

## **River Otter Script**

River otters were quite common in Colorado back in the 1800s. By the early part of the 20th century they had pretty much disappeared. Trapping and water pollution had taken their toll.

Otters are highly adapted to spending a considerable amount of time in water. Their bodies are sleek, their legs short with webbed feet and their tails powerful for swimming. Otters commonly slide along mud or snow banks rather than walk or run. This might look like they're being playful but it's likely just a more efficient way of moving around. These animals are carnivores but pretty much prefer fish and crayfish.

A species is considered endangered when it no longer exists in the state or is here in such small numbers that it could disappear at any time. The threatened status still gives a species full protection but means its situation is less precarious.

River otters were considered endangered until this fall when their status was down listed to threatened. Bringing otters back to Colorado began back in 1976 when the first of more than one hundred otters were captured in other states and released into a number of Colorado waterways. Currently there are self sustaining populations on the Green, Gunnison, Piedra and Colorado rivers.

With the Colorado Division of Wildlife, Jeff Butler, News 4.