

## For Immediate Release

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## Oregon's Sea Otter Awareness Week: Join Us for Exciting Events & Conservation Efforts!

The [Elakha Alliance](http://www.elakhaalliance.org), an Oregon non-profit working to restore sea otters to the Oregon coast, invites the public to celebrate [Sea Otter Awareness Week](#) (SOAW) September 22-28, 2024. The Alliance joins California based organizations including Sea Otter Savvy, Defenders of Wildlife, the Monterey Bay Aquarium, and California Department of Parks and Recreation to inspire a deeper awareness of these unique marine mammals, their ecological importance and the challenges they face. Elakha Alliance representatives will host in-person events at the Oregon Zoo, Oregon Coast Aquarium, Yaquina Bay Yacht Club, Coos Bay Library and 7 Devils Brewery.

This year's theme, "**Together We Thrive**," highlights the interconnectedness of humans, sea otters and the environment. It encourages communities, organizations and individuals to work together for a healthier, more sustainable future.

**Oregon Sea Otter Awareness Week activities** (see [www.elakhaalliance.org/events](http://www.elakhaalliance.org/events) for details):

- Sunday Sept 22nd - Saturday Sept 28th: [Sea Otter Art Online Silent Auction](#)
- Sunday Sept 22nd, 10am-3pm: [Sea Otter Viewing Station at Oregon Zoo](#) (Portland)
- Sunday Sept 22nd, 7pm: [Sea Otter Pint & Paint Night at 7 Devils Brewery](#) (Coos Bay)
- Monday Sept 23rd, 6pm: [Webinar: Exploring Oregon's Estuaries: Vital Ecosystems and Conservation Efforts with Oregon Shores Conservation Coalition](#)
- Tuesday Sept 24th, 12pm-1pm: [Float Down the Coast Live Stream at the Oregon Zoo](#)
- Thursday Sept 26th, 7pm: [Sea Otters in Oregon - Road to Recovery Presentation at Coos Bay Library](#) (Coos Bay)
- Friday Sept 27th, 10am-3pm: [Sea Otter Viewing Station at Oregon Coast Aquarium](#) (Newport)
- Saturday Sept 28th, 4:30pm-6:30pm: [Seas The Night: Sea Otter Art Silent Auction Cocktail Party at Yaquina Bay Yacht Club](#) (Newport)

Sea otters, once plentiful on the Oregon coast, were hunted nearly to extinction for their lush furs by the early 1900s. A few surviving animals in California and Alaska enabled the population of sea otters to rebound in many places. However, they remain absent in their former habitats on the Oregon and northern California coasts, a stretch of nearly 800 miles.

In 2022 the US Fish and Wildlife Service released a study of the feasibility and impacts of returning sea otters to the region. The study found that there would be many ecological and economic benefits from

returning sea otters due to their importance in protecting kelp forests which are critical habitat for many marine species, including fish caught in commercial and recreational harvest. An economic impact assessment conducted for the Elakha Alliance in 2022 found that the return of sea otters would provide economic benefits to Oregon coast communities, although shellfish harvest in some areas could be affected. A 2023 study of potential impacts on tourism and travel economics on the southern Oregon coast from the return of sea otters predicts a substantial boost to the local economy from increased tourism and travel.

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