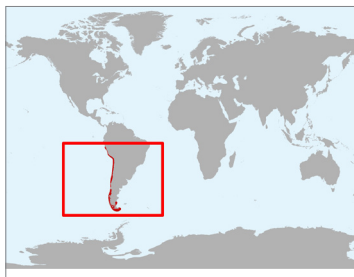




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Geographical range

Amazing Species: Marine Otter

The **Marine Otter** or Sea Cat, *Lontra felina*, is listed as 'Endangered' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. This species inhabits exposed shores along the Pacific coast of South America, from northern Peru, along the Chilean coast to Cape Horn and Isla de Los Estados (Argentina), as well as parts of the Strait of Magellan.

Habitat destruction, pollution, and poaching are the major threats to Marine Otters in South America. Owing to excessive hunting for its pelt, the species has been nearly exterminated from the northern and southern extremities of its former range. In addition to hunting, Marine Otters may be killed incidentally by fishing activities.

The Marine Otter is legally protected in Peru, Chile and Argentina and occurs in several protected areas. However, human poverty levels are high along the coast, and with poor law enforcement, hunting can be an attractive source of income. As a result, a change in public attitude to otters, together with increased law enforcement, are both necessary in order to slow the decline of this species.

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