Activity Card 9A

Otter

(Lutra lutra)

The Eurasian otter is the only otter native to Europe and is one of Ireland's oldest mammals having been here since the end of the last ice age (some 10,500 years ago). In Irish it is known as **madra uisce** (the water hound). This name is appropriate as the otter is extremely well adapted to live in water.

1 Name and explain 3 adaptations the otter has that help it with its life style.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

2 Otters are one of main creatures found at the head of freshwater food chains in Ireland. What do they feed on?

_____

_____

3 Can you place the following creatures in one of the boxes below?

Otter	**Humans**	**Dipper**	**Swan**
Trout	**Dragonfly larvae**	**Kingfisher**	**Water boatman**
Salmon	**Mink**	**Daubenton's Bat**	

Carnivore	Herbivore	Omnivore

4 For how long can an otter stay under water?

_____

Activity Card 9B

5 **What are the following and can you match them to the creatures listed on the previous page?**

What is a	What creature uses it?
Holt _____	_____
Redd _____	_____
Roost _____	_____
Lie _____	_____
Nest _____	_____

6 *Otters are not commonly seen. This is because they are mainly n_____l (that means that they hunt by night). They live in a h____t that often has its entrance under-water. In the spring the females give birth to up to 2 or 3 c__s. Blind and helpless they start eating f____h at about 2 months but do not go into the w____r until they are 4 months old. They remain with their mother for up to a year. In the wild otters can live for up to ____ years of age.*

In the past otters were hunted for s____t, but this was outlawed in 1981. It is believed that Ireland now holds the densest population of otters in Western E_____e.

Fill in the blanks above using the following words

sport **nocturnal** **fish** **holt** **cubs** **water** **europe** **15**

7 **The otter has suffered a population decline in recent years and is now one of the most threatened mammals in Ireland. Write down 2 reasons for this decline?**

1._____

2._____

8 **It is now against the law to harm otters or their holts.**
Can you describe actions that have been taken to help otters and hopefully increase their numbers?

1._____

2._____

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