

Sea otters pushed out of bay habitat

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Alaska's sea otters are in peril after a cold winter on the Alaskan Peninsula has frozen them out of their bay habitat.

The Anchorage Daily News reported that as the otters are pushed out of their usual habitat and onto the tundra, they have become easy prey for wolves and humans. Another threat to the otters is hunger, and eagles and foxes have reportedly been seen picking at otters' remains near the Port Heiden area southwest of Anchorage.

The Daily news reported that villagers have also hunted otters, skinning them to make hats, gloves and blankets from their thick pelts.

A source from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service said the otters have come onto land looking for food after an extra-cold winter froze them out of their bay habitat where they scour the sea bottoms looking for urchins and clams. Moving awkwardly across land, many otters have died simply from exhaustion.

Western Alaskan sea otters are listed as threatened under the United States' Endangered Species Act. The Daily News reported a 20 percent drop in sea otter populations over the past 20 years.

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