SEA OTTER BIOLOGIST

ACTIVITY BOOK
**Sea Otter Biologist Activity Book**

This book features five hands-on activities designed for 8- to 12-year-olds. Each activity includes one 30- to 45-minute project and extensions. Activities can be used in any order. Also included are objectives and learning outcomes, assessment questions, ideas for a presentation or exhibit and topics for further investigation. Wonderwise learning outcomes are based on national science education standards identified by McREL (Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning), the Nebraska Educational Standards, and the National Science Education Standards developed under the direction of the National Research Council. This book incorporates concepts of inquiry-based learning and the 4-H Youth Development experiential learning model.

**Each youth participant should receive a copy of the activities. Copies of this book can be downloaded from the Sea Otter Biologist CD-ROM.**

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**WONDERWISE**

Women in Science Learning Series

Wonderwise introduces you to women who have made science their career. Each kit is a comprehensive instructional package that includes a video, CD-ROM, and activity book. With these materials, leaders and youth explore the world of women scientists and discover together the fun of learning about science. For more information about Wonderwise, including free samples, Web activities, resources, science education standards and ordering information, visit our Web site:

[www.wonderwise.unl.edu](http://www.wonderwise.unl.edu)

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**Project Director:** Judy Diamond. **Developers:** Suzanne M. Gardner, Monica Norby. **Design/Illustration:** Michael Davis, Linda Allison. **Produced by:** University of Nebraska State Museum, Gary Heusel and the Nebraska Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Programs. Thanks to Brenda Ballachey, William S. Wells, Beth Schenker, Amy N. Spiegel, Mary Knudson, Mark St. John, Roger Bruning, Marian Langan, Dana Esbensen, Rosemary Thornton, Edith Meints, Jim Bodkin, Jill Koelling, Sarah Disbrow, Kathy French.

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science as a human endeavor.
# Information for Leaders

## What You Will Need for Each Activity

Listed below are the materials and preparations you will need for each activity. Most of the materials can be purchased locally. The more difficult-to-find items can be purchased from Wonderwise. The symbol ∫ indicates that an item can be ordered from the Wonderwise Web site or GPN, the Wonderwise distributor. To purchase supplies, kits, videos, or CD-ROMs contact:

GPN (Great Plains National)
P.O. Box 80669 • Lincoln, NE • 68501-0669
Phone: 1-800-228-4630 • FAX: 1-800-306-2330
e-mail: gpn@unl.edu • Web site: gpn.unl.edu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity 1</th>
<th>Activity 2</th>
<th>Activity 3</th>
<th>Activity 4</th>
<th>Activity 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Otters In Action</strong></td>
<td><strong>Kelp Critters</strong></td>
<td><strong>Fragile Waters</strong></td>
<td><strong>Otter Smorgasbord</strong></td>
<td><strong>Tracking Otters</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>For the entire group:</strong></td>
<td>For the entire group:</td>
<td>For the entire group:</td>
<td>For the entire group:</td>
<td>For the entire group:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>∫ 14-min. video</td>
<td>∫ Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Map (optional)</td>
<td>∫ Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Map (optional)</td>
<td>∫ 14-min. video</td>
<td>∫ 1 clicker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brenda Ballachey, Sea Otter Biologist; 12-min. video of Sea Otters in Action</td>
<td>1 newspaper to cover work area</td>
<td>1 newspaper to cover work area</td>
<td>1 calculator</td>
<td>Map of North America, including Alaska</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>For each team of 2-3:</strong></td>
<td><strong>For each team of 4:</strong></td>
<td><strong>For each team of 4:</strong></td>
<td><strong>For each team of 2:</strong></td>
<td><strong>To prepare signs:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>∫ Beachcomber’s Guide or pictures of kelp forest animals downloaded from the Web</td>
<td>Part 1</td>
<td>Part 1</td>
<td>∫ 1 empty paper towel tube</td>
<td>Use 8 sheets of paper to make signs for North, South, East, West, NE, NW, SE, SW.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>∫ Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Map (optional)</td>
<td>Scale – gram wts.</td>
<td>Scale – gram wts.</td>
<td>∫ 1 blindfold</td>
<td>Use 3 sheets of paper to make signs for Hawkins Island, Mummy Island, and Hinchinbrook Island.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>space for the kelp forest: a corner of the room or floor-to-ceiling wall space with a 1-meter area in front of it</td>
<td>3 baby food jars</td>
<td>3 baby food jars</td>
<td>The leader should tape the signs on chairs at the approximate locations shown on the map, page 39.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>∫ 1 quart motor oil</td>
<td>1 quart motor oil</td>
<td>1 quart motor oil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>∫ water</td>
<td>water</td>
<td>water</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Part 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Part 4</strong></td>
<td><strong>Part 4</strong></td>
<td><strong>To prepare signs:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>∫ 2 paper towels</td>
<td>∫ plastic pipet or dropper</td>
<td>∫ feathers, fur fabric</td>
<td>∫ 2 paper towels</td>
<td>Use 8 sheets of paper to make signs for North, South, East, West, NE, NW, SE, SW.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>∫ plastic spoons</td>
<td>∫ 2 paper towels</td>
<td>small rocks, sea shells</td>
<td>plastic spoons</td>
<td>Use 3 sheets of paper to make signs for Hawkins Island, Mummy Island, and Hinchinbrook Island.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>∫ cup of motor oil</td>
<td>cup of motor oil</td>
<td>parsley or carrot tops</td>
<td>cup of motor oil</td>
<td>The leader should tape the signs on chairs at the approximate locations shown on the map, page 39.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Part 4</strong></td>
<td><strong>Part 4</strong></td>
<td><strong>Part 4</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>∫ 14-min. video</td>
<td>∫ feathers, fur fabric</td>
<td>∫ 14-min. video</td>
<td>∫ 14-min. video</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brenda Ballachey, Sea Otter Biologist; 12-min. video of Sea Otters in Action</td>
<td>small rocks, sea shells</td>
<td>Brenda Ballachey, Sea Otter Biologist; 12-min. video of Sea Otters in Action</td>
<td>small rocks, sea shells</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>For each participant:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Part 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Part 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Part 3</strong></td>
<td>Brenda Ballachey, Sea Otter Biologist; 12-min. video of Sea Otters in Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>∫ pencil</td>
<td>∫ scale – gram wts.</td>
<td>∫ parsley or carrot tops</td>
<td>scale – gram wts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>∫ colored pencils or crayons</td>
<td>∫ 3 baby food jars</td>
<td>∫ parsley or carrot tops</td>
<td>3 baby food jars</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>∫ 1 quart motor oil</td>
<td>∫ parsley or carrot tops</td>
<td>1 quart motor oil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>water</td>
<td>water</td>
<td>water</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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WONDERWISE  
Sea Otter Biologist

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Watch the 14-minute video on Brenda Ballachey, a wildlife scientist working in Alaska. Take a look at human behavior, then watch the Otters in Action part of the video and observe and record the otters’ behaviors.

What We Know. It is no surprise that people come from all around the world to observe the sea otters that live along the Pacific Coast of North America. One can observe these sleek-looking marine mammals swimming, somersaulting, diving, rolling, shaking, twisting and turning as they interact with each other and their environment. The behaviors you see, such as feeding, grooming and resting, are behaviors that sea otters use to establish social relationships, raise their young and survive in their environment.

Scientists who study the behavior of animals watch them with trained and experienced eyes. Behaviors aren’t always what they seem. For example, while sea otters appear to somersault for fun, scientists know that the somersaults help the otter clean its fur and trap air bubbles within each of the tiny fur fibers in its pelt. The fur bubbles help the otter stay afloat, and keep its skin warm and dry. Understanding the meaning of an animal’s behavior requires careful observation and analysis.
Part One: Human Behavior

1 Watch the video about Brenda Ballachey. Then let’s think about our own behaviors. What do you do when you are hungry? What do you do when you are tired? What do you do when your skin feels itchy? How do you know when someone feels happy? Sad? Tired? Bored? Upset? Excited?

2 Write down the behaviors that go with the feelings on the table below.

BEHAVIORS (What you do, your body language)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hungry</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tired</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bored</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excited</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Itchy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 Find a partner. Using one of the behaviors you recorded above, but no words, send a message to your partner. See if your partner can guess what you are feeling by watching your behavior.

4 Ask your partner what she thought you were feeling. Take turns sending behavior messages to each other until time is up.
Think It Over

What behaviors do you imagine you might have in common with sea otters?
Part Two: Studying Sea Otter Behavior

1. Watch the first 2-3 minutes of the *Otters in Action* video.

2. Look carefully at what the sea otters are doing. As you watch, make a list here of everything you see the sea otters doing.

3. Rewind the tape to the beginning of *Otters in Action*. 
**Part Two: Studying Sea Otter Behavior (cont’d)**

**Recording Behavior**

1. Look at the pictures below. They show behaviors that belong to the categories GROOM and INTERACT. Read the description of each behavior.

2. Watch 5-7 minutes of the *Otters in Action* video, but this time look only for the behaviors included in the categories GROOM and INTERACT. Ignore all of the other behaviors for now. As you watch, place a tally mark in the box next to the name of each behavior, each time you see it. At the end of the video, add your tally marks to find a total for each group of behaviors.

### GROOM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nibble</td>
<td>Mouth contact is made with some part of the otter’s own body, in nibbling or licking movement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rub</td>
<td>Flippers rub some area of the otter’s own body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logroll</td>
<td>From belly-up position the otter rotates to the side like a rolling log. Feet and flippers are submerged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somersault</td>
<td>A full 360° forward roll with the head tucked close to the belly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shake</td>
<td>The head is rotated side to side in a shaking movement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### INTERACT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ride</td>
<td>The otter places his body on the belly of another otter by swimming up slowly or by rolling sideways onto its partner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tumble</td>
<td>Two otters roll over and over each other; the arched backs are usually visible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nose</td>
<td>Muzzle contact made with another otter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrestle</td>
<td>In an upright position, two otters grasp each other with forearms around the head and shoulders, then twist to break the hold.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nibble</th>
<th>Rub</th>
<th>Logroll</th>
<th>Somersault</th>
<th>Shake</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>GROOM</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>INTERACT</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Part Two: Studying Sea Otter Behavior (cont’d)**

3. Look at the pictures below that show behaviors belonging to the categories REST, FEED and LOCOMOTION. Read the descriptions carefully.

4. Watch the next 5-7 minutes of the *Otters in Action* video. Look only for the behaviors included below. Just as you did before, make a tally mark in the box next to each of these behaviors, each time you see it. Add all of your tally marks up to find a total for each category of behaviors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Tally</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>REST</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock</td>
<td>From a head-up position, the otter rocks its body from side to side.</td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Rock Illustration" /></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Float</td>
<td>Otter floats belly-up on the surface, rear flippers up and quiet.</td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Float Illustration" /></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEED</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submerge</td>
<td>Body is totally under water.</td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Submerge Illustration" /></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periscope</td>
<td>Only the shoulders and head are visible above the water as the otter takes a look around.</td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Periscope Illustration" /></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eat</td>
<td>While floating on back, otter repeatedly brings forepaws to mouth; food may be shoved into mouth or pieces bitten off.</td>
<td><img src="image5" alt="Eat Illustration" /></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOCOMOTION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swim</td>
<td>Belly-down, the head and back are visible moving along the surface.</td>
<td><img src="image6" alt="Swim Illustration" /></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dive</td>
<td>From a belly-down position, the otter submerges head then feet.</td>
<td><img src="image7" alt="Dive Illustration" /></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Otter illustrations courtesy of Dr. Jane Packard.
ACTIVITY ONE

Think It Over

What behaviors do sea otters use most frequently?
Part Three: Graphing the Data

Use the space below to make a bar graph that shows the total number of times you observed the otters displaying each behavior category.

### SEA OTTER BEHAVIOR GRAPH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior Categories</th>
<th>Number of Times Observed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Groom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locomotion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 40
- 35
- 30
- 25
- 20
- 15
- 10
- 5
- 0
Think It Over

In the event of an oil spill, an otter’s fur becomes coated with oil. The oil causes the fur to become matted, destroying the layer of air bubbles within the fur fibers. How do you think this might affect the otter’s behavior?

Excellent job studying sea otter behavior.
Create a kelp forest and learn about the animals that live among the kelp. Then, draw the animals and create a kelp forest community.

**What We Know.** Imagine yourself taking an underwater walk along the coast of California or Alaska. You would find yourself surrounded by a vast underwater forest made up of a plant called kelp. Kelp is a kind of seaweed. It has a thick stem from which leaflike blades grow. Kelp attaches itself to the ocean floor by rootlike structures called holdfasts. These hold the kelp in place. From there, the kelp grows up toward the sunlight. Giant kelp, such as the kind that grows along the coast of North America, is the largest seaweed in the world. It grows more than 100 meters long—the height of a full-grown redwood tree.

The animals that live among the kelp make it colorful and keep it healthy. They are a part of the kelp forest community. The forest is home to octopuses, sea urchins, abalone, crabs, sea stars and fish. Sea otters and harbor seals live in the kelp forest because some of their favorite foods are found there, and the kelp provides protection.
Part One: Creating the Kelp Forest

Take a look at the drawing of kelp on this page. Study the way it looks. Would you say it grows from the bottom up or from the top down? If you have trouble deciding, look for roots called holdfasts. Now which way do you think the kelp grows?

Find a space to set up your kelp forest and gather your materials: crepe paper (1 package), scissors, tape and Holdfast Worksheet (p.13). Follow the steps below to make the kelp stems:

Making the Kelp

1. Do not unfold crepe paper but use scissors to cut wavy strips about 3 to 5 cm wide.
2. Separate the “kelp” into individual strands. Use tape to join 4-5 strands together at one end to form a kelp plant.
3. Make as many “kelp plants” as you can with your crepe paper and tape.
4. Color the 2 holdfasts on the Holdfast Worksheet green and brown.
5. Cut out each holdfast. Attach one holdfast to each kelp plant at the base (where tape fastens it together).

Building the kelp forest

Go to an area set aside for the kelp forest. Build a small rock pile for each kelp plant (or use one large rock for each kelp plant). Tape the holdfast to the rock(s). This will help create the ocean floor. Use tape to attach the top of the kelp plants to the ceiling directly above. Add leaves made from scrap crepe paper.
HOLDFAST WORKSHEET

Cut along dotted line.
1. How many meters high is the kelp in your forest? Measure it to find out. Write the height of the tallest stem here:

2. If this were a real kelp forest, the plants would be much taller. Let’s say that every meter of your kelp equals 5 meters. How many meters tall would your kelp be if it were growing in the ocean?
Part Two: Kelp Critter Art

What animals make up the kelp community? It is made up of critters like crabs, sea urchins, abalone, fish, snails, lobsters, octopuses, clams, chitons, mussels and, of course, sea otters.

1. Choose 2 or 3 of the animals listed above to draw. Use your Beachcomber’s Guide or pictures from the Web. Make a plan with your group so that everyone is drawing a different animal.

2. Read the information below each picture that tells the size (in centimeters). Try to draw your animals to scale. Use the centimeter scale on the Beachcomber’s Guide or a centimeter ruler to determine the correct size. If you choose to draw a sea otter, look at the pictures of otters in this book to help you. (Adult males are about 1 1/2 meters long while the adult females are about 1 meter long.)

3. Draw your animals on white construction paper. Use crayons or colored pencils to add color to your drawings.

4. Cut out your drawings.
Part Two: Kelp Critter Art

Where in the kelp do the animals live? They live at different depths. To help you decide where to place your animals in the kelp forest, read the chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Kelp</th>
<th>Animals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attached to kelp plants</td>
<td>crabs, limpets, chitons, sea stars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving in and around the kelp</td>
<td>sea otters, harbor seals, water birds, fish, mussels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The water column (middle section)</td>
<td>fish, plankton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benthic (bottom section) of kelp</td>
<td>octopuses, sea urchins, abalone, fish, crabs and lobsters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Place your animals in the kelp forest according to the information above. Use tape or a stapler to hold the animals in place.

Great job making your kelp forest!
Can you think of a way the kelp helps the animals that live in the forest?

Explain your answer here.
**Activity Three**

**Before You Begin**
Teams of 4
Length:
Part I - 15 mins,
Part II - 15 mins,
Part III - 30 mins,
Part IV - 45 mins.

**What You Need**
For the entire group:
- Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Map (optional)
  - 1 newspaper to cover work area
For each team of 4:
Part 1
  - Scale -- gram wts.
  - 3 baby food jars
  - 1 quart motor oil
  - water
Part 3
- plastic pipet or dropper
  - 2 paper towels
  - plastic spoons
  - cup of motor oil
Part 4
- feathers, fur fabric
  - small rocks, sea shells
  - parsley or carrot tops
  - oil from Part 2
  - small brush
  - cotton balls
  - shallow pan
  - paper towel
  - hot water
  - Liquid Dawn detergent

**To prepare jars:**
jar #1: fill with ¼ oil and ¾ water
jar #2: fill half full with water
jar #3: fill half full with oil

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**Fragile Waters**

Study a map of the Gulf of Alaska and track the movement of an oil spill. Then conduct three oil investigations.

**What We Know.** In the icy, clear waters of Alaska’s Prince William Sound live 10,000 to 15,000 sea otters. The rocky coast and plentiful shellfish make this an ideal habitat for otters. Thousands of birds, fish, whales, and other marine life also make their home here. Unfortunately, on March 24, 1989, shortly after midnight, an environmental catastrophe occurred. A 306-meter oil tanker, the Exxon Valdez, slammed into a rock reef which ripped open the ship’s steel hull. The crash released nearly 42 million liters of crude oil into Prince William Sound in less than 5 hours. The oil poured out so fast and with such force that a wave of oil 1 meter high formed on the surface of the water. In less than two days the spill had spread 50 kilometers on calm water. On the 4th day, a storm moved in with winds up to 100 kilometers an hour. The oil continued to spread, and by the 19th day it was 400 kilometers down the coast. By the 56th day the oil had traveled 750 kilometers southward.

One month later, oil was found all along the beautiful and fragile coastline, at distances of more than 1900 kilometers from the original spill. Because sea otters rely on clean and dry fur to keep warm, the oil coating their fur was life-threatening. Scientists estimate 3,000 sea otters died.
Part One: Map Study of the Gulf of Alaska

1. Locate Prince William Sound on your large map of the United States.

2. Look carefully at the map of the Gulf of Alaska below. Locate the Exxon Valdez grounding site. This is the area where the ship spilled the oil. Color in the grounding site symbol.

3. Note how far the oil spread over the 56-day period as indicated on the map. To track the distance, use the information on the map. Fill out the table below to track the distance of the flow.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Distance in Kilometers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Map information courtesy of Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.
What do you think should be done to avoid oil spills?
**Part Two: How Does Oil Behave in Water?**

1. Set out your baby food jars on a table. Look carefully at Jar #1. The contents are ½ oil and ½ water. Where is the oil in relation to the water?

2. Make sure the top on the jar is tightened. Try to mix the contents by shaking the jar vigorously. Put the jar back on the table and observe. Now describe the position of the oil in the water.

3. Why do you think the oil is sitting on top of the water?

4. Look at Jars #2 and #3. Which one do you think is heavier?

5. Use a scale to weigh Jar #2 and then Jar #3. Record their weights in the table below.

6. Which one is heavier?

7. Does this explain why the oil is on top of the water in Jar #1? Explain your answer here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JAR</th>
<th>WEIGHT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jar #2</td>
<td>(grams)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jar #3</td>
<td>(grams)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Oil and water don’t mix. What are the advantages and disadvantages of this in an oil spill?
Part Three: What Are the Properties of Oil?

1. Stack two paper towels in front of you. Hold the empty plastic spoon so it rests on the paper towels. Remember to keep track of your oil so that it can be properly disposed of.

Pour oil into the spoon until it is very full. Next, have a partner use the plastic pipet to add more oil one drop at a time to your already full spoon. How many drops can you add before the oil spills over? Record below:

Number of drops ________

2. What do you notice about how the oil looks on the spoon?

3. What do you think keeps the oil from spilling over while it piles up on the spoon?

4. Place the cup of oil in front of you. Begin pouring the oil from the spoon back into the cup. Try to get the oil to leave the spoon one drop at a time. Were you successful? Why or why not?

5. Remember that a real oil slick probably acts similarly to the oil in your spoon. Not only does it float on the surface of water, but it also hangs together. This is due to surface tension.

Good work! Carefully put the oil back into the cup. Place any oily paper towels in the garbage.
Think It Over

Think of as many words as you can to describe the properties of the oil you tested.
Part Four: Does Oil Damage Natural Materials?

1. Gather your materials: a rock, a sea shell, two feathers, some furlike fabric and some plant material (carrot tops or parsley).

2. Use the shallow pan of water to test each item to see which ones will float. Float only one feather (keep one dry for later). Record your results below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items that float in water</th>
<th>Items that don't float in water</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Remove all objects from water and dry with a paper towel.

4. Which of these items do you think would be the most damaged by oil in the event of an oil spill?

Record here:
Part Four: Does Oil Damage Natural Materials? (cont’d)

5 Place items on a thick pile of several paper towels. Use a brush to apply motor oil from the cup to all items except the dry feather.

6 Did the oil soak into the samples?
If so, which ones?

7 Place one oiled feather and one dry feather in the pan of water. Compare how they float.

8 How do you think an oil spill affects birds?
Part Four: Does Oil Damage Natural Materials? (cont’d)

Which method will clean oil from the items you tested?

When an oil spill occurs, scientists and other people must work quickly to try to clean it up. But what is the best way for cleaning the oil-coated animals and other natural objects? Listed in the table on page 28 are four suggested methods for cleaning the oiled materials. Look at the table and predict which method you think will work best. Write your prediction here:
Part Four: Does Oil Damage Natural Materials? (cont’d)

10 Use cotton balls with each of the four methods to try to clean the oil off your materials. Use the numbers below to rate how well each cleaning method worked. Record the rating in the table below.

1 very good 2 good 3 marginal 4 poor 5 very poor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Carrot Tops</th>
<th>Fur</th>
<th>Sea Shell</th>
<th>Rock</th>
<th>Feather</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cold water</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot water</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold water with Dawn detergent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot water with Dawn detergent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11 Which cleaning methods used above worked best? Explain why.

Great job investigating the properties of oil. Clean up your area carefully.
Think It Over

What properties of oil make it hard to clean up?
What We Know. At birth, sea otters weigh between 1 and 1 ½ kilos. Much like a human baby, they are helpless and depend on their mother's fat-rich milk for survival. By the age of 2 ½ months, otters learn how to dive for prey and begin to eat solid food like fish, squid, clams, sea urchins and crab. At first the pup plays with the food, but eventually starts to take small bites.

By the age of six months, pups are able to capture their own prey. Depending on where they live and what food is available, sea otters learn to eat many different kinds of fish and shellfish. For example, otters who live in the Aleutian Islands of Alaska eat fish. But sea otters who live in the Prince William Sound area choose invertebrates like sea urchins, clams, mussels and crab. Like humans, sea otters eat a large variety of foods. Their choice of food depends both on what is available and on individual likes and dislikes.

If you were a sea otter how much food would you eat? You would eat a great deal! In fact, sea otters eat at least ¼ of their body weight in food each day. For example, a 20-kilo, full-grown sea otter would eat more than 5 kilos of food a day or about 2,000 kilos of food a year. That is more than two times the amount of food needed for a boy or girl of the same weight. For a human adult that would be equal to eating 100 hamburgers a day! Can you imagine that?
Part One: How Much Do Sea Otter Pups Eat?

1 How much food do sea otter pups need to eat as they grow? Scientists have determined that the amount of food a pup needs is related to how much it weighs. And, as you learned in the beginning of this activity, sea otters eat more than \( \frac{1}{4} \) of their body weight in food each day.

Let’s look at an example of how to figure this out:

If a pup weighs 2 kilograms, how much food would it need to eat each day? To find out what \( \frac{1}{4} \) of 2 is, divide the body weight of 2 kilos by 4.

Write your answer here: _______ kilograms (kg) of food a day.

2 Record the answer you found above in the table below to show how many kilos of food are needed by the otter at the age of one month. (You should have found that a 2-kilo sea otter requires \( \frac{1}{2} \) kilogram of food each day.)

3 Use a calculator to figure the amount of food (to the nearest whole number) needed each day for the next 11 months as the otter continues to grow.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OTTER AGE</th>
<th>OTTER WEIGHT EACH MONTH</th>
<th>KILOS OF FOOD NEEDED EACH DAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Month</td>
<td>2 kgs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Months</td>
<td>3 kgs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Months</td>
<td>4 kgs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Months</td>
<td>5 kgs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Months</td>
<td>6 kgs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Months</td>
<td>9 kgs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Months</td>
<td>11 kgs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Months</td>
<td>13 kgs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Months</td>
<td>14 kgs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Months</td>
<td>16 kgs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Months</td>
<td>18 kgs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Months</td>
<td>20 kgs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At six months, otter pups are able to capture their own prey. How much food do they need to find each week?
Part Two: Graphing Results

Follow the directions below to create a line graph that shows how much food the sea otter needs as it continues to grow. Use the information from your table on p.31 to make the graph. First, find the age along the horizontal (–) axis. Then find the kilos of food needed for that age on the vertical axis ( | ). Now, mark a dot on the graph that represents these two points. Finish by plotting the remaining information from the table on p.31. As you work, join the points you create with a line.

1 Find the difference between the amount of food that a 3-month-old and a 12-month-old otter eat.

Write your answer here: ____________(kilograms of food/day needed).
Think It Over

What does your graph tell you about how much an otter pup eats as it grows older?
Part Three: Diet for a Day

At the age of 12 months, otters are eating about 5 kilograms of food each day. But what do they eat that would equal 5 kilos? In this part of the activity, you will create a Diet for a Day for a 12-month-old sea otter.

1 How many kilograms of food will a 12-month-old sea otter require each day? (Refer to the graph on page 33.)

Write your answer here: ________ (kilograms of food needed/day)

2 How many grams does this equal? (Multiply amount of kilograms by 1000 to get grams)

Write your answer here: ________ (grams of food needed/day)

3 What kinds of food will the sea otter eat during one day?

Use the list below to design a Diet for a Day. Keep in mind the total grams of food the 12-month-old sea otter requires. Use the worksheet below to help you plan your diet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PREY ITEM</th>
<th>WEIGHT OF EACH PREY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mussels</td>
<td>2 mussels = 30 grams of meat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea Stars</td>
<td>2 sea stars = 30 grams of meat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scallops</td>
<td>1 scallop = 30 grams of meat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crabs</td>
<td>1 crab = 30 grams of meat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butter Clams</td>
<td>1 pound of clams = 30 grams of meat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abalone</td>
<td>1 abalone = 120 grams of meat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea Urchins</td>
<td>4 sea urchins = 30 grams of meat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelp Greenling</td>
<td>1 greenling = 180 grams of meat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### OTTER SMORGASBORD

#### Activity Four

**Part Three: Diet for a Day (cont’d)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PREY TYPE (animal)</th>
<th>WEIGHT OF EACH (in grams)</th>
<th># OF PREY (how many)</th>
<th>TOTAL WEIGHT (in grams)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Add up total weight column to find total grams of food for one day: ______________

Convert the total number of grams from your weight chart on p.35 to kilograms (divide by 1000; there are 1000 grams in 1 kilogram).

Write your answer here: ___________ (kilograms of food needed/day)

Go back and look at the Kilograms of Food Needed graph, p.33. Compare the answer above to the amount of food needed for a 12-month-old otter. Do the numbers match? If not, go back and work on the diet again.

---

**Great job completing Otter Smorgasbord!**
Otters find food on the water’s surface and at the bottom of the ocean. How would an oil spill affect what they eat?
Tracking Otters

Biologists track sea otters using radios. Use a handmade “antenna” to listen for clicking sounds and try to determine where a “sea otter” is located in your room.

Before You Begin
Teams of 2
Length: 60 mins.

What You Need
For the entire group:
- 1 clicker
- Map of North America, including Alaska
- 11 sheets of 8½ x 11-inch white paper to make signs (see directions below)

For each team of 2:
- 1 empty paper towel tube
- 1 blindfold

To prepare signs:
Use 8 sheets of paper to make signs for North, South, East, West, NE, NW, SE, SW.
Use 3 sheets of paper to make signs for Hawkins Island, Mummy Island, and Hinchinbrook Island.
The leader should tape the signs on chairs at the approximate locations shown on the map, page 39.

What We Know. When sea otters are born, they are completely dependent on their mother and stay in close contact with her. But by the age of six or seven months, they become more independent. Just like human kids, they venture farther away from their mother until eventually they grow up and leave home. After leaving their mother, some sea otters may travel several miles away to a new home while others may remain in the same general area.

Biologists like Brenda Ballachey use a method called radio tracking to learn more about otters. A small electronic transmitter is fastened to the sea otter. The transmitter works like a miniature radio station, but instead of playing songs, it sends out beeps for 2-3 years or the lifetime of the battery. By tuning a radio receiver to the right frequency (like dialing your favorite radio station), Brenda can identify the beeps coming from an otter’s transmitter. She then picks up the signal on a small hand-held antenna and records the location of the beeping. Biologists spend months or even years searching over large areas to locate and track otters.

Brenda Ballachey uses radio tracking to locate young otters and follow their movements in Prince William Sound, Alaska. The tracking method helps her determine how many of the pups will survive the first year of life.
Part One: Map Making

Look at a map of North America and locate the state of Alaska. Find the location of Prince William Sound (located in southeastern Alaska). It is a large body of saltwater that lies between the mainland and several islands. This is the area where Brenda Ballachey does her radio tracking research.

Preparing for the activity as if you were at Prince William Sound

1. Choose at least four volunteers to place the eight direction signs (N, S, E, W, NE, NW, SE, SW) up around the room in the correct places. Discuss with the group where they should be placed.

2. Look at the map below. It is a simplified version of the area in Prince William Sound where Brenda Ballachey radio tracks otters. You will use this map during the activity. Follow these directions to finish preparing the map:

   Add four directions (North, South, East, West) to the map. Start by writing North at the top, then continue writing the other three directions in the correct places on your map.

   Now add the directions for each corner of the map as you did in the room.

3. Notice that your leader has already placed the three Prince William Sound locations, Hawkins Island, Mummy Island and Hinchinbrook Island, on chairs around the room. These are actual locations in Prince William Sound where Brenda Ballachey tracks sea otters. Find them below.

4. During the activity you will imagine that your room is Prince William Sound. Your job will be to track (or locate) an otter. What tools and equipment will you need? How will you find the otter? How will you record what you have found? All of these questions can be answered in the next part of this activity. Turn to Part II now, and have fun tracking otters!
Part Two: Tracking the Otter

Tracking Activity Demonstration

First try a practice run. Choose four people to demonstrate the activity for the rest of the group. Decide who will play each of the following roles: Speaker, Sea Otter, Tracker and Receiver. The Speaker will read the following descriptions slowly and loudly to guide the others through their parts.

**Speaker reads:**

**Sea Otter’s role:** Get the clicker from your leader. When it is time for the demonstration, move to any location in the room, wait for the Receiver to put on the blindfold, and then press down to make a clicking sound. Click slowly for 30 seconds.

**Receiver’s role:** Take a paper towel tube and a blindfold. Place the blindfold over your eyes and tie it on. Put the paper towel tube up to one ear. Slowly turn in a circle and listen for the Sea Otter’s clicks. When you hear the clicking at its loudest, stop and point in that direction. Pull down your blindfold but continue pointing. Check to see how well you located the otter.

**Tracker’s role:** When the blindfold is in place on the Receiver and the clicking begins, the Tracker will help turn the Receiver around in a circle. At the end of each 30-second trial, the Tracker will record a dot on the map that estimates where the Receiver was pointing.
Part Two: Tracking the Otter (cont’d)

Now you are ready to try the activity for real.

1. Choose one person from the entire group to play the Sea Otter. Give the Sea Otter the page titled “Directions For Sea Otter Only,” Have the Sea Otter carefully read the instructions.

2. The rest of the group should find a partner and decide who will be the Receiver and who will be the Tracker. Gather your materials: a paper towel tube, a blindfold, a pencil and the maps on page 39 that you prepared.

3. With your materials, go to a spot near one of the direction signs (such as NW, E, SW). As soon as everyone is quiet the Sea Otter will begin clicking.

Trial One - As soon as the clicking begins, the Receiver begins to track the otter. The Tracker records a dot on the map to show where the Receiver is pointing.

Trial Two - Gather your materials and go to a second spot near a direction sign of your choice. Play the same role. Repeat the same steps.

Trial Three - Go to a spot near a third direction sign of your choice. Repeat the same steps. Now, return to your desk with your partner. Use a pencil to connect the three points made by the Tracker.

Now have your team meet and discuss the map you made. Is it correct? Does it match the Sea Otter’s movements?

If you have time, try this extension. Trackers and Receivers change roles. Repeat Trials 1-3 exactly as above, but use your partner’s map.
Part Two: Tracking the Otter (cont’d)

For the Sea Otter Only: Give this page to the Sea Otter.

Your job as the “sea otter” is to go to each of the islands set up around the room and click slowly for 30 seconds. Time yourself at each location. You will go to a different island for each trial. There will be three trials. Take these written directions with you.

Trial One

- Wait on the sidelines until the Receivers have blindfolds on.
- Then go to the first location, Hawkins Island.
- As soon as everyone is quiet, face in one direction, hold your clicker out and click slowly for 30 seconds. Be sure you are not close enough for a Receiver to touch you. The Receivers will try to locate you. Stay put until the Trackers have marked their maps and the Receivers have pulled down their blindfolds.

Trial Two

- Wait until the Receivers have their blindfolds in place.
- Then go to your second location, Mummy Island.
- Face in a different direction and click slowly for 30 seconds.
- The Receivers will try to locate you. Stay put until the Trackers have marked their maps and the Receivers have pulled down their blindfolds.

Trial Three

- Wait until the Receivers have their blindfolds in place.
- Then go to your third location, Hinchinbrook Island.
- Face in a different direction and click slowly for 30 seconds.

Extension

Go to the same island for all three trials. You will repeat the clicking sequence as before. Be sure to move to the sidelines in between each trial and keep your clicking location secret.
1. What might the otter be doing when it needs to move around a lot? When it is not moving around?

2. Why is it important for scientists to know how much space animals need to live?
Create a story about a scientist who studies sea otters.
1. Go to your library and read about the fur trade of the 18th and 19th centuries. Find out why sea otters (or a furry animal of your choice) were hunted, how many there were before the fur trade, and what their numbers are today.

2. Learn about one of the animals you drew for the Kelp Critters activity. Go to the library and find books and computer software (multimedia encyclopedia) that have information about your animal. Write a one-page report telling where your animal lives, how big it gets, what it eats, and why it is important to sea otters.

3. Observe the behavior of one of your household pet mammals (dog, cat, hamster). Compare the animal’s behavior to that of another animal by recording which behaviors are the same and which are different.

4. Create a poster to investigate the following questions:
   - Where is oil found? What is it made of?
   - Is oil a renewable or nonrenewable resource?
   - What are three renewable resources?

5. Follow these steps to track your own movements for a week: Make a map that shows your home in your neighborhood. Include the streets, your school and some of the stores, parks and other places you visit often. Use your map as a guide, but keep a journal that tells where you go each day for one week.
   - Can you see a pattern to your movements?
   - How do your movements compare to those of a sea otter?