

*August 22, 2018*

On this week's Ruttger's Nature Excursion we alerted our group of Bass Lake Nature Trail hikers that our sightings at this time of the season may include blooming Asters along the trail, a possible visit from a Solitary Sandpiper in the sandy areas of the retention pond, or song-bird migrants beginning their journeys south to warmer climes. The best unanticipated sighting of all however was by observant Adam (Ruttger's Guest) who alerted us all to mammals swimming in Bass Lake, heads surfacing, bodies undulating beneath the surface, along the shoreline near us, easily seen even without binoculars: Three River Otters! A mother and her two pups were hunting the lily pads and playing on logs, because we all know; if it's not fun, otters won't do it! An otter is perfectly adapted for its environment. It swims by propelling itself with its powerful 'rudder' tail and flexing body. Notice the webbed feet, plus its fur is water repellent to keep it warm and dry, while nostrils and ears close in the water. It can hold its breath underwater for estimated eight minutes. A group of River Otters can be called a 'romp' or a 'lodge', but when they are out swimming together they are called a 'raft'. Their sounds, distinctive "chips", were heard from the pups as they searched for their mother when they climbed onto a fallen tree near the beaver lodge. Thankfully, the two pups stayed long enough for LeAnn to get some photos. Thanks to Adam and all our attentive hikers for making these excursions around Bass Lake so much fun. And remember; be observant for nature's miracles, they're all around us!

- LeAnn and Ron