



River Otter (*Lontra canadensis*)



Photo Source: Colorado Division of Wildlife



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Federal status: Not listed

Colorado status: Threatened

The river otter is the longest member of the weasel family in Colorado, ranging from 3 to 4.5 feet, of which the powerful, cylindrical tail comprises about one-third. Webbed toes and water-resistant fur suit the animal to a life spent largely in water. Otters are rich brown in color, with silver brown beneath. The otter is about twice as long and five times as heavy as mink, the only other aquatic carnivore in the Rockies.

Habitat: Otters live in riparian habitat, usually in bank dens abandoned by beavers. Otters disappeared from the state by the early part of the 20th century. In the 1970s, however, the Colorado Division of Wildlife began to restore populations to several drainages in the state, including the Upper Colorado, the Dolores and the upper South Platte rivers.

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