

Nutria

STATION #9

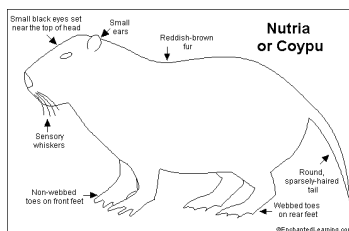
Directions:

1) Mark the BEFORE section of the Nutria Anticipation Guide.

2) Read the passage titled - *Nutria - Suspected of Crimes in the Wetlands.*

3) Mark your Nutria Anticipation Guide in the AFTER section.

4) Compare your AFTER section to the NUTRIA KEY.

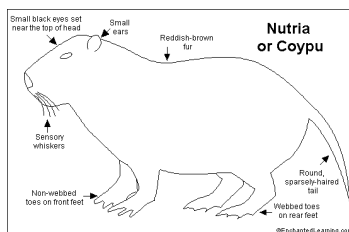


Purpose: Read to learn more information about a species of animal found in the coastal wetlands.

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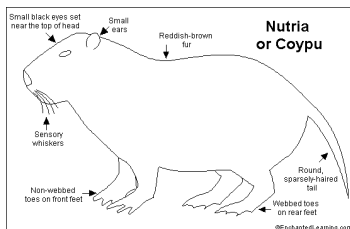
<i>Nutria Anticipation Guide</i>				
Before Reading		Statements	After Reading	
<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False	1) Nutria were introduced to the United States because of their fur.	<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False
<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False	2) This species is considered <i>omnivore</i> because its diet requires both plants and animals.	<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False
<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False	3) Nutria is a predator to the fish and the turtle.	<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False
<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False	4) Nutria is a harmless species.	<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False



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<i>Nutria Anticipation Guide KEY</i>				
Before Reading		Statements	After Reading	
<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False	1) Nutria were introduced to the United States because of their fur.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False
<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False	2) This species is considered <i>omnivore</i> because its diet requires both plants and animals.	<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> False
<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False	3) Nutria is a predator to the fish and the turtle.	<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> False
<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input type="checkbox"/> False	4) Nutria is a harmless species.	<input type="checkbox"/> True	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> False



Nutria – Suspected of Crimes in the Wetlands

THE CRIMES: Destroys vegetation in wetlands and coastal marshes, which erodes soil. Completely destroys some marshes. Carries a parasite that causes marsh itch in people.

DESCRIPTION: Brown rodent, 35.56 cm (14 inches) long from nose to base of tail. Can weigh 7.257 – 11.339 kgs (16-25 pounds) or more. Has three layers of fur and 10.16 cm (4-inch) long whiskers. Its orange teeth with four large incisors are a distinguishing feature. Toes on hind feet are connected by a skin web.

The Interrogation

Where are you from?

I'm an amigo from Argentina, South America.

How did you get here?

I was brought to North America because people liked my fur. Sometimes I escaped from the fur farms, and other times the fur farmer would intentionally let me go and roam the wilds. In Texas people actually brought me in to manage ponds that were choked with vegetation. Little did they know that I don't like algae and many of the submerged plants. Also, I reproduced in such large numbers that there was just not enough food to satisfy me. So I moved on to other areas where I was not wanted in order to get the food I wanted.

What's your problem?

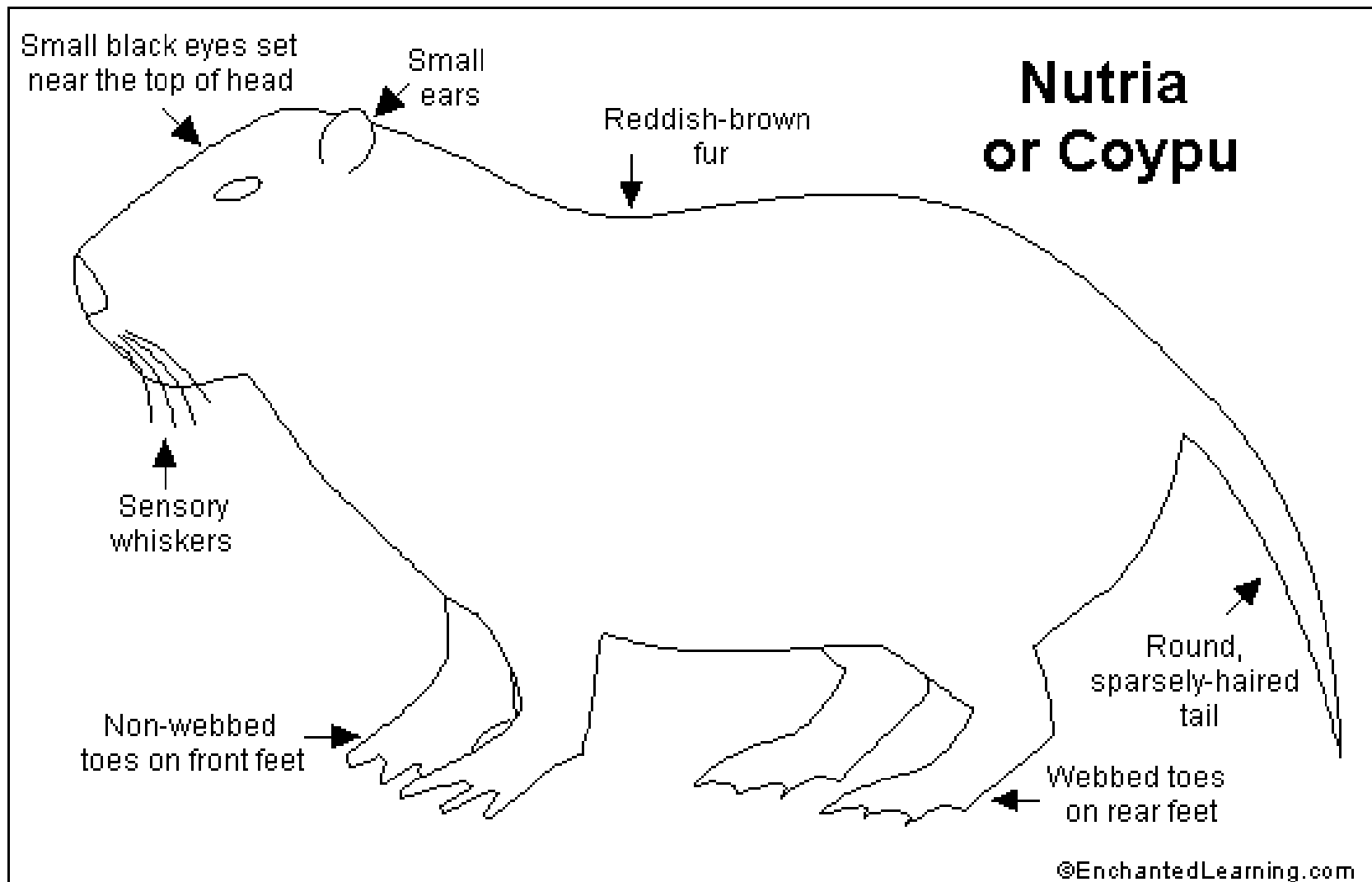
I'm responsible for wreaking havoc on your marshes and wetlands. Thanks to me there are lots fewer of these important natural areas. I use my strong teeth to really tear up the roots of native vegetation that keep these wetlands healthy. Then muddy channels form preventing new vegetation growth. My eating habits use up habitat for nesting waterfowl, and other wetland birds. Fish and crabs—you're in deep trouble now because you need the salt marsh for shelter and protection from predators and as a source of food. I'm taking away all these things you need to survive. Wetland and marsh loss is also an economic problem for commercial fisheries and local ecotourism in these wildlife refuge areas. We create human health problems by passing along a parasite causing marsh itch.

How can we control you?

Louisiana's Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is trying to reduce my population by increasing the demand for my great looking fur; yikes, they even want people to kill me and eat me so they are coming up with all sorts of nutria recipes! Maryland's Department of Natural Resources and the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center did a study where they put up wire fences to see whether keeping us out of marsh habitats that were trying to regrow could stabilize or recover marsh vegetation. They found that some Eastern Shore marshes can recover when nutria are kept out. However, thanks to my nasty eating habits, these marshes can only partially recover because of the terrible erosion I cause and because of the tidal saltwater that flows in once I've done a number on the marsh.

Reward: *The honor of protecting our water resources— A healthier environment and more opportunities to enjoy our natural areas.*

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