



## WILDLIFE WINDOW: River Otter Undeniable Cuteness!

Photo-story by the P&P Committee  
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The North American **River Otter** (*Lontra Canadensis*), one of the most coveted and charismatic creatures to observe in the wild, is found in Rivendell and throughout the state of Florida. Curious and playful by nature, they capture much attention from wildlife enthusiasts for their undeniable cute-factor and charm. River Otters are semiaquatic mammals - equally at home in the water and on land. They make their home in a burrow near the water's edge, and can thrive in river, lake, swamp, or estuary ecosystems, including our very own ponds and preserves.

Adult River Otters are 3-5 feet long and can weigh up to 30 lbs. They have long, muscular, streamlined bodies with short legs and fully webbed feet bearing non-retractable claws. Their small heads widen to long necks and shoulders, and they have flattened, well-muscled tails. These otters have brown-to-gray fur, and their undersides are a lighter, silvery shade. Their dense, short under-fur is overlain by darker, coarse guard hairs that help repel water.

A top predator in their food chain, River Otters have a carnivorous diet that consists mostly of crayfish, turtles, crustaceans, frogs and fish. They can consume meals of up to 15 percent of their body weight daily and are most active early in the day and in the evening, spending hours hunting for their meals. They mate once a year and average one to three pups per litter, which are reared by their mother and learn to swim at around two months of age.



**Protect their Habitats.** We can help our River Otter friends by recycling, reducing use of toxic pesticides and fertilizers, properly disposing of fishing line and remembering to keep our wildlife wild by never feeding, harming or approaching them. Let's keep our ponds and preserves healthy and attractive for these wonderful River Otters and other wildlife friends. We will enjoy their beauty, plus keep our property values strong.

We remind you to view the amazing P&P Wildlife Photo Gallery at: [www.rivendellcommunity.com/ponds](http://www.rivendellcommunity.com/ponds).

Great photos by Bob Frank. Thanks Bob!