Real Sandpiper Point: sea otters and kelp



Sandpiper Point is made up. The animals and plants on this page are real, and so are the facts. Each one comes from the source named beneath it.

- Sea otters rest floating together in a group called a raft.
  Source: Monterey Bay Aquarium. www.montereybayaquarium.org/animals-the-ocean/animals-a-to-z/sea-otter
- When resting, sea otters sometimes tie themselves in kelp fronds so they don't drift.
  Source: Aquarium of the Pacific. www.aquariumofpacific.org/onlinelearningcenter/species/southern_sea_otter
- Sea otters sometimes hold paws while sleeping so they don't drift apart. It does not happen all that often, so say "sometimes."
  Source: Seattle Aquarium. www.seattleaquarium.org/animal/sea-otter/
- A mother sea otter nurses and grooms her pup while she swims on her back, with the pup on her chest.
  Source: Aquarium of the Pacific. www.aquariumofpacific.org/onlinelearningcenter/species/southern_sea_otter
- A mother sea otter cares for her single pup by herself for about six months, until weaning.
  Source: US Fish & Wildlife Service. fws.gov/species/southern-sea-otter-enhydra-lutris-nereis
- A sea otter's two-layer fur has more than a million hairs per square inch. Sea otters have no blubber; their dense fur keeps them warm.
  Source: Monterey Bay Aquarium; US Fish & Wildlife Service. www.montereybayaquarium.org/animals-the-ocean/animals-a-to-z/sea-otter
- Sea otters use tools, often a rock as a hammer or anvil to open shellfish.
  Source: US Fish & Wildlife Service. fws.gov/species/southern-sea-otter-enhydra-lutris-nereis
- Sea otters eat about a quarter of their body weight every day.
  Source: US Fish & Wildlife Service. www.fws.gov/story/2015-11/thinking-ocean
- Giant kelp is anchored to rocky reefs by a holdfast.
  Source: Aquarium of the Pacific. www.aquariumofpacific.org/onlinelearningcenter/species/giant_kelp
- Gas-filled bladders called pneumatocysts help kelp float toward the light.
  Source: Monterey Bay Aquarium. www.montereybayaquarium.org/animals-the-ocean/ecosystems/kelp-forest
- Giant kelp can grow up to about two feet a day in ideal conditions (NOAA says up to about 18 inches a day; say "a foot and a half or more").
  Source: Monterey Bay Aquarium; NOAA. www.montereybayaquarium.org/animals-the-ocean/ecosystems/kelp-forest
- Many animals live in a kelp forest: sea stars, anemones and urchins near the holdfasts; rockfish, crabs, sea otters, sea lions and seals higher up.
  Source: Monterey Bay Aquarium. www.montereybayaquarium.org/animals-the-ocean/ecosystems/kelp-forest
- Sea otters are a keystone species in the kelp forest. They eat urchins; without otters, urchins can boom and eat kelp until bare rock is left.
  Source: Monterey Bay Aquarium. www.montereybayaquarium.org/animals-the-ocean/ecosystems/kelp-forest
- Winter storm waves can tear kelp fronds and uproot whole kelp forests.
  Source: Monterey Bay Aquarium. www.montereybayaquarium.org/animals-the-ocean/ecosystems/kelp-forest

Where they live

Real southern sea otters live along California's central coast, from San Mateo County down to near Santa Barbara. They once lived along the whole California coast. Sandpiper Point is a made-up place.

In the stories

Pim's Bath and Pim Holds On borrow the real otters' rafts and kelp. In Pim Holds On, holding moves from Mama's paw to kelp to Pim's own paws.

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More real facts

Stories: Pim's Bath, Pim Holds On.

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