

personal safety. Finally, the MMPA provides exceptions for First Nation (Indian), Aleuts and Inuit (Eskimo) who take marine mammals for subsistence purposes or when creating native clothing or handicrafts.

Many countries around the globe have adopted similar regulations in the form of Marine Mammal Protections Acts and Marine Mammal Protection Regulations.

Related internet source

Marine Mammal Protection Act web site: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/laws/mmpa>

S. Elizabeth Alter

Marine Mammal Science *Marine Mammal Science* (ISSN 0824-0469) is the primary academic journal publishing current research on the biology, ecology and **conservation of marine mammals**, including marine **tourism**-related research (for example, the effects of **whale, dolphin and manatee** watching). It is published by the Society for Marine Mammalogy, which is the professional society for scientists and others interested in the biology and conservation of marine mammals across the globe.

Related internet sources

Society for Marine Mammalogy: <http://www.marine-mammalogy.org>

Marine Mammal Science:
<http://www.marinemammalogy.org/mms.htm>

Leslie A. Cornick

Marine Otter The marine otter (*Lontra felina*) is one of two otter species classified as marine mammals (the other is the **sea otter**), feeding exclusively in the sea (Estes and Bodkin, 2002). The marine otter is very similar in appearance to the freshwater otter. Individuals attain a total length (including the tail) of slightly over 1 m and weigh between 3.2 and 5.8 kg. The marine otter is listed as an endangered species by both the US Endangered Species Act and the IUCN **Red Data Book**.

The marine otter lives along exposed rocky **shorelines** on the South American Pacific Coast, from northern Peru (at least to Chimbote, northern limit 6°S) south along the Chilean coast to **Cape Horn**, Straits of Lemaire and adjacent **islands** (Larivière,

1998). It is also present in isolated populations in Argentina, especially in the **Strait of Magellan** and on Staten Island (Larivière, 1998). The coastal **beaches** of the Paracas National Reserve (the only **Marine Protected Area** in Peru) are a good site for viewing this species. In the **fishing ports** of Mooro Sama and Vila Vila in Peru, marine otters inhabit the artificial breakwaters that protect the ports. The marine otter also occasionally enters **estuaries** and freshwater habitats, and uses caves and tunnels along the coast (Ebensperger and Castilla, 1992).

The marine otter enters the sea only briefly, to feed predominantly on **crustaceans** and fish and, to a lesser extent, molluscs. The most common prey for these otters is the one most available in the subtidal environment. Individuals are found mostly alone or in pairs, though groups of three or more are sometimes seen. The marine otter is known locally as *chungungo*, *chinchmén*, *gato marino* and *nutria del mar* (Larivière, 1998).

There is currently no directed tourism, although marine otters are a great attraction. In terms of promoting ecotourism, the non-governmental group Pro Delphinus Peru, with support from the Columbus Zoo and Fulbright Commission Peru, began a research and education programme to raise awareness in the local community and better understand the behaviour of marine otters in Peru, and to try to reduce potential threats to their survival. Vila Vila gets many tourists in the summer months, and the organization is working to post more educational signs down by the beach areas to alert people to the presence of otters, since people are swimming in the same areas used on a daily basis by the resident marine otters. Discussions with marine otter experts indicate that there is potential for directed ecotourism.

See also: Sea Otter.

Related internet sources

IUCN/SSC Otter Specialist Group: <http://www.otter-specialistgroup.org>

Earthwatch's Marine Otter Program: http://www.earthwatch.org/site/pp2.asp?c=dsJSK6PFJnH&b=1147573#situation_report

Pro Delphinus Peru: http://www.prodelfinus.org/nutrias_mar.php?lang=EN

Dagmar Fertl