

Otters are extremely fond of crayfish, but, strange to say, they are not lovers of frogs. After frequent trials, I never could induce either of my pet Otters to eat a frog, although they were by no means slow at killing them. They were always ready for fish, fresh or salt, of any kind, raw or cooked; although they always preferred them alive if possible. When fish was not available, both of them were satisfied with bread and milk, meat or potatoes.

Merriam corroborates the crayfish item, stating: "The numbers of crayfish (*Cambarus*) that the Otter destroys in the course of a summer is almost incredible. The Otter 'sign' that one finds so abundantly about our lakes and streams, on rocks and logs, often consist wholly of fragments of the chitinous exoskeleton of the crustacean. At other times, fish-bones are mingled with the broken crayfish shells. . . . When unable to procure these in sufficient quantity, it devours frogs; and is said to depopulate the poultry yard, and even to prey upon lambs. . . . In confinement, it will eat meat, and is said to prefer it boiled."<sup>23</sup>

As an item on the list, several trappers have assured me that Otters commonly feed on fresh-water clams, crushing the shells with their teeth to get at them.

It is known to eat wild fowl; and doubtless, when pinched, will relish a kind of animal food.

W. P. Lett, on the occasion of his paper before the Ottawa Field Naturalist Club, referred to the Otter preying on ducks. Mr. Whitcher, in reply, "stated that he had seen an Otter come up and sit on the rocks alongside of ducks; and that the birds did not apparently mind him, although the appearance of a Mink would have made them all fly. Possibly this was because the Otter seizes his prey from beneath the water, and therefore the ducks do not recognize him as an enemy on land; whereas it is there that the Mink attacks them."<sup>24</sup>

In Maine, according to Manly Hardy, the Otter has a long list of foods. "Besides fish," he says, "they often catch Muskrats, and in winter I have known them to entirely depopulate the houses of a large colony of Muskrats. When in a Beaver country, they often kill the young Beaver, and I feel quite sure that they also sometimes kill ducks.

"I was once being paddled up to a black duck which we had heard quacking in a logan; I saw what I thought were the backs of several ducks, and beyond them, just then a duck gave a loud quack and flew. I then saw that what I had taken for ducks were two Otters which seemed to be trying to catch the farthest duck. While they were under water, I put a

<sup>23</sup>Mamm. Adir., pp. 87-88.

<sup>24</sup>Can. Otter, p. 188.