Study Questions to “A Romp of Otters”

Study and learn facts and ideas based on this Young Naturalists nonfiction story in Minnesota Conservation Volunteer, November–December 2016, www.mndnr.gov/mcvmagazine.

Minnesota Conservation Volunteer magazine is your guide to wild things. Every other month, six times a year, the magazine arrives in your school library. Each one has a story for Young Naturalists like you. Are you curious about wild things? Young Naturalists tells true stories that can answer all kinds of questions such as these—

Have you ever heard of a purple wartyback? How about a pink heelsplitter, pimpleback, or monkeyface? All are Minnesota freshwater mussels. Read Young Naturalists stories to learn which species (kinds) of critters live in Minnesota—frogs, salamanders, snakes, wild cats, wild dogs, weasels, mice, and rabbits.

Want to peek inside the den of a red fox and see how the kits grow up? Are you a rock hound searching for agates? Have you ever wondered what’s alive under snow? How animals see? Why is a bluebird blue? How birds fly?

Would you like to hear the true story of giants of the ice age? Young Naturalists also tells you about the underground universe. You can read the story of a tiny owl that went to a hospital with an injured wing. Find out about a boy who worked in a logging camp. Read the story of Ojibwe children today hunting and gathering like their ancestors did.

Learn how to get started camping, snowshoeing, ice fishing, or canoeing.

Find these stories and more online at www.mndnr.gov/young_naturalists.

Your knowledge of wild things helps you explore and enjoy the outdoors. Have fun!
1. **Name five adaptations that help river otters live in water.**

   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________

2. **Fill in the blank: An otter can stay underwater for up to ______ minutes.**

3. **How do whiskers help an otter survive?**

   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________

4. **Name six things an otter eats.**

   ____________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________

5. **Name three things that eat otters.**

   __________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________

6. **Male otters mark their territory with ____________ and _____________.**
7. How many otter pups are in a litter? _______________

8. How does a mother otter feed her newborn young?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

9. Where do river otters live?
   A. rivers
   B. wetlands
   C. ponds
   D. lakes
   E. all of the above

10. Why did otters start to disappear after European settlers arrived in Minnesota?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

11. What has happened since then that has helped otters populations recover?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

12. What does the author say we need to do if we want to have otters in our future?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Challenge: An otter weighs about 30 pounds. What is the metric system equivalent? ______

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment

Name _____________________________ Period _____ Date ____________

1. Another name for an otter’s whiskers is
   A. vibrissae.
   B. vibrators.
   C. glands.
   D. nose needles.
2. An otter can grow to be ____ feet long and weigh ____ pounds

3. Why do you think groups of otters are called “romps”?

   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

4. True or false: Otters hibernate in the winter?

5. A young otter is called
   A. an otterling.
   B. a romp.
   C. a pup.
   D. a kitten.

**Student Study Guide: Vocabulary**

- **Crayfish**: small, lobsterlike animals that live in lakes and rivers
- **Dawdle**: to move slowly
- **Fertilized (egg)**: an egg that is able to grow to become a new animal
- **Gland**: body part that releases hormones or other substances
- **Implant (egg)**: become established inside the mother’s body so it can grow
- **Imprint**: to make a strong impression
- **Juvenile**: young animal
- **Periscope**: a device with mirrors that can be used to look above the surface of the water when underwater
- **Pollutant**: a chemical or other substance that contaminates the environment
- **Rudder**: part of a boat used to steer it
- **Scoot**: to move rapidly
- **Territory**: the area in which an animal lives and which it defends
Cut along horizontal lines, fold in the middle and tape or staple. Blanks are provided to allow you or your students to add new words or phrases.

What is a **crayfish**?  
**A small, lobsterlike animal that lives in lakes and rivers** is a

To **dawdle** is  
To **move slowly** is to

When an egg is **fertilized**, it  
**An egg that is able to grow to become a new animal** is

What is a **gland**?  
**A body part that releases hormones or other substances** is called

When referring to an egg, to **implant** is to  
When referring to an egg, to **become established inside the mother’s body** is to
**To imprint** is to make a strong impression is

A **juvenile** is a young animal is a **young animal** is a

What is a **periscope**?

A **device with mirrors that can be used to look above the surface of the water when underwater** is called a

A **pollutant** is a **chemical or other substance that contaminates the environment** is a

A **rudder** is a **part of a boat used to steer it** is

To **scoot** is to **move rapidly** is to
**Territory** is the area in which an animal lives and which it defends. **its**