

Spring Tales Newsletter



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Mammals of the Wetlands

Walk or Swim?

Wetlands are the home to many kinds of waterfowl, but did you know that many mammals also live in these places as well?

Some mammals live in these areas permanently, while others only pass through these areas for food and water.

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River otters dive underwater to catch fish in their mouths, their preferred food source.



Beavers use their teeth as tools, cutting twigs and branches to build dams and lodges.

Furry Friends

The wetlands are home to many kinds of mammals. Some live in these areas year-round and others frequent these places for food and water. Deer, coyotes, jackrabbits, and skunks are common mammals who visit wetlands. You might find evidence of these mammals or even be lucky enough to see them in these areas! The California river otter, common muskrat, American mink, nutria, and beaver are aquatic mammals that live in and use both water and land to survive.



River otters prefer to live in water bordered by woods and in wetlands like marshes. They use their webbed back feet and strong tails to steer while they swim. Otters do spend time on land, running a few steps and then sliding on their bellies—what fun!



Common muskrats are stocky rodents with small heads and a narrow, flat tail that they use like a rudder. They enjoy living in a variety of wetlands and create lodges or bank burrows for shelter. The muskrat gets its name from the two musk glands under its tail!



The American mink lives in forested areas near wetlands. They have a long sleek body with stubby legs and a thick tail. The mink has soft, thick fur that is covered by oily guard hairs that make its coat waterproof. Mink can dive as deep as 16 feet!

**INVASIVE
ALERT!**



The nutria is an invasive species from South America, meaning that it is not native to the United States and is causing damage to the areas where it lives. Nutria burrow into levees causing them to become weak or even leak! They are also destructive eaters- feeding on rare and endangered species that rely on wetland habitats.



The beaver is the largest living rodent in North America! Using their teeth, beavers cut down trees and gather woody material to create dams and lodges for protection and shelter. Their flat tails are used for balance and swimming as well as temperature regulation, fat storage, and communication!

Make Your Own Beaver Lodge

Supplies:

- Pretzel Sticks
- Peanut Butter
- Chocolate Chips
- Rice Cake



Instructions:

1. Take a rice cake and spread a layer of peanut butter across the top.
2. Begin piling pretzel sticks on top of the peanut butter, adding more peanut butter and pretzel sticks until there is a secure mound.
3. Add in a few chocolate chips to the peanut butter for an extra treat.
4. Enjoy!

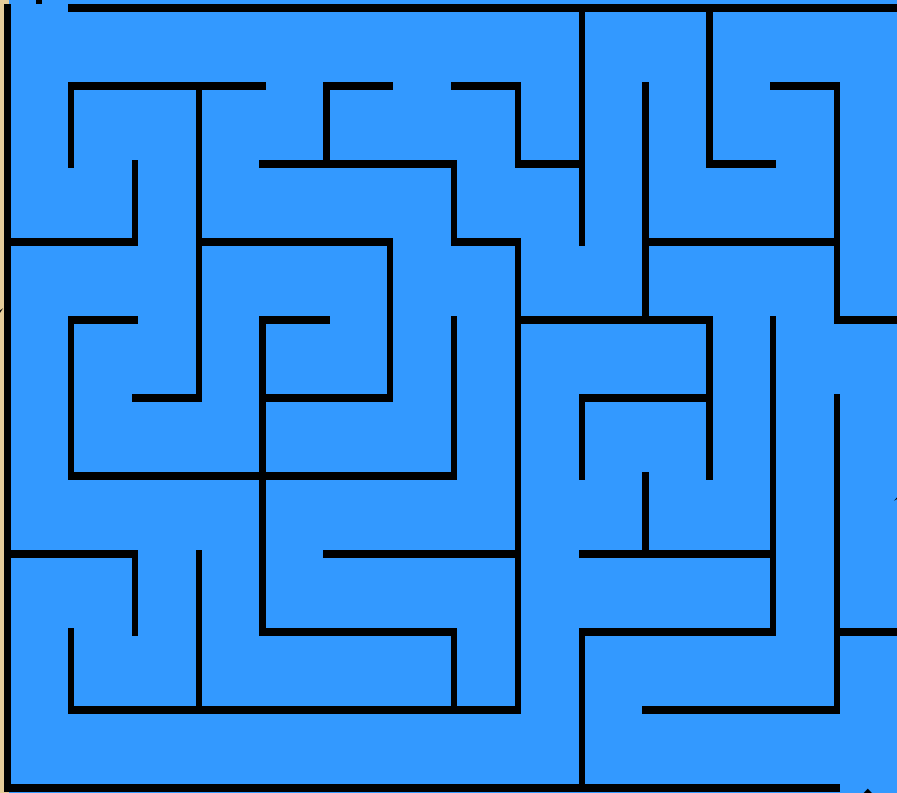


Otter Maze

Instructions: Can you help the river otter make it through the maze to find its food? Use a pencil to trace your path through the maze, starting at the otter and working down to the fish!



START



END



River otters eat fish, crayfish, birds, frogs, insects, and rodents!

Did you know that river otters must eat 12% or more of their body weight each day?!

For more information on our education programs or to get involved, contact Molly Maupin, Education Coordinator at (916) 648-1406 or mmaupin@calwaterfowl.org

For more information and our calendar of events go to www.calwaterfowl.org