Goodbye to Janet and Hello to Aodhan

After 18 years with us Janet (Wildgoose) has left IOSF. She and her husband have decided to move to the Borders to be nearer their family. Of course we are sad to see her go but can understand her reasons. Janet has been with the Charity for so long and been a large part of IOSF’s growth into the worldwide otter conservation organisation it is today. No doubt many of you will have been in contact with her over the years regarding all matters relating to your sponsorship and other queries.

“Thank you Janet and we wish you all the best for the future”.

As you can imagine, it was certainly not an easy task to find a replacement. We had a number of applicants and as always they all had their attributes. In the end Aodhan Stoddart, a Skye-man, joined us two weeks ago. Aodhan is 18 years of age and very passionate about wildlife, and has already demonstrated his knowledge of IT. He has settled in very quickly and instantly became an enthusiastic and valuable member of our team. We hope he will be with us for many years to come.

So “Welcome to Aodhan”.

IOSF’s World Otter Day 2019

IOSF World Otter Day is this month – Wednesday 29 May!
So join in the fun and raise awareness of otters worldwide.

World Otter Day in 2018 was a massive success and people took part all over the world. So now we want to make this year’s even bigger!

Check out our map that is highlighting all the events across the world

https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1vIiqH9SpkuJUm2G_IHe1s5QywPtbpfqm&ll=3.0633702474431885%2C0&z=2
If you have an event that you would like to share with us then please email ben@otter.org as we love to hear about your ottery events and we want to add you to the map!

There is still time to take part. Here are some ideas on what you can do:

**Remember to post on social media**
- Social media is such a powerful tool to get our message across these days. We urge you to post on social media on 29 May (IOSF World Otter Day) to raise awareness of otters. Why not pick your favourite species of otter and tell your friends and social media followers their importance and why you love them so much.

**DON’T FORGET to use the #WorldOtterDay** and to tag IOSF in your post so that you can raise awareness for otter conservation and our cause.

Our social media handles are as follows:
- Facebook - @InternationalOtterSurvivalFund
- Twitter - @IOSF
- Instagram - @IOSF_Otters
IOSF World Otter Day 2019 Raffle
There is still time for you to take part in our World Otter Day raffle. One ticket is a £5 donation and you can buy as many tickets as you like. There are some great prizes and you could win an IOSF Otter Watching Day.

Tickets are available from Grace's JustGiving fundraising page (https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/grace-yoxon-raffle). Once your donation has gone through please make sure that you tick the box alongside “I'm happy to be contacted by Grace Yoxon" so that Justgiving can share your contact details with us and we can issue your ticket number/s.

The last entries will be accepted on June 5th 2019 and the draw will take place on June 6th 2019. All winners will be notified by email... remember, we need your email.

Good luck!

If you have already donated for tickets but not received your ticket numbers, then we do not have your email address. Please forward your JustGiving confirmation email to admin@otter.org and we will issue ticket numbers to you.

The Blue Otter narrow boat was again attending the Skipton Waterway Festival this year on 4-6 May, raising awareness about otters and funds for IOSF and World Otter Day.

Find out more about the Festival here: https://www.facebook.com/groups/314725109233927/

Blue Otter Boats have two luxury narrowboats to rent and these too raise funds for IOSF and otter conservation. Each boat has an otter mascot (photo right) ‘Otto’, who can accompany you on your travels for £1 per night, which is donated to IOSF.

Thank you Blue Otter Boats.

IOSF World Otter Day grants
Every year, IOSF offers three World Otter Day grants to help support otter events across the world. We were overwhelmed once again with applications for these grants and were delighted to be able to offer an additional grant – thanks to a generous donation from an anonymous donor. Here are the grant winners this year:

Location: Paumari, Brazil
In the heart of the Brazilian Amazon, Ana Maria Montes Ferro is dedicating an event to celebrate Giant and Neotropical otters, the two species that the local community in the area live alongside. During the day children will have the opportunity to become Giant Otters.
with masks and interactive games. Local communities will have the chance to learn about these species and how they can help maintain habitats and the ecosystem. This is a great event that will raise awareness of the otters, and other environmental issues, in one of the most biodiversity rich areas in the world.

**Location: Bao Bolong Wetland Reserve, The Gambia**
Karanta Camara is going to visit local fishermen and local communities that live along the River Gambia. This will raise awareness of the species and give the fishermen a chance to learn more about the otters and how they fit into their environment. This will hopefully help them to develop a different perception of the species. During this time, Karanta will teach observation skills so that we can obtain more data on otters within the area.

**Location: Kinabatangan, Malaysia**
Leona Wai plans to hold a human-otter conflict workshop with local fishermen. This will raise awareness of otters among the fishermen and find strategies to reduce the conflict that suit both parties. During the workshop, there will be a presentation on the ecology of otters and current threats to their survival. The fishermen will then be able to discuss their own examples of human-otter situations to help to find which strategies work best in their own area.

**Location: Vientiane, Laos – courtesy of an anonymous donation**
Kiengkai Khoonsrivong, who attended IOSF’s 2018 Laos workshop, will hold a day-long workshop on illegal trade in Vientiane and visit otter habitat. Forestry representatives and students will be invited to learn more about this and find ways of reporting on illegal trade.

---

**CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP - WHETHER YOU OWN A BUSINESS OR ARE EMPLOYED, does the company have a green policy/ support conservation? Then perhaps the company would like to consider becoming a Corporate Member with IOSF and supporting our work with otters.**

You can find out more information on our website [http://otter.org/Public/HelpUs_CorporateSponsorship.aspx](http://otter.org/Public/HelpUs_CorporateSponsorship.aspx)

---

**Team Otter - Join our Team Otter Clubs**
Have you tried the latest species quiz on the TEAM OTTER website?

Try your luck and see how much you know about the Asian short-clawed otter!

[http://www.loveotters.org/411038442](http://www.loveotters.org/411038442)

We have to say a massive thank you to Grace MacLean, Elsie Graham and Gemma MacKenzie for holding a fundraiser on Saturday 5 May and raising a massive £200 for IOSF and otter conservation. During the day the girls sold baking, hot and cold drinks as well as raffle tickets and a ‘Guess the number of sweets’ game at Skye Camanachd
ladies’ and men’s games in Portree, Isle of Skye. In case you don’t know, Camanachd is Gaelic for shinty, a game a bit like hockey played in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.

Everyone at IOSF would like to take the opportunity to thank Grace, Elsie and Gemma for their efforts!

And remember to keep your pictures, poems, etc coming – I love to hear from you.

**News from The Sanctuary**

In our last newsletter we still had otters in our care. This has now become two, in a month of mixed emotions. We will follow the order chronologically to save any confusion. Firstly, we finally managed to release the duo of Aeris and Beatha. Throughout their time together they had both shown very different characters, Beatha, being slightly confident and almost cheeky, whilst Aeris, was much more reserved and nervous.

They followed a similar trend on release. Beatha couldn’t have been happier to be home in Wester Ross. She shot out of her cage and almost immediately disappeared. We saw her run across the beach, lost sight of her, then re-spotted her swimming off into the distance.

Aeris was a lot more cautious and spent a considerable amount of time analysing her new surroundings. We have since had reports of sightings of what we suspect to be one of the otters looking healthy and feeding! Thanks to Phil and his family and Sarah and her team for their help getting these two back to the wild.

Next, and not so good, was the devastating news that little Storm didn’t make it. He had made such a promising start and seemed to be improving day by day until one Sunday we went to feed him and found him dead. A subsequent post-mortem revealed no obvious cause of death so it remains a mystery, making it even harder! We are well aware that we cannot save every otter but it certainly doesn’t make it any easier when we do lose one!

Then, some good news! About a week after we lost Storm it was time to release Mel back to the wild. We had identified the perfect spot and, as the sun shone on a beautiful loch, he went back to where he belonged. He took his time, like Aeris, to identify his new surroundings before disappearing into the bushes.

The remaining two otters, Oscar 2 and Karma, continue to grow. Karma particularly loves the octopus that is donated to IOSF by local fishermen and when there is a choice between
the two, she has no hesitation in opting for tentacles over tails!

We have also had two calls about juvenile otters being found where they shouldn’t be.

Firstly, on Tuesday 1 May we had a call from Ord on the Isle of Skye. We were already in the area so went straight to assess the situation. The otter appeared healthy and after much deliberation we decided that it would most likely rest up and eventually move on, which is exactly what it did. We are fortunate to have a number of people who live in Ord who were very happy to monitor this otter and they have since seen it swimming happily along the coast.

Over to Strath Conan, near Dingwall, and a couple of days later we had a report of a very similar problem of an otter in someone’s garden, which was right beside the river. Again the otter seemed to be perfectly healthy so the house owner kept an eye on it until it could go off when ready.

Sometimes it seems that we should step in and help but this is not always the best thing to do. Juveniles can sometimes end up in strange places, as in these two cases, and as long as they are not injured or at risk, it is better for them to be able to find their own way, providing someone can keep an eye on them.

Progress is being made on the new facilities. The building is now up and Paul and Ben are busy working on the fencing.

If you would like to support our cubs in the Sanctuary you can send a cheque marked “Hospital” on the back or make a donation online at www.ottershop.co.uk

**Fuzi** (©Rita Chapman all photos)
We have further news from the otter sanctuary but not our own. This time we are heading over to Kikongo Otter Sanctuary in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

This is Fuzi, a Congo clawless otter who follows in the illustrious footsteps of Mazu, Kamiya and Mweka in being cared for by Rita and Glen Chapman and their wonderful team of Congolese helpers, Delphin and Sico.
Fuzi, which is short for Kimfuzi meaning courage/bubbling energy, came to Kikongo five days after her mother was killed when fish pond harvesters discovered her nursery holt not too far away. She had had no food or water for five days, but seemed to be in remarkably good condition.

For the first two weeks Fuzi had a great appetite and put on over 400g – indeed Rita described her as being like a “fat sausage”! Then one morning Rita woke up to find her lethargic and refusing her bottle. Getting her to a vet is not an option in this remote part of DRC but Rita managed to get her some antibiotics and she seemed to respond. A couple of days later Fuzi appeared back to normal.

Unfortunately, in the end, as can be the case with wildlife rehabilitation, Fuzi didn’t make it! A few days later she was ill again and this time she couldn’t pull through in spite of round the clock care by Rita and her team.

In her short life Fuzi carried on the role of Mazu in raising awareness for otters in the area and the local kids discovered just how amazing otters are. In fact, Rita has a club for village boys where they do things like tree planting and one of those boys was involved with Mazu back in 2010 – see the photo right.

Thank you all for your donations to help with the care of Fuzi. Any donations/adoptions will still be sent to Kikongo Otter Sanctuary to help rebuild their current facilities. There is no doubt that another cub will find its way to Rita and she and the Kikongo Otter Sanctuary will be ready for them.

GIFT AID IS A SIMPLE WAY TO INCREASE THE VALUE OF YOUR GIFT TO IOSF - at no extra cost to you. If you pay tax in the UK, IOSF can reclaim the basic rate tax (25%) on your gift. So, if you donate £10, it is worth £12.50 to IOSF.

It is a simple process to sign up to Gift Aid - all you have to do is make a Gift Aid declaration. If you are donating online, just select the “Yes” option on the Gift Aid box on the donation form. Alternatively you can download and print out the Gift Aid Declaration on page 13 of our Fundraising Pack which can be found at:

Product of the Month @www.ottershop.co.uk

Our Otter Adoption Gift Box makes the perfect gift, and with a variety of options you will find the perfect one.

https://www.ottershop.co.uk/PBSCCatalog.asp?CatID=1563130

SAD NEWS
Chris Rockingham.
We are sorry to tell you about the death of Chris Rockingham of the PACT Animal Sanctuary in Norfolk. We first came across Chris and her husband George in 2015 when she phoned for advice on caring for an otter cub. Although dealing a lot with domestic animals, PACT also takes in injured wildlife. Chris cared for the cub, which she nicknamed “Hissing Sid” until he was big enough to be transferred to the New Forest Otter Sanctuary in Hampshire. We have stayed in touch ever since and Chris and George even came up to Skye to meet us.

She will be a loss to the sanctuary but we have no doubt that her work will continue through her husband, staff and volunteers.

Andy Law
Andy Law was a well-known member of the community of South Skye and had many strings to his bow including being a member of the Mountain Rescue Team and the warden of the RSPB hide at Kylerhea. He was also an excellent wildlife photographer and was kind enough to let us use some of his photos in our “Otters of the World” book.

Andy had been working on a nature trail for the RSPB when he suffered a severe heart attack. It is an indication of the type of person he was that the church was filled for his funeral and we all learnt so much more about the man and his past life from his friends and family.
A man of many talents, he will be missed.

**More Education Work in Nepal** (©photo Purna Man Shrestha/Resources Himalaya Foundation)
Purna Man Shrestha attended our workshop in China in September 2016 and since then he has been very active in creating more awareness of otters in his home country of Nepal. Recently there have been a series of awareness meetings on otters, run by Resources Himalaya Foundation. In Kathmandu on 17 April there was a meeting for students from Amrit Science College (ASCOL), Central Department of Environmental Sciences, Tribhuvan University, Golden Gate International College and the Institute of Forestry. There were a number of talks from otter experts from inside the country on the status of otters and their conservation.

On 3 May, Resources Himalaya Foundation held a talk by Prof. Paras Mani Acharya titled “Ecology and conservation of otters in Nepal”.

Both events have raised the profile of the species and drawn attention to potential conservation issues. We are grateful to Purna and Resources Himalaya Foundation for their continuing work for otters.

**News in Brief**

**Giant otter reintroduction in Argentina**
Previously extinct in Argentina, the giant otter is making a comeback. The arrival of two otters, a male from Budapest Zoo in Hungary and a female from Parken Zoo in Sweden, has led to plans for a reintroduction to the wild in the San Alonso wetlands.

The two otters, Lobo and Alondra, will be slowly introduced to one another before being released into the wild. The reintroduction of this pair will hopefully be the start of a thriving population which will restore a balanced ecosystem in the area and could serve ecotourism opportunities involving the species.


**Eurasian otter caught on camera in China**
For the first time, images of the Eurasian otter have been found in the Qionglai Mountains. The images, shot in Wolong National Nature Reserve in southwest China's Sichuan Province, confirm the species presence within the area. Numbers of Eurasian otters have dropped across the country but this new footage is some positive news. Experts believe
they have not been recorded in the area over the last few decades. The discovery shows an improvement to habitats within the area and investigations are ongoing to develop protection plans for the species.


Planned holiday area in Loch Lomond could be detrimental to otters
The plans for a large holiday complex on the shores of Loch Lomond are expected to be met with a record number of objections. An environmental impact survey has discovered that, as well as water pollution, damage to ancient woodland and red squirrel fatalities, the otter population in the area could be harmed by the new development.

IOSF has contacted the relevant authorities about the development and will keep you updated.


Raise FREE Donations... when you shop online. It’s simple and costs you no more than your shopping. Visit one of our charity pages to discover how easy it is for you to help otters even more:

easyfundraising
https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/iosfund

The Giving Machine
https://www.thegivingmachine.co.uk/causes/international-otter-survival-fund/

Regular and secure giving... at your fingertips
Text OTTER 10 to 70085 to donate £10 (or change the amount to however much you wish to give)
JOIN THE KILTWALK
Have you heard of the Kiltwalk? It is an opportunity for people from Scotland to raise funds for their favourite charity by taking part in a sponsored walk. Originally the Kiltwalk was to raise funds for children but now you can donate to any charity of your choice. So why not join with thousands of others for a fantastic walk and raise funds for the otters.

The first Kiltwalk of 2019 took place in Glasgow on 28 April and 13,000 Kiltwalk Heroes participated in the biggest EVER Royal Bank of Scotland Kiltwalk. But don’t despair, there are still three Kiltwalk dates remaining this year:

- 2 June in Aberdeen
- 18 August in Dundee
- 15 September in Edinburgh

All funds collected by a Kilt-walker receive a boost of 40% thanks to the generosity of The Hunter Foundation. So IOSF and otters will receive 140% of what you raise!

Find out more at https://www.thekiltwalk.co.uk/

Thanks
Thank you to everyone who has given generously during April, we are grateful for your support.

We also want to thank:
The Mrs D M France-Hayhurst Trust; The Rainforest Action Fund; Tesco Dingwall Bags for Help blue tokens and the Brevard Zoo, Florida.

Events
Visit our website to find out what might be happening in the otter world near you. Don’t forget, if you are aware of any otter-related events taking place, send us the details (Title, time, date, place and cost (if applicable), and we will post it on our Events page. http://otter.org/Public/Events.aspx

And, catch up with all the World Otter Day events on our interactive map here: http://www.otter.org/Public/Events_OurCurrentEvent.aspx

BECOME AN IOSF LIFE SUPPORTER - OUR SUPPORTERS ARE ALWAYS VALUED
BY US as a crucial source of support for the work that we are doing, and those of you that become life supporters are highly appreciated.

For a one-off payment of £350 you can become a Life Supporter and give your long-term commitment to help secure a better future for otters in the UK and around the world.

We will send you a certificate showing your life supporter status and you will continue to receive full updates in our newsletters, on all of the work that we are doing. https://www.ottershop.co.uk/become-a-life-supporter-c2x9466694
LEGACY - A LEGACY IS A GREAT WAY OF GIVING TO SOMETHING close to your heart and every gift will make a difference. After your family, have you ever thought of leaving something in your will to charity? Please consider remembering the International Otter Survival Fund in your will and help our work, protecting otters, to continue.

Including a legacy in your will ensures that your wishes are carried out, so it is important to discuss this with your solicitor. You can stipulate a specific restriction for its use, but remember that without restriction your legacy can be directed to where it is required most urgently.

Should you choose to provide a legacy for the International Otter Survival Fund in your will, we thank you and appreciate your support in this way.

This link [http://otter.org/Public/HelpUs_Legacy.aspx](http://otter.org/Public/HelpUs_Legacy.aspx) will take you to our dedicated web page concerning making a Legacy.

All photos are © to the name/s as indicated, otherwise ©IOSF

You can follow us on: [ ] [ ] [ ]

Annual Supporters’ Rates
UK and EEC Countries:  
- Adult: £24.00 per year  
- Child: £13.00 per year  
- Family: £34.00 per year

All other countries:  
- Adult: £30.00 per year  
- Child: £15.00 per year  
- Family: £40.00 per year

Life Membership (all countries): £350.00

Have you enjoyed reading this e-newsletter? Then please forward it to someone else and spread the word.

If you are reading this for the first time and would like to receive all IOSF mailings, click [here](http://tinyurl.com/p3irsmx) to sign up. Please be assured that we will never pass on your details to any other party and you will only ever receive emails from us.

Discover Ways You Can Help
There are many ways in which you can raise money and awareness to help the otters in our Fundraising Pack or find out what some of our supporters have done over the years in the online newsletters.

International Otter Survival Fund  
7 Black Park  
Broadford  
Isle of Skye IV49 9DE  
Scotland

Email: enquiries@otter.org  
Tel/Fax: ++(0)1471 822487

Join our IOSF mailing list. Click on this link: [http://tinyurl.com/p3irsmx](http://tinyurl.com/p3irsmx)