

WILDSIDE VETERINARY HEALTH CENTER
CARE SHEET: ASIAN SMALL CLAWED OTTER



Diet:

- Predominantly fish-based diet.
- 2-3 feedings a day
- Their high metabolic rate and energy demands require the otter to consume about 20% of its body weight per day.

The recommended diet is below:

- 50% Mazuri® Fish Analog 50/10 Gel Diet
 - 30% Fish (capelin, smelt, herring, mackerel, trout)
 - 14% Whole prey (day old chicks, live feeder fish, shellfish - clams)
 - 2% Veggies/fruits (green beans, carrots, greens, celery, squash, broccoli, bell pepper, berries, melon) → can be given as enrichment. Approximately 20 grams per day per otter.
 - 2% Invertebrates (crickets/mealworms – tablespoon 2-3x a week)
 - 1% Hardboiled egg (1-2” slice once a week)
 - 1% Whole crayfish once a week to help with dental health
- If possible, feed in different places around the enclosure and in separate dishes per animal.
 - The use of separate feeding bowls makes it easier to medicate a particular animal should the need arise.
 - It is good practice to watch the otters feed to ensure all the otters are eating a balanced diet.
 - Clean drinking water should be available at all times. Drinking water should be provided in bowls small enough that the otters do not swim in them.

Supplement:

- Mazuri® Fishing Cat & Otter Supplement --> Feed 1 tablet per 1 lb. (0.45 kg) of fish or shellfish by placing the tablet into the food. Feed within 12 hours.

Housing:

- This very social animal does better when kept in couples.
- Although otters enjoy and spend a lot of time in water, they also require plenty of dry land for resting, grooming, digging, and foraging. The more natural the surroundings the better therefore a substrate of grass, soil, pebbles, non-abrasive sand and/or mulch as opposed to concrete will be beneficial to the otter group.
- The recommended ratio is 20% water to 80% land.
- Pond with shallow sloping edges, they enjoy digging at the edges and washing their food in the shallow waters. If the pond is artificial and not filtered it must be cleaned weekly.
- Pool sides should be complex (i.e. deadfall, shrubs, boulder piles, fallen logs extending into the water, etc.) and not smooth, uninterrupted lines.
- The warmer the water the more these tropical otter's swim. An ideal pool temperature is about 75 to 85°F (26.6-29.4°C).
- To contain the otter either a 1.5m fence, maximum mesh size of 50mm, with an inner horizontal overhang of 30cm or a non-climbable wall is recommended. The wall or fence should be buried in

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the ground to a depth of at least 80 cm and slightly angled inward to discourage the otter from digging out.

- At least one nest box per otter should be provided, including at least one large enough to accommodate the entire group. The nest boxes should be situated away from sun, rain, wind, and public proximity. Boxes can be made from wood, plexiglass, plastic barrels, etc.
- Clean, dry bedding or nest-building materials should always be supplied. This bedding material can be hay, grass, shredded paper, towels, polyester fleece (whatever is used the animals should be monitored to ensure they are not eating it).
- Whatever bedding is used must be plentiful and clean.

Veterinary care:

- Annual wellness exam should be composed of: radiograph, blood work, fecal exam.
- Vaccines: Ferret distemper, FVRCP, rabies.
 - Subadults should be vaccinated at 8, 12, and 16 weeks.
 - Rabies should be given at 16 weeks.
 - Adults should be vaccinated annually.