

when seeking to find unfrozen water. It often travels a great distance at such times, and if threatened by danger on the snow, it slides on its belly rapidly, leaving a furrow behind it. Some suppose it is done by the animal in an attempt to bury itself in the snow. This is not the case, but rather a necessity arising from the shortness of its legs, as proportioned to its body. The animal has been known, not unfrequently, to get upon a hill near its own residence, when covered with snow, and with its fore feet bent back, slide down the hill for several rods, with great rapidity. This feat is evidently performed for a pastime.

The otter usually feeds upon fish, frogs, and other small animals; and when they can not be obtained, it will eat the tender branches and bark growing in or near the water, and sometimes grass. They are bad economists of food, and often annoy a community of beavers, by destroying their husbanded store of growing eatables. The otter is less numerous than the beaver, and its fur more valuable. The foot of the otter has five toes, connected by webs, like the toes of a duck. It displays considerable sagacity in preparing its burrow, which it makes upward under a bank, the entrance being beneath the water, and that in a freshet it shall not be drowned, it opens a small vent to the surface, often concealed by leaves and bushes. The otter taken young has been tamed, and taught to fish for its master.