



News Release

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Beware of Aggressive River Otters Around Anchorage Waterways

(Anchorage) – The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) urges Anchorage residents to be alert around local lakes and rivers where river otters have recently attacked people and their pets.

River otter attacks in Anchorage, while rare, have been reported over the last decade. The most recent incident occurred on August 18 along Campbell Creek near Taku Park where an adult was injured by an otter when it approached the victim and a group of children along the creek. In late July a child on a paddleboard was bitten after encountering a group of four river otters on Sand Lake. The department also received reports of otters acting aggressively towards a dog in the area; after investigation it was determined that the dog was not harmed.

River otters are present in many areas of the Anchorage Municipality and may travel through connected lakes and streams throughout the city. River otter groups are typically comprised of either a mother with young, or associated bachelor males. The group composition of river otters responsible for the recent attacks is unknown. If you have river otters frequenting your property, discourage them from familiarizing themselves with water equipment like rafts, kayaks, or paddleboards on dry land. If you are approached by an otter, use deterrents like noise makers or bear spray. If possible, leave the area and notify ADF&G immediately; otters can be territorial and may be a threat to others.

Do not allow pets to interact with otters. Wild animals are unpredictable. There is a risk of injury in any wildlife interaction and also the risk of disease transmission. There has not been a reported case of rabies in river otters in Southcentral Alaska in recent years, however the possibility of disease concern remains.

Any wild animal behaving aggressively or unusually in Anchorage should be reported immediately using the 24/7 online reporting tool:

<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=reportwildlifeencounter.main>

For immediate public safety concerns, call 9-1-1.

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