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Otter



Latin: *Lutra lutra*
Irish: *Dobharchú*

Size: From the nose to the tip of the tail, males measure about 115cm. Females are about 100cm long.

Months seen: All year

Habitat: Otters live along riverbanks, lakeshores, marshes and coastal areas.

Home: An otter's home is called a holt, and the entrance is often concealed underwater.

Food: Otters hunt mainly underwater and enjoy a diet of all types of fish and crabs, as well as small mammals.

Features: Otters are playful mammals and enjoy splashing in the water for fun. They are generally nocturnal, and hunt mainly at night. A male otter is known as a dog, and a female otter a bitch. A group of otters is called a bevy, family, lodge or romp.

Otters are well adapted to living in the water. They have a long, sleek body, a long muscular tail and webbed feet to help them move quickly in the water. They have large lungs, which they fill with air before diving, allowing them to stay underwater for more to three minutes. They also have a soft insulated layer of fur which is protected by an outer layer of long coarse hair. A layer of air is trapped in between, and this keeps them warm and dry underwater.



Otters breed all through the year and usually produce a litter of between 2 and 5 young. These pups are born blind and without teeth. They stay with their mother for up to one year while she teaches them to swim and hunt for themselves.