

Lesson 8  
READ THIS STORY #2, Basic

## Sea Otters

Sea otters are fascinating creatures. An adult weighs about eighty pounds. He has tiny eyes and a wealth of whiskers that look like a beard. His cute ears are buried in his fur. His front paws are dainty but his hind legs look like the flippers of a seal. A sea otter's length is about forty-eight inches; one-quarter of that is his tail.

A baby otter is born with its eyes open, all of its teeth, and a full coat of fur. Although a baby otter is able to swim immediately, the mother often floats on her back while the baby sits on her stomach. To keep him from swimming away, she always ties the baby to a kelp bed with strands of seaweed whenever she must scour the deep sea bed for sea urchins or other shellfish.

Even though their entire lives are spent in the ocean, their skin never gets wet. That's because their thick glossy fur traps a layer of air which prevents the water from touching their skin.

Otter fur is the most valuable and desired fur in the world. That's why sea otters were hunted almost to extinction. A recent multinational treaty to protect them has been successful. The population of sea otters is now flourishing.