

Precipice of Survival

What is the Future of the Southern Sea Otter?

Speakers:

Featuring the new award-winning USGS video *Precipice of Survival—The Southern Sea Otter* by Stephen Wessells, introduced and discussed by sea otter researchers including Alisha H. Kage and M. Tim Tinker, Research Biologists

- The southern subspecies of sea otter, *Enhydra lutris nereis*, is a keystone organism in the kelp forests along the California coast
- One of the otters' favorite foods is sea urchins, which feed on the kelp—hence changes in the otter population affect all levels of the ecosystem
- The species *Enhydra lutris* originally was found all the way around the North Pacific, from Baja California to Japan, and may have numbered half a million animals
- The southern subspecies was thought to be extinct in the early 20th century, but a tiny colony was found off Big Sur in the 1930's and has since expanded to about 2,500 animals along our coast
- In the 1990's, otter numbers off California began to decline again—but why?

Thursday, August 26, 2004, 7:00 p.m.
USGS, Conference Room A, Bldg 3, Menlo Park, California

The Earth Science Information Center (Map and Publication Sales) in Building Three will remain open until 7:00 p.m. on the evening of the lecture. Map for lecture site on reverse. For information on USGS public events, call (650) 329-5000 or visit our website at <http://online.wr.usgs.gov/calendar/>

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