

River Otters of South Florida

ROSF



Volunteer

River Otters of South Florida Alliance: ROSFA An Introduction to Becoming a River Otter Volunteer

There is a serious need to (1) conduct research on river otters (*Lontra canadensis*) in south Florida's subtropical and tropical environments and (2) develop and implement educational programs and talks to help people of all ages to familiarize themselves with and appreciate the otters living among us. The content of the River Otters of South Florida website is guided by its mission. The Mission of the River Otters of South Florida (ROSF) website is: ***To aid our understanding and interest in the biology, behavior, ecology, and the conservation issues impacting the river otter in Florida, particularly south Florida, and to help educate ourselves, our children, and others about otters worldwide.***

There is extremely limited knowledge of the river otter in Florida. In fact, nothing is known about river otter population structure, presence, activities, behavior, diet, reproduction, genetics, the impact of human-applied chemicals on otters, or the impact on otter populations as a consequence of extensive land development for human habitation. In the rest of the North American continent a great deal of these types of investigations have been conducted. However, no significant river otter research has ever been conducted anywhere in the entire state of Florida. In early 2019 a survey, of colleges and universities with four-year-degree programs in the biological sciences, was conducted by this author to determine river otter research activities at these institutions. The results indicated no faculty or graduate students, in any of these institutions, were or had been conducting scientific investigations of river otters in Florida. It appears, this investigator is the only scientist in Florida engaged in river otter research in Florida. A follow-up survey will be conducted in the Fall of 2023.

Educating people about otters and conducting research on otters must be demonstrated as mutually beneficial. There are many, undefined opportunities to convey information and stimulate interest in river otters in our school children and other people here in southwest Florida. To attempt to accomplish this requires people to help. These are the many people who carry a passion for something in their hearts and wish to help with some activity of major interest to them. For people to connect with their interests they can volunteer in many ways. Should you have a passion for wildlife, you may wonder what opportunities are available for me to connect with wildlife in my community?

Are you interested in and wish to learn more about the animals that share the same environment with you? Would you like to contribute your time to help other people learn more about wildlife? I would like to offer you "An Otterly Fantastic Volunteer Opportunity" to help investigate river otters and educate people about this most prevalent, semi-aquatic mammal in Florida. To view a listing of available volunteer opportunities and their job descriptions use this link:

[riverotterssouthfl.com/volunteers/volunteer opportunities/volunteer.2022.#1 Priority #1.Job Descriptions](http://riverotterssouthfl.com/volunteers/volunteer%20opportunities/volunteer.2022.#1%20Priority%20#1.Job%20Descriptions)