



Otters and clean water: A holiday gift for wildlife

About otters, winter wildlife, and water quality

This media kit highlights the role of river otters as indicators of healthy aquatic ecosystems. It connects their survival to clean water, abundant fish populations, and intact shorelines. It also provides recommendations for winter practices that protect otter habitat and water quality, with a seasonal tie-in to the holidays.

Resources to promote awareness of otters and water quality

- Use the sample newsletter article to share on your organization's website or in your newsletters. These are editable so you can customize the length or message.
- Use the sample social media posts to share through your social media channels. These are editable so you can customize the message and website.
- Follow and reshare messages posted on the Hennepin County Environment and Energy social media channels: [Hennepin Environment on Facebook](#), [Hennepin Environment on Instagram](#), and [@hennepinenviro on Twitter](#).

Contact

For more information, contact Grace Barcelow, Conservation Specialist, at grace.barcelow@hennepin.us

Sample newsletter article

Otters and clean water: A holiday gift for wildlife

River otters are playful, adorable mammals that remain active all winter long. They slide across snowy banks, dive under ice, and hunt fish in cold streams and lakes. But their survival depends on clean, healthy water.

Otters are considered an indicator species: their presence signals that rivers and lakes are healthy enough to support abundant fish and intact natural shoreline habitat. Pollution from road salt, litter, and runoff can degrade these waters, threatening otters and the ecosystems they depend on. Chloride from de-icing salt, for example, builds up in rivers and lakes over time, harming aquatic life and disrupting food chains.

This holiday season, we can give otters the gift of clean water. By practicing smart salting, disposing of trash properly, and keeping storm drains clear, we help protect otters' winter playgrounds. Every small action preserves the clean water otters, and all of us, need to thrive.

Take a winter walk near a local stream or lake and look for signs of otters: slides in the snow, tracks along the shoreline, or holes in the ice where they enter the water. These sightings remind us that protecting water quality benefits both people and wildlife.

Social media posts

Suggested hashtags: #Otters #WaterQuality #WinterWildlife #SaltSmart #HolidayHabits

To use images and graphics: right click on image and select Save as Picture

Leave it to Beavers

Facebook/Instagram: River otters are playful all winter long, but they depend on clean water to thrive. This holiday season, give otters the gift of clean water by using salt smartly, keeping storm drains clear, and disposing of trash properly. #Otters #WaterQuality #HolidayHabits

X: Give otters the gift of clean water this holiday season. Smart salting and litter prevention protect their winter playground. #Otters #WaterQuality #SaltSmart

Images: Minnesota river otters. Photos by Mike Budd/USFWS.



