

# KAH-LAN

*The Adventurous Sea Otter*



KAREN AUTIO

Illustrated by Sheena Lott

This activity  
guide belongs to

\_\_\_\_\_

Activity guide compiled by Sono Nis Press

# Contents

## Story Synopsis

Young sea otter Kah-Lan is *hungry*. He is sure there are big crabs near the point, but his mother won't let him out of her sight. One day, he sees his chance. Soon he and his friend Yamka are swimming around the point—right into danger! Will they ever make it back home?

|                              |    |
|------------------------------|----|
| Story Synopsis               | 2  |
| Sea Otters vs. River Otters  | 3  |
| Character                    | 4  |
| Word Play                    | 5  |
| Yamka's Journal              | 6  |
| Endangered Animals           | 7  |
| Plot                         | 9  |
| Make Connections             | 10 |
| Language Arts                | 11 |
| Analyzing Images             | 12 |
| Arts and Crafts: Mask        | 13 |
| Arts and Crafts: Plate Craft | 14 |
| About the Author             | 15 |
| Appendices                   | 16 |

# Sea Otters vs. River Otters

*Kah-Lan* is about a brave and adventurous sea otter who goes on quite a journey! Perhaps while he was travelling he also saw some river otters. Do you know some of the differences between these two animals? Have your teacher or teacher-librarian help you do some research and learn more about the differences between these two similar yet unique animal species.

| Sea Otter           | River Otter         |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Size:               | Size:               |
| Colour:             | Colour:             |
| Where do they live? | Where do they live? |
| What do they eat?   | What do they eat?   |

How many things are the same?

How many things are different?

Did you know? A note from the author: *Kalan* is another term for sea otter and was the original name of my sea otter character. I changed the spelling to *Kah-Lan* to help readers know how to pronounce the name. The official scientific name for this species is *Enhydra lutris*.

# Character

1. In your opinion, was Kah-Lan brave or foolish to go off in search of new food, despite the warnings of his elders? Why? In your opinion, what is the difference between bravery and foolishness?

---

---

---

---

2. Who changes the most over the course of this story? Why did you choose this character, and what do you think changed about them?

---

---

---

3. Even though the sea otters in the story are given some human-like qualities, the author still has them communicate with each other as animals would. What are some ways sea otters communicate? What are some ways in which humans communicate with each other using body language? Provide at least three examples.

---

---

---

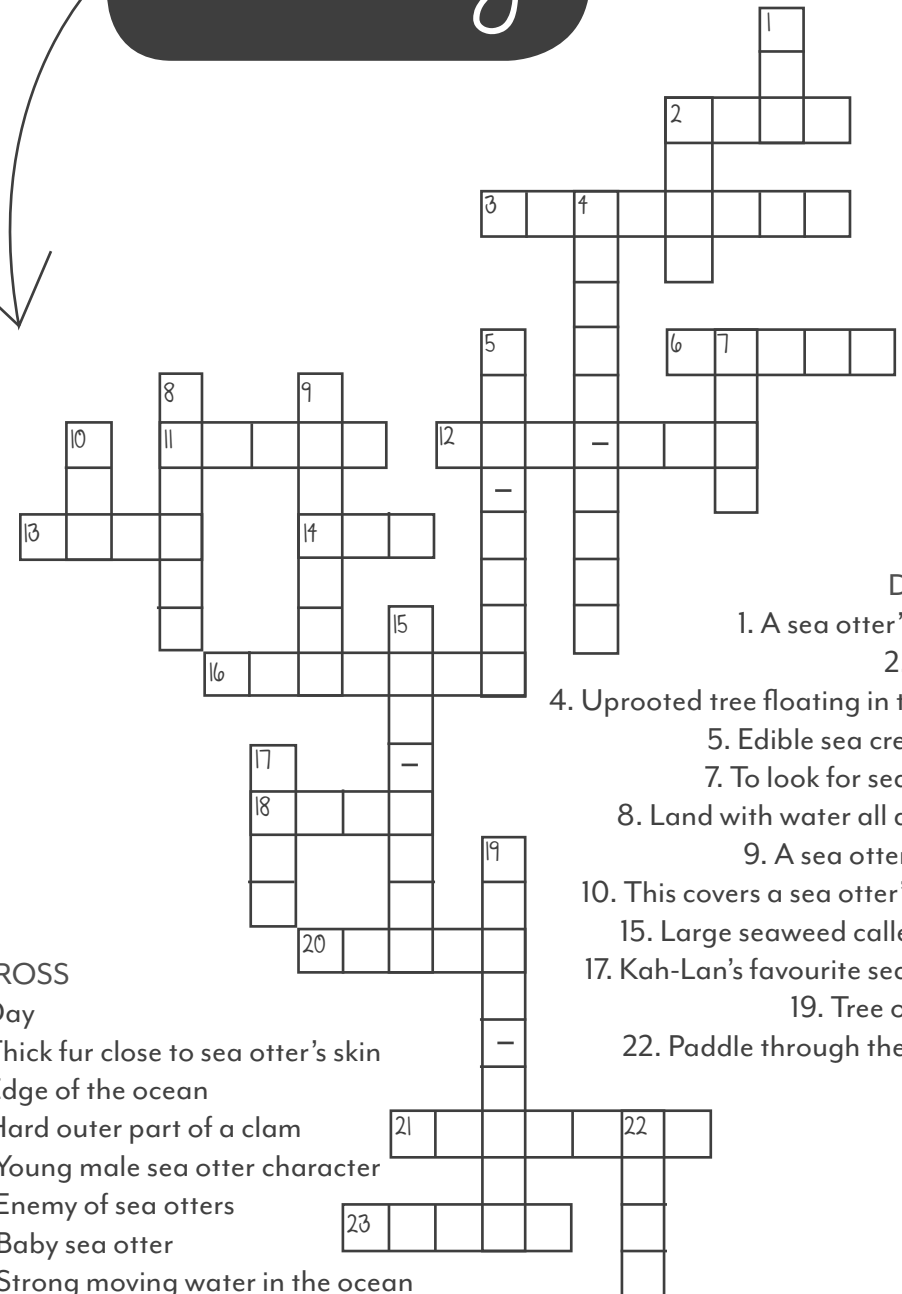
---

# Word Play

Use the grid below to find the words listed underneath.  
Letters can be used more than once, and words  
can be found in any direction, including backwards!

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| L | S | R | E | P | P | I | L | F | R | E | A | T | M | T |
| D | A | R | K | W | S | U | R | F | F | E | P | K | I | N |
| U | Y | N | W | T | A | E | P | Z | U | I | H | S | W | E |
| E | V | I | D | A | T | V | Y | T | S | R | L | T | S | C |
| D | R | I | F | T | T | R | E | E | A | A | L | C | O | S |
| R | Z | V | O | Y | R | E | A | S | N | E | R | E | C | M |
| U | S | O | R | C | A | E | R | D | M | E | M | R | S | B |
| F | U | S | H | E | L | L | E | O | A | R | A | A | C | S |
| R | R | R | O | S | T | R | H | T | E | B | K | F | E | X |
| E | F | O | C | E | X | U | U | D | P | N | M | I | D | S |
| D | A | C | E | A | N | R | L | O | A | V | A | S | A | L |
| N | C | K | A | T | E | E | I | L | B | A | Y | H | W | T |
| U | E | Y | N | R | P | N | H | C | U | R | R | E | N | T |
| S | H | O | R | E | T | A | T | S | E | R | O | F | E | V |
| R | I | A | D | E | K | L | W | O | R | G | T | F | A | R |

- |              |             |            |            |
|--------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| • AIR        | • EYES      | • OCEAN    | • SHELL    |
| • BAY        | • FISH      | • ORCA     | • SHORE    |
| • CLIFF      | • FLIPPERS  | • OTTER    | • SURF     |
| • CRAB       | • FOREST    | • PAW      | • SURFACE  |
| • CREATURE   | • FURLESS   | • POINT    | • SWIM     |
| • CURRENT    | • GROWL     | • PUP      | • UNDERFUR |
| • DARK       | • HOME      | • RAFT     | • WATER    |
| • DAWN       | • HUNT      | • ROCKY    | • WAVES    |
| • DIVE       | • ISLAND    | • SCENT    | • YAMKA    |
| • DRIFT-TREE | • KAH-LAN   | • SEA      |            |
| • EAT        | • LAND-TREE | • SEA-MEAT |            |
| • ELDER      | • MOTHER    | • SEA-TREE |            |



## ACROSS

2. Day
3. Thick fur close to sea otter's skin
6. Edge of the ocean
11. Hard outer part of a clam
12. Young male sea otter character
13. Enemy of sea otters
14. Baby sea otter
16. Strong moving water in the ocean
18. A group of sea otters
20. Large body of salty water
21. Describes a human
23. Water moved by wind

## DOWN

1. A sea otter's hand
2. Night
4. Uprooted tree floating in the sea
5. Edible sea creatures
7. To look for sea-meat
8. Land with water all around
9. A sea otter's foot
10. This covers a sea otter's body
15. Large seaweed called kelp
17. Kah-Lan's favourite sea-meat
19. Tree on land
22. Paddle through the water

(Answer Key in Appendix 1)

# Yamka's Journal

Pretend you are Yamka and write a journal entry about your adventure. Here are some questions to help you think about what to write: Why did you follow Kah-Lan? What did you enjoy? What was scary? Were you glad you went, or did you regret your decision? Draw a picture to go with your entry. Use additional paper for your writing if you need to.



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Endangered Animals

---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---

2. Animals often become endangered in part due to human interactions either directly with the species or as a result of impacts on the animal's habitat. Below, list three ways in which that might happen. Beside each negative impact, list at least one way in which we might change our habits to help prevent the number of endangered and extinct species from growing.

How Humans Have Hurt

---



---



---

How Humans Can Help

---

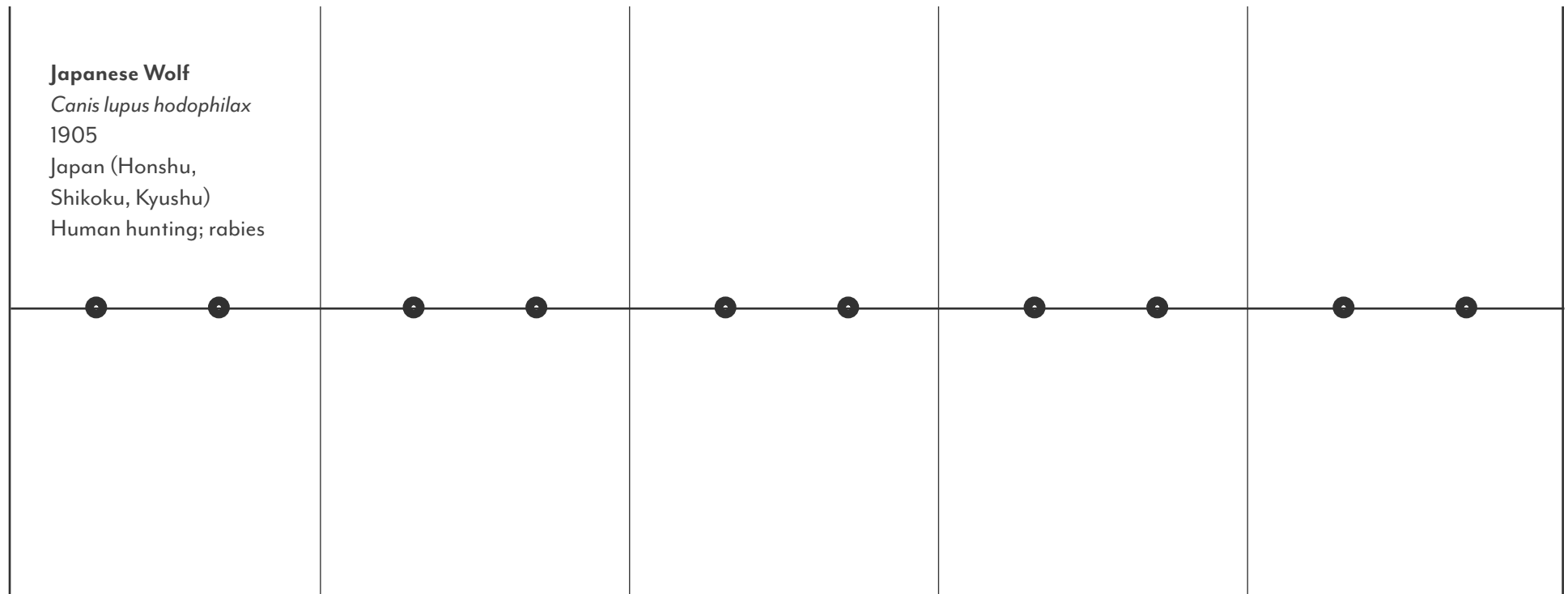


---



---

3. Find out about nine species that have become extinct since 1900 and add them to the timeline below. Add their common and scientific names, year they became extinct, main area of habitat, and believed cause of extinction. Do you notice any patterns (such as grouping by location or time period)? One example is done for you.





1. If you could have changed one thing about the plot, what would it be, and why? For example, did you feel that something was too scary? Didn't make sense? Was boring? Try not to say "I didn't like it," and leave it at that. Instead, analyze what, specifically, you wanted to alter and why.

---

---

---

---

2. At the end of the book, Kah-Lan is happily feasting with many of his companions, but what do you think happens next? Write an epilogue (final part of the book set some time after the main story) telling readers what happened to Kah-Lan, Yamka, and the others. Did Kah-Lan and Yamka have a family together? Move to a different location? Get in trouble with a whale? Decide how far in the future your epilogue will take place and then tell the rest of the story. Illustrate your epilogue and use additional paper if needed.

---

---

---

---




---

---

---

# Make Connections

1. Someone who studies sea otters or other sea life is called a marine biologist. What does a marine biologist do? Write three or four sentences about what it would be like to have this job. Is it a job you would like to have? Why or why not? What do you want to be when you grow up?

---

---

---

---

---

2. Have you ever seen a sea otter? What about a whale or other sea creature? Was it in the wild or in an aquarium? If you've ever been to an aquarium, what was your favourite part? Was there anything you didn't like? Which animals did you see?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Language Arts

1. Choose two words from the book that you had never heard before or didn't know the meaning of and write them below.

Word #1 \_\_\_\_\_

Word #2 \_\_\_\_\_

Next, look up the words and write their meaning in your own words.

Meaning #1 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Meaning #2 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Finally, use each word in your own sentence.

Sentence #1 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sentence #2 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Group Work

2. While *Kah-Lan the Adventurous Sea Otter* is a novel, the author has done a lot of research to make her book as factual as possible. With your group, look at a different book with an animal character (such as the *Curious George* books). If you want, take turns reading to read the story to each other. Once you have read the book together, talk about it as a group. Do you think the author researched the animals for this book? Do you think it makes the story better or less interesting if it is true to life? Why or why not? What would you have changed in the book you read together?

# Analyzing Images

1. Which of the illustrations in the book is your favourite? Why?

---

---

---

2. The cover is very important because it makes readers want to pick up a book. What are two things you like about this cover? What are two things you don't? Why do you feel this way?

I Like: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

I Don't Like: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

## Group Work



3. As a group, talk about the topics below. Once you have had time to talk as a group, your teacher will ask you to share your group's ideas with the class.

When you first saw the cover, what did you think was going to happen in the story? As you read, were you surprised about what happened compared to your guess? If you were illustrating the cover, what would you change? Keep the same?

*Below are two variations on a mask craft you can complete. One uses paper which you can colour; the other uses craft foam. It's up to you which one to make, or you can even create both!*

### Materials:

- Sea Otter Mask Craft pattern (Appendix 2), printed on cardstock
- Crayons, pencil crayons, or markers
- White crayon, pencil crayon, or Sharpie
- Scissors
- Glue or double-sided tape
- Ribbon or elastic

### Instructions:

1. Colour the sea otter head dark brown, face light brown, and nose black.
2. Cut out the mask shapes, including the eye holes.
3. Glue or tape the nose to the face.
4. Glue or tape the face to the head, matching the eye holes.
5. Use a white crayon, pencil crayon, or Sharpie to draw on whiskers.
6. Measure a piece of elastic long enough to comfortably stretch around the child's head. Tape one end to either side of the back of the mask, or knot through a small hole on either side of the mask, with the knots at the back. OR, if the child is allergic to latex, attach a ribbon (approximately 40cm/16 inches long) to each side of the mask, long enough to tie behind the child's head.

## Arts & Crafts: Mask

### Materials:

- Mask pattern (Appendix 2), printed on cardstock to trace
- Craft foam: dark brown, light brown, and black
- White crayon or Sharpie
- Scissors
- Double-sided tape
- Ribbon or elastic

### Instructions:

1. Trace the pattern pieces on to the craft foam and cut out. (Head on dark brown, face on light brown, and nose on black.)
2. Use the double-sided tape to stick the nose on the face piece.
3. Use the double-sided tape to stick the face on the head piece, matching the eye holes.
4. Use a white crayon or Sharpie to draw on whiskers.
5. Measure a piece of elastic long enough to comfortably stretch around the child's head. Knot through a small hole on either side of the mask, with the knots at the back. OR, if the child is allergic to latex, attach a ribbon (approximately 40cm/16 inches long) to each side of the mask, long enough to tie behind the child's head.



# Arts & Crafts: Plate Craft

## Materials:

- Sea Otter Plate Craft pattern (Appendix 3), printed
  - Small paper plate
  - Crayons, pencil crayons, or markers
  - Scissors
  - Glue
- .....

## Instructions:

1. Colour the head, paws, flippers, and tail of the sea otter.
2. Cut out the head, paws, flippers, and tail, and glue them on the paper plate.
3. Draw the sea otter's food items on the plate.

**For more sea otter crafts, visit Danielle's Place:**  
[www.daniellesplace.com/html/ottercrafts.html](http://www.daniellesplace.com/html/ottercrafts.html)



Karen Autio grew up in Nipigon, Ontario, but fell in love with sea otters in 1984 while visiting the Vancouver Aquarium. Karen lives in Kelowna, British Columbia. To learn more about Karen Autio and her books, visit [www.karenautio.com](http://www.karenautio.com).

1. Think of five questions you would like to ask Karen about herself or her books. As a class, pick five questions in total and send a letter to Karen via her publisher. Make sure to include a SASE (self-addressed, stamped envelope), and she will write back with her answers when time allows. She would also love to read your epilogues (from page 9), if you would like to share them with her.

**Karen Autio**  
c/o Sono Nis Press  
PO Box 160  
Winlaw, BC V0G 2J0  
Canada

## About the Author

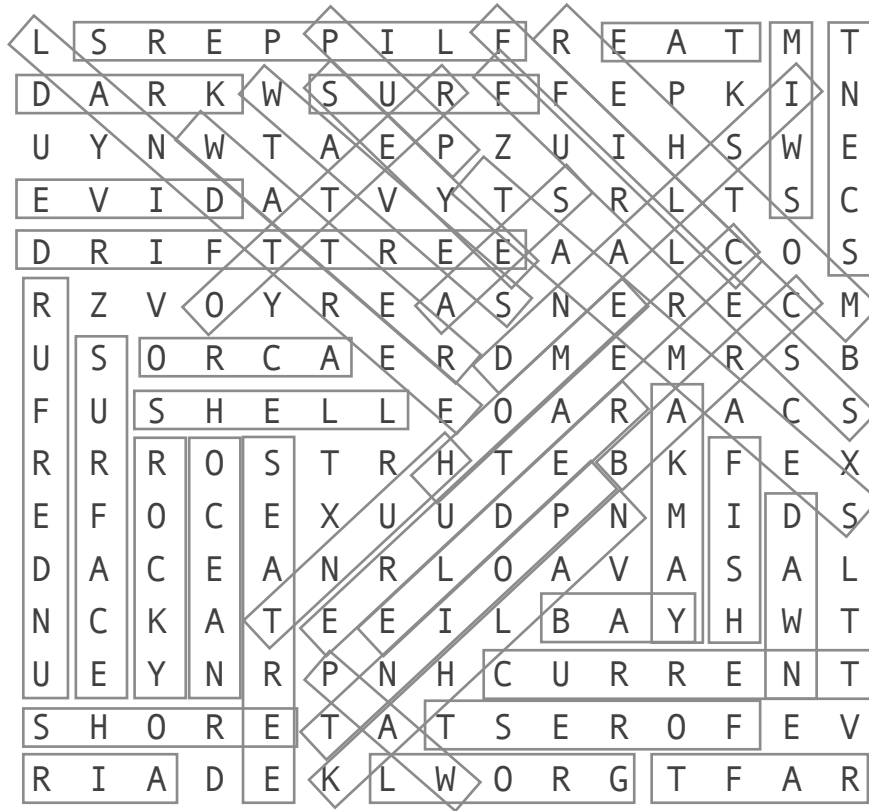


—Will Autio photo

Karen Autio at one of her favourite spots—where the rescued and non-releasable sea otters live at the Vancouver Aquarium in Vancouver, B.C.

2. Pretend you are an author and write your own biography for the back of your pretend book. Think about what information about your life and books might be interesting to readers.

# Appendix I Answer Key



(Over,Down,Direction)

AIR(3,15,W)  
BAY(10,12,E)  
CLIFF(13,5,NW)  
CRAB(14,6,SW)  
CREATURE(13,5,SW)  
CURRENT(9,13,E)  
DARK(1,2,E)  
DAWN(14,10,S)  
DIVE(4,4,W)  
DRIFT-TREE(1,5,E)  
EAT(11,1,E)  
ELDER(7,12,NE)

EYES(9,5,NW)  
FISH(13,9,S)  
FLIPPERS(9,1,W)  
FOREST(13,14,W)  
FURLESS(9,2,SE)  
GROWL(11,15,W)  
HOME(8,9,NE)  
HUNT(8,9,SW)  
ISLAND(14,2,SW)  
KAH-LAN(6,15,NE)  
LAND-TREE(1,1,SE)  
MOTHER(15,6,NW)

OCEAN(4,9,S)  
ORCA(3,7,E)  
OTTER(4,6,NE)  
PAW(6,13,SE)  
POINT(10,10,SW)  
PUP(8,3,NW)  
RAFT(15,15,W)  
ROCKY(3,9,S)  
SCENT(15,5,N)  
SEA(10,4,SW)  
SEA-MEAT(15,10,NW)  
SEA-TREE(5,9,S)

SHELL(3,8,E)  
SHORE(1,14,E)  
SURF(6,2,E)  
SURFACE(2,7,S)  
SWIM(14,4,N)  
UNDERFUR(1,13,N)  
WATER(4,3,SE)  
WAVES(5,2,SE)  
YAMKA(12,12,N)

