our program was off and running. We currently have 91 otter observations and 92 participants...well done!

**We head to the Verde River** in Arizona this May for their birding and nature fest, where we will introduce everyone to the joy of river otters, offer an in-person discussion of the project, where we are and where we would like to be, and lead an Otter Walk along the banks of the beautiful Verde River.

**On local ground**, we guest lectured for both UC Berkeley and New Voices Are Rising, a young climate protectors project of the Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment. Outreach to local students, whether high school or college, is a core part of our work.

*Supported by Elizabeth River Project, Friends of the Verde River, Rose Foundation*

# VOLUNTEER of the Year

Aviva Rossi, PhD



Aviva Rossi, PhD, has worked with us since 2012. She was one of our first volunteers and taught us much about camera trapping and field biology. Since then, Aviva has become a valued and much-appreciated advisor, fundraiser, and supporter of our Otters for Waters program with wise counsel. She also provided our youngest volunteer this year, her son Alex Rossi, who is following in his mother's footsteps. We are proud to call Aviva our friend and Volunteer of the Year 2024.

# Board Member Search

During 2024 we said farewell and thank you to Richard Abramson, who joined our board two years ago. His legal and business support was much appreciated!

As we move forward with expansion into new waterways with partner organizations, we seek up to five new board members to help lead us into the next stage of our growth. We are a values-driven organization, small and nimble, and we seek people with an interest in protecting our waterways, habitat, and wildlife and a willingness to learn and grow along with us. We encourage and welcome diversity on our board.

# volunteer!



**You make it happen.** Join us to find knowledge, fun and stewardship and support saving our waterways through otters at tabling events, presentations, as an Otter Ambassador, and in conversations with friends. Apply online.





# 2024 FINANCIALS

## INCOME

■ Grants 52%    
 ■ Direct Contributions 32%    
 ■ Contract Services 6%    
 ■ Events 10%



## EXPENSES

■ Programs 91%    
 ■ Support Services 6%    
 ■ Fundraising 3%



## PROGRAM EXPENSES

■ Research 32%    
 ■ Education 33%    
 ■ Community Science 35%



# 2024 HONOR ROLL

Richard Abramson	Ken Drexler	Sunni Killfoil	Carol Peterson
Sarah Allen	Candace Duran	David Kimball	Jeffrey Poehlmann
Michael Amado	Ashley Eagle-Gibbs	MaryEllen King & Bob DeLeo	Jacqueline Read
Raven Amaro	Michele Egan	Kathy Klahn	Mathieu Reeves
Alan Anacheka-Naseman	June Eidson	Megan Knobeloch	Josephine Riccomini
Dale Anania	Dixie Finley	Lori Kopacz	Gina Rogers
Timothy Anderson	Maryann Foley	Daria Koshkina	Susan Rosenthal
Barbara Austin	Maureen Forsy	Mary Patricia Kramer	Christopher Russell
Christine Banzon	Mary Gleim	Kermit Kubitz & Kate Edwards	Sharlene Rutland Hauser
Susan Bartholome	Kristin Gornick	Barbara Lancaster	Betsy Sanville
Sally Beauford	Randall Hagen	Phoebe Lenhart	Carol Schaffer
Annamarie Beckel	Lynn Hajek	Helen Lindqvist	Theodore Schulze
Anita Belofsky	Candace Hale	Julie Litwin	Kathryn Shack
Paul Berensmeier	Janelle Hall	Cynthia Lloyd	Kathleen Shelley
Jessica Berman	Colleen Haraden-Gorski	Jennifer Locklin	Jane Smith & David DuVal
Wayne Best	Peter Harvey	Hillary Maag & Colin Bode	Wendy Sparks & Jeff Torquemada
Simon Bird	Robert Hass	Bill MacFarland	Marlene & Martin Stein
Millicent Bogert	Elaine Hattendorf	Dave Mackenzie	Susan Stienstra
Mark Boran	Christine Hayamizu	Mary Lee MacKichan	Paul Stucky
Diane Bouchard	Claudia Hein	Arthur Manzi	Sriram Subramanian
Christopher Boyd & Margaret O'Brien	Eva Heninwolf	Ruth Marcec	Tim Sullivan
Tony Bragano	Vikki Henry	Matthew McHenry	Mary Sutton
Anthony Brewer	Ceci Herrmann	Donald McIlraith	Karl Swartz
Bob Burke	Denise Hill	Lynette McLamb	Maureen Tracy
Josephine Burns	Anastasia & Randall Hobbet	Jerry Meral	Linda Tiffany
Eric Carlson	Linda Hoffman	Kate Merriman	Robert Timineri
Colin Carroll	Gary & Karen Holm	Carrie Miller	Heidi & Charles Triay
Karin & Steve Chase	Kristen Holmstrand	Bridger & Katherine Mitchell	Harvey Trop
Jim Compton	Luke Hones	Roxanne Moger	Scott Ullman
Ryan Cornelius	Sheri Howe	Mia Monroe	Diane Valenti
Kathy Coultrup	Lewis Hurwitz	Ed Mooring	Robert van Duinen
Sarah Cox	Yusuke Ichikawa	Louisa Morris & Bob Neale	Annette Varady
Mackenzie Cristner	Janet & Tony Isadore-Barreca	Robert Morton	Mary Wade
Hillary Curtis	Julie Jacobs	Patricia Munter	David & Idie Weinsoff
Susan Delmanowski	Dianne Jenett	Flor Murray	Malcolm & Julie McDade Whyte
Annie Dolan-Niles	Sue Johnson	Peter Nelson	Patricia Williams
John Dolinsek & Kathy Kent	Katherine Jones	Melissa Nelson	David & Patty Wimpfheimer
Karin Donker	Janice Kattke	Stacy Nii-Eastly	Kristin Womack
Barbara Dornan	Julie Kaye	Mary Perez	James Wood
	Mary Keydash	Marilyn Petch	Stephen Young

***Join us*** by supporting our work to protect otters and our shared watersheds.

# END OF YEAR THANKS

## Otters for Waters Partners

Elizabeth River Project  
Friends of the Verde River  
Loveland Living Planet Aquarium  
Audubon Nature Institute of Louisiana

## Organizational Supporters

Anderson-Rogers Foundation  
Benevity Fund  
Carol & Kent H Landsberg Foundation  
Contra Costa County Fish & Wildlife Commission  
CuriOdyssey  
Estate of Jean Amos  
FieldScope/BSCS Science Learning  
JPMC Foundation  
Lagunitas School Leap Program  
Levin Richmond Terminal Corp  
PayPal Giving Fund  
Rose Foundation  
Safari West  
Slick Family Foundation  
Stuart Foundation  
The Windfall Fund  
Verla K Regnery Foundation  
West Marin Fund  
Windfall Fund

## Special Thanks

Jacqueline Jones  
Marie Macaspac  
Katherine and Bridger Mitchell  
Aviva Rossi, PhD  
Martin Stein  
Debra Stein

## In-Kind Donors

Adobe  
Bovine Bakery  
Dropbox  
Esri  
Folkmanis Puppets  
Good Earth Natural Foods  
Google  
Marin French Cheese Company  
Microsoft  
Pee't's Coffee  
Trader Joe's

## River Otter Ecology Project

PO Box 103  
Forest Knolls, CA 94933  
415-342-7956

[ROEP Website](#)



## 2024 Volunteers

Ganette Abaya  
Robert Aston  
Katie Ballinger  
Christine Banzon  
Peter Barto  
Dave Berlin  
Terence Carroll  
Frank Cipriano  
Brenden Collett-Grether  
Robert De Leo  
Mary Gleim  
Holly Groves  
Megan Isadore  
Karen James  
Nancy Jean  
Erik Jones  
Jacqueline Jones  
Mary Keydash  
Mary Ellen King  
Lisa Mann  
Suzanne Queen  
Alexa Quintana  
Wendy Sparks  
Jeff Torquemada  
Scott Ullman

## 2024 Intern

Katie Ballinger, MD, MS  
Oregon State University

## Advisory Board

### Sarah Allen, PhD

Senior Scientist, Point Reyes  
National Seashore (Retired)

### Frank Cipriano, PhD

Research Associate, Center for  
Comparative Genomics, and  
Academy Fellow, California  
Academy of Sciences

### Nicole Duplaix, FLS, FRGS

Co-Chair, IUCN SSC Otter Specialist  
Group, Senior Instructor Fisheries  
& Wildlife Dept., Oregon State  
University

### Heide Island, PhD

Heide Island, PhD, Animal Behavior and  
Behavioral Ecology, Professor  
Pacific University | Psychology

### Thomas Serfass, PhD

Professor of Wildlife Ecology,  
Frostburg State University; North  
American Coordinator for the Otter  
Specialist Group, IUCN SSC

## Board of Directors

### Terence Carroll

**President**  
Co-founder, Research Director, ROEP

### Megan Isadore

**Executive Director**  
Co-founder, ROEP, Deputy Continental  
Coordinator, IUCN/SSC Otter Specialist  
Group

### Christine Banzon

**Vice President**  
Marketing Professional

### Mary Ellen King

**Secretary**  
Retired Development Professional

### Colleen Haraden-Gorski

**Treasurer**  
VP of Operations, Marketing Director,  
Balance Hydrologics



Photo by Karen James