



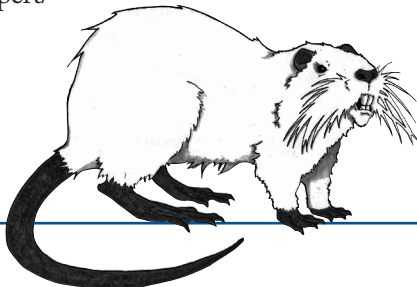
Use the case study, lesson plan, activities, assessment questions, and Aquatic Invader Investigator page to enhance student understanding of nutria and connect these organisms to the community. Assign assessment questions as a homework assignment, or use the questions for classroom discussions or final evaluation. All lessons and resources are available at [MenaceToTheWest.org](http://MenaceToTheWest.org).

### LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- **Lesson: Myocastor Multiplier**
- **Population Count**

### CASE STUDY

“Shedding Light on Nutria.” Portland State University Ph.D. graduate Trevor Sheffels studied nutria’s social and ecological impacts. Link to the blog: <http://blogs.oregon-state.edu/wise/2014/11/21/interview-trevor-sheffels-nutria-expert/>



### LESSON PLAN

#### Myocastor Multiplier

Use basic information about the nutria life cycle to calculate how large a nutria population can grow in five years, and observe the awesome power of logarithmic population growth.

### LEARNING ACTIVITIES

#### Population Count

Make a classroom-community connection by helping research invasive species. Managers need to map the abundance and distribution of nutria and other invasive species, but often lack the resources and funds for this research. Your classroom can help, all while teaching valuable lessons in ecology, invasive species, and scientific inquiry. Contact your local natural-resource manager to see if he or she could use help collecting data about nutria or other invasive species. Often this involves simple protocols that your students could develop. Connecting your classroom to the community could result in important findings that will help control invasive species.

### SPECIES GUIDE ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- Where did nutria originate?**  
*South America.*
- Why were they introduced to the United States?**  
*For their fur.*
- What fur-bearing animal hunted for its pelt did the United States export to South America to supplement the nutria population?**  
*Beaver.*
- How quickly can a nutria begin swimming after birth?**  
*Within 24 hours.*
- What animal native to North America is considered invasive in the nutria’s native range?**  
*Beaver.*
- During what time of day do nutria feed the most?**  
*Nighttime.*
- Nutria rarely venture more than 600 feet from their home burrow. How can they spread into new areas?**  
*When food becomes scarce, and agricultural crops lure them.*

# Nutria

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**8 Name three characteristics of nutria that negatively impact the environment.**

*A few options, but not limited to below:*

- *Tunneling and burrowing*
- *Nutria burrows can undermine the banks of streams and can cause considerable erosion*
- *Defecation in waterways*
- *Nutria foraging damages agricultural crops, lawns, and home gardens*
- *Rapid reproduction*
- *Large populations*

**9 Do you think it is a good idea to feed nutria? Why or why not?**

*No. They carry disease and are aggressive.*

**10 Nutria often thrive in urban areas where waterways have been deeply channelized and have steep banks. Why?**

*Steep banks allow nutria to create their tunnels, which are often compartmentalized for resting, feeding, and hiding from predators or weather.*

**11 If you were in charge of designing a new wetland, what features would you include to discourage nutria from invading?**

*Avoid steep banks.*