



# A Conversation with Lisa Connors

Author of  
*Oliver's Otter Phase*

***What was your incentive to write this particular book?***

I wanted to share information I learned about sea otters. I found the facts fascinating and felt there were kids out there who, like me as a child, wondered what it would be like to be an animal.

***When did you become interested in writing?***

I first dreamed of writing in my early 20s after reading *Winter* by Rick Bass. I thought how wonderful it could be to arrange words in a way that made the reader laugh, cry and ponder those words for days after.

***When are you most creative?***

A long solo walk or traveling always spark my creativity. Driving last summer in Montana, I had to pull over and have my husband drive so I could get an idea down on paper.

***What is the most frequently asked question you encounter as an author and what is your answer?***

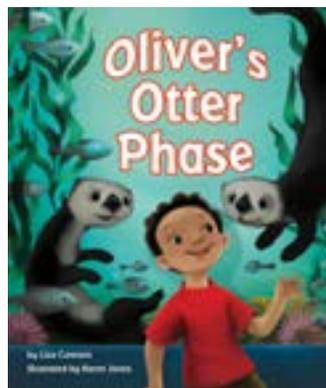
Q: What do you write? A: Nature essays and picture books. I like to write fiction and narrative nonfiction that often includes science or nature.

***What is most rewarding about writing children's books?***

The most challenging aspect of writing children's books is letting go of an original idea while revising – to rearrange it, chop it up and start over, letting the best story grow. The most rewarding aspect is when this revision process works.

***Do you have advice for parents?***

I am not an otter expert, but I have a Masters in Environmental Studies and a strong understanding of evolution and adaptations. Sea Otters are not only a threatened species – they are a keystone species and as such are vital to whole communities. This book allows children to consider the adaptations that allow an otter to survive and complete its life cycle. Also, it is beneficial for parents to encourage imagination in children. Oliver can now relate to sea otters in a more lasting and profound way than if his parents told him he was silly pretending to be an otter.



Such strong connections that adults help foster in children – whether it be towards other humans or other species – lead to compassionate thoughts and actions when those children become adults.

*What's your favorite animal?*

I used to want to be a wolf biologist, so I guess I'd have to say the wolf, *Canis lupus*. Much of my love for the wolf comes from learning about them and their role in the environment and bemoaning their maligned status among most people. I love learning and writing about animals so that other people fall in love with them too.

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