

# Endangered sea otters fly into France

December 9 2016

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A sea otter pictured at the Oceanopolis centre in Brest, western France, on December 9, 2016

A pair of jetlagged sea otters arrived in France on Friday after a 9,000-kilometre (5,600-mile) flight from Alaska to their new home at a sea life park.

The otters, an endangered species hunted to near extinction because of their highly prized fur, are native to the shallow coastal waters of the north Pacific.

The two males, named Matchaq and Tangiq, looked relieved to take a cool bath in a quarantine centre in France after spending 15 hours aboard a private jet chartered specially for the journey.

They will go on show at the Oceanopolis sea life centre in the city of Brest in northwest France, which brought another three [sea otters](#) to France last June from Alaska. Only one of them has survived.

Their transfer from the SeaLife Center in Alaska was part of a conservation effort for sea otters that have been cared for in captivity and cannot be released into the wild.

The mammal is still considered endangered, even though a hunting ban has helped their numbers rebound to an estimated 126,000 worldwide, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Thanks to their thick fur, the voracious eaters are able to spend much of their lives in the water preying on crustaceans and small fish—while trying to avoid hungry killer whales.



Sea otters at the Oceanopolis centre in Brest, western France, on December 9, 2016

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Citation: Endangered sea otters fly into France (2016, December 9) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-12-endangered-sea-otters-france.html>

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