

otterreview

the International Otter Survival Fund

2018



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From Paul...

This is a very special Annual Review as it marks 25 years of IOSF. To all of our supporters and the Charitable Trusts who believe in us we have to say a very special thank you. Below is a copy of our very first newsletter produced in December 1993 – way before we had a website, Facebook page, Twitter site or Instagram. I'm sure you will agree that we have come a long way since then.



Back then, we had plenty of good ideas but we were very small. Who would have thought that in the 25 years to follow we would have cared for over

200 otters ourselves, helped with cubs and conservation projects in over 60 countries and held six training workshops in Asia and Africa. In this year alone we have had a workshop in Laos and been invited to Taiwan on positive otter conservation work and started building our new otter facilities on Skye. None of this would have been possible without YOUR help.

IOSF is set to continue this valuable otter conservation and research work. We are well structured and have a new young employee who is helping our charity move forward in an even more positive way.

Thanks to you all again and please stay with us on our next 25-year journey.

Have a great Christmas and New Year

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The Year at a glance

OCTOBER

Grace MacLean, aged 10, is announced as IOSF's Children's artwork competition winner

NOVEMBER

Philippine otter habitat saved from development

DECEMBER

IOSF is contacted to help with Smooth-coated otter cubs in Myanmar and Iraq. The latter was of the rare sub-species Maxwell's otter (*Lutrogale perspicillata maxwelli*)

JANUARY

IOSF receives its 200th otter at the otter hospital

FEBRUARY

Otter voted Britain's Favourite Mammal on British Mammals Facebook page

MARCH

KISTOC continues IOSF supported education work with children in Kenya

APRIL

IOSF Otter conservation workshop in Laos

MAY

IOSF visits 4 primary schools during the week of World Otter Day delivering our message on otters and environmental conservation

JUNE

The Austria Otter Cull is cancelled

JULY

IOSF is invited to Taiwan to discuss otter conservation and plans for a rehabilitation facility and smooth-coated otters receive legal protection in Indonesia.

AUGUST

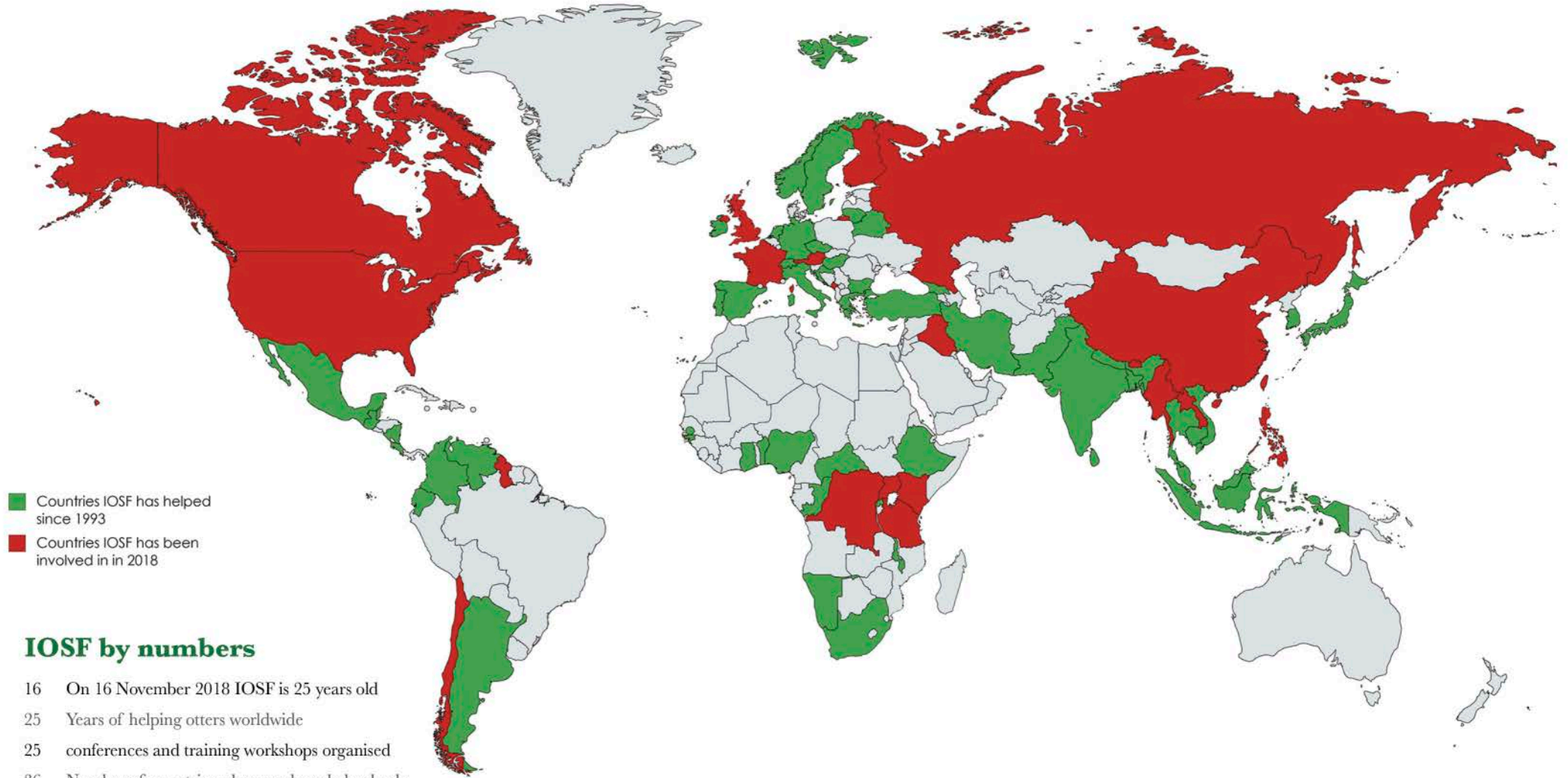
Spotted-necked otter signs are found in the Democratic Republic of Congo

SEPTEMBER

Work begins on IOSF's new otter facility on the Isle of Skye



IOSF global activity map



IOSF by numbers

- 16 On 16 November 2018 IOSF is 25 years old
- 25 Years of helping otters worldwide
- 25 conferences and training workshops organised
- 36 Number of countries where we have helped cubs
- 44 Number of countries where we have supported projects
- 56 Number of countries we have supporters
- 99 Number of cubs abroad that we have helped
- 207 Number of cubs and injured otters we have treated at our Skye hospital
- 30,000+ supporters worldwide

IOSF Resources online

Created with mapchart.net ©

We have many resources online available for download, especially educational material for children. There are now 10 translations of our short video available at www.otter.org resources page: German, Irish, Spanish, French, Swahili, Chinese, Japanese, Nepalese, Portuguese and English. We welcome you to use this video to promote otter awareness and if you think you can help with other translations, please get in touch.

World Otter Day – 30 May 2018

IOSF's World Otter Day has become a great opportunity for many people around the world who care about otters to be involved in raising awareness of otters, encouraging better conservation of otters and their habitats, and helping to raise funds to support this work.

Our fourth World Otter Day was celebrated on Wednesday 30 May 2018 and events took place in at least 26 countries, including India, Bangladesh, Russia, Portugal, Cambodia, Argentina, Brazil, Laos, Taiwan, Switzerland, Montenegro, Guatemala and Mexico. A wide range of people and organisations were involved and each year this is growing as awareness increases. Those taking part ranged from individuals and schools, to researchers and NGOs.

Yet again social media played a big part in extending the reach to more people. Education of our younger generation has been important too, building awareness in the guardians of the future.

We want to say 'Thank You' to everyone who took part and supported this



important day for otters. It is your participation that makes it a success and yet again, together we managed to get #worldotterday trending on Twitter. In fact

it was trending No 1 until it was knocked off by Britain's Got Talent!

IOSF was again able to offer three grants of £100 to help with the cost of an event for IOSF's World Otter Day. There was an enthusiastic response from applicants with a wide range of ideas for their celebration of IOSF's World Otter Day. This year's grants were awarded to:

UGANDA – Godfrey Lubanga, Uganda Wildlife Authority at Murchison Falls National Park: Carried out a survey for otters on a 10km stretch of the Nile river, east of Karuma and involved the local fishing community.

MONTENEGRO – Ninoslav Durovic, NVU Living Green: with the children's educational TV show, young reporters, TV Vijesti "Pčelice – Small Bees", discussed otters and IOSF's World Otter Day, visited local otter habitat in Skadar Lake NP to search for otter signs and installed a camera trap to help with future research there.

UK, WALES – The Cardiff University Otter Project: Streamed an

otter post mortem via their Facebook and Twitter pages, to provide an insight into the research carried out on otters in the UK.

IOSF's World Otter Day for 2019 will be Wednesday 29 May

Photographs from a small selection of events that took place on World Otter Day:

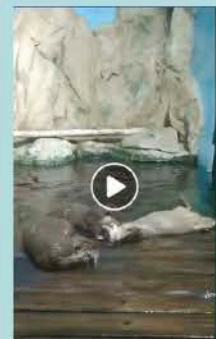
#worldotterday



There was a seminar about otter conservation at Jagannath University, Dhaka, Bangladesh



Learning about otters in Tanzania



World Otter Day was celebrated at the otter enclosure at the Aquarium of Cattolica in Italy



Otter education is fun on the Isle of Mull, Scotland



Kengki Khoonsrivong celebrated by raising awareness with friends and colleagues of the District Education and Sports Bureau in Viengxay district, Huaphan province, Lao PDR



There were lots of activities at Sorocabá Zoo, Brazil



Making origami otters at Chimelong, China

25 Year Otter Hospital Appeal



Thanks to the tremendous generosity of our supporters we are now able to replace our croft facilities. We are currently in the process of having the foundations laid for the building. Following this the building will be erected on site along with surrounding otter-proof fencing.

If conditions allow, we plan to leave the facilities until next Spring to allow regrowth of vegetation within the pen areas, before we put our first otter into the new enclosure.

We always welcome your support and if you would like to help with our hospital work you can send a cheque marked "Hospital" on the back or make a donation online at www.ottershop.co.uk

RAFFLE WINNERS

We are delighted to announce that the raffle raised almost £1,800 towards our Appeal to update the otter hospital facilities. This is a wonderful achievement and we would like to thank everyone who took part. The winners are:

Otter Watching Day for two people

– Lisa from W Yorkshire

Bronze plaque by David Burt

– Hazel from Warwick

Bottle of Abhainn Dearg whisky

– Andy from Inverness

Border Fine Art sculpture

– Cary from Yorkshire

Necklace by Saffron & Ana Phoenix

Jewellery – Nick from Skye

Framed painting by Jane C Kirkwood

– Jane from Staffordshire

Otters of the World book

– Myriam from Switzerland

IOSF otter adoption gift box

– Lloyd from London

Beanie sea otter soft toy – Scott from Kent

Supporter Renewal Rates

Increase the value of your gift to IOSF:

UK and EEC Countries:	All other countries:	Life Membership (all countries):
Adult: £24.00 per year	Adult: £30.00 per year	£350.00
Child: £13.00 per year	Child: £15.00 per year	
Family: £34.00 per year	Family: £40.00 per year	

If you are paying by standing order, please ensure you are paying the correct amount.

giftaid it

Otter Oscars

On 1 December 2017 we announced the winners of our second Otter Oscar Awards, and they are:

Special Award:

Vic Simpson

Sadly Vic died at the end of July but his widow, Jane, told us how thrilled he had been to receive his Otter Oscar. We could not think of a better recipient. When he "retired" in 2001 he set up his own Wildlife Veterinary Investigation Centre – the first of its kind in Britain. Due to his hard work and attention to detail he identified many causes of death which otherwise would have been overlooked. He also trained many others to carry on his work and produced a DVD showing his methodology for post mortem work. When Jane phoned to tell us the sad news we talked about the impact he had on so many people and she told me that one of his trainees had told her "there are loads of wildlife fledglings thanks to him". He will be greatly missed.



Vic Simpson receiving his award

© Kate Hills



Cockham Rise Primary School received the Children's award



Budjarn Lambeth received the award for Young People



Christina Ward - Community Achievement



Dr Nicola Okes received the research award



River Otter Ecology Project - Group or Organisation



Dave Webb - Photography

Nominations for the next Otter Oscars are open and you can find more information at http://www.otter.org/Public/News_StopPress.aspx. You can nominate yourself or someone else; young or old; amateur or professional; who has done a lot for otters. **Nominations must be received by Friday 23 November and results will be announced on Monday 3 December 2018.**

Asian Otter Conservation Network

The following is a summary of the report on otter work in the four regions of Asia.



Southeast Asia – Coordinator: Aad Aadrean

In Singapore the smooth-coated otter has received much public attention and appears as a mascot, as the species seems able to live together with Singaporean people in city wetlands. The situation is being monitored by Otter Watch. In Indonesia, legal protection has been extended to smooth-coated otters but we still need this for Asian small-clawed otters.

In other countries, however, there is no improvement in legal action yet, and trade in otters particularly for pets is increasing in the region.

Research and conservation projects have been carried out in Cambodia,

Malaysia and Indonesia and a new website for otters in the Bahasa language was launched: <http://berang-berang.com>. A wetland restoration in Kalimantan and Sumatra has been initiated by Wetland International Indonesia.



South Asia – Coordinator: Jyoti Bhandari

Research and public awareness projects have been carried out in Nepal and undergraduate students are being encouraged to carry out projects on otters. In India surveys have been carried out in Sikkim, and Eurasian otters were discovered in the forest of Balaghat, Madhya Pradesh, during a camera trap study for large carnivores. As may be expected, there is little information on otters in Afghanistan, but a paper was published in 2016 reviewing current information and highlighting the need for more work.



East Asia - Co-ordinator: Ling-Ling Lee

Field surveys have confirmed several new records of the presence of Eurasian otters in the region. In China, a camera-trapping survey and molecular study of faecal samples confirmed the presence of Eurasian otters on Hengqin island in Guangdong Province. However, interviews and transect surveys revealed a drastic decline in otters largely due to rapid urbanisation and critical habitats need to be strictly protected.

Images of otters have also been recorded by camera traps in Tibet. A female otter was found dead on Jeju island, South Korea – the last record

of otters here was nearly 400 years ago. The problem of otter cafés in Japan was brought to the attention of otter specialists recently by Sharne MacMillan in an article in *OTTER, the Journal of the International Otter Survival Fund Vol. 4*. Members of the public can interact and play with otters (usually Asian small-clawed otters), thus increasing the demand for pets. In Taiwan there has been a problem of otters being attacked by dogs which also carries a risk of disease such as rabies being transmitted to the otters.



Middle East – Co-ordinator: Omar Al-Sheikhly

Further research is continuing in Iraq, following the photographs of the endemic sub-species of smooth-coated otter (Maxwell's otter, *L. perspicillata maxwelli*) reported in *OTTER, the Journal of the IOSF Vol 3 in 2017*. The NGO, Iraqi Green Climate Organization (IGCO), produced an educational leaflet in Arabic about wildlife and biodiversity surveys in Iraq in cooperation with IOSF and the Iraqi Ministry of Health and Environment (IMoHEn). This was distributed among hunters, fishermen and Marsh Arabs. There have been no new sightings of otters in Iran, Israel/West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon or Syria.

The full report by Padma de Silva, Chair of the Asian Otter Conservation Network can be found in *OTTER, the Journal of the IOSF Vol. 4*, available at the Otter Shop.

African Otter Network

The African Otter Network (AON) has made some significant progress this past year and currently consists of 27 people from 10 countries. This is quite a substantial increase from the handful of people working on the continent before the IOSF workshop in 2015. The Network want to concentrate on emphasising wetland conservation and management for the good of wildlife and human communities: an approach called Living Wetlands.

Over the next 12 months, AON will continue to build a presence and distribution database for Africa's otters, prioritise research goals, expand its network of range-country conservation partners and focus efforts on developing the Living Wetlands approach.



Some significant recent accomplishments were:

- AON's website (africanottersnetwork.org) and Facebook page are spreading awareness of African otters across the globe.
- More education material has been developed including games, an ecosystem poster and flyers.
- James Leonard is monitoring the spotted-necked otter on Rubondo Island National Park in the Tanzanian portion of Lake Victoria.
- William Mgomo is still working closely with fishermen, villagers, school children and fish-pond owners in southern Tanzania and the Lake Nyasa shoreline.

The full report by Jan Reed-Smith, Director of the African Otter Network, can be found in *OTTER, the Journal of the IOSF Vol. 4* available at the Otter Shop.

Education

Team Otter

IOSF's Team Otter invites children all around the world to join and learn more about otters.

Team Otter is a group of children who want to learn more, do more and teach more about otters and the environment. In the group we can learn more about all species of otter and learn what everyone is doing to help.

Anyone can join our Facebook group "TeamOtter" and keep up to date on games, quizzes, competitions, news and much more all related to children and otters. The group is for schools, parents and children who want to make a difference. Some may wish to run their own club which meets weekly, monthly or in whatever time constraints you see fit.

IOSF's education officer, Ben, is always available for Team Otter groups or if anyone has any questions on otters or needs help with their event.

More information is available on the website (www.loveotters.org) or on Facebook.

Interactive Material

IOSF, along with our web designer Doug Lapsley, has designed a unique interactive World of Otters map on our website. This gives more information about each species, where they live, what they look like and much more.



We are now looking to add some more interactive and fun ways for people to learn about otters and their role in the environment.

UK Education Visits

IOSF's education officer, Ben, has been hard at work producing new material for children. Between 28 and 31 May he visited four primary schools on the Scottish islands of Muck, Eigg and Rum, finishing on the mainland at Arisaig. These schools are all very small (Rum 4 pupils, Muck 10, Eigg 8 and Arisaig 27) and the visits were met with great enthusiasm by the children and teachers alike. They enjoyed and learnt from IOSF's engaging presentation on the world's otter species, the food chain, what is harming otters and the environment, and how they can help. IOSF will continue this programme and we are already planning visits to more schools within the area.

All material produced is available to download from IOSF's Website (Resources for Children) for use around the world. The material has already been used in England and the USA.



Ben and the children at Rum school

INTERNATIONAL Kenya

KISTOC (Kisumu Science Teachers Otter Conservation Development Group) followed their successful phase 1 educational programme, a training seminar to develop more teachers, with an event for schoolchildren at Lake Victoria, Kenya. 97 students from 19 different schools attended and they learnt

about otters and other fauna, conservation and the environment in relation to the lake. Some time was spent in the classroom and this was followed by a trip to a problem area on the lake shores. Visiting a heavily polluted area allowed educators to emphasise how important it is to maintain healthy waterways for all species, including otters and mankind.

Laos

The workshop in Laos marks IOSF's fifth in Asia having already held successful workshops in Cambodia, Indonesia, Bangladesh and China. It was held at Nakai Nam Theun National Protected Area in April 2018 and was entitled "Conservation of endangered otters and their habitats in Laos through education and reducing illegal trade".

36 people attended, mostly from Laos, with six trainers from Sumatra (Indonesia), Taiwan, Sri Lanka, The Netherlands and the UK. Lao participants included representatives of the General Department of Forestry, who are responsible for conservation in the country; PAFO (Province of Agriculture and Forestry Office) and DAFO (District of Agriculture and Forestry Office); Anoulak and university lecturers.

Topics included an overview of the 13 otter species and the problems they face



Participants of the IOSF workshop in Laos

in the wild – habitat loss, pollution, and illegal trade; the importance of otters in a wetland ecosystem; identification, ecology and status of Asian otters; illegal trade, care and rehabilitation and field techniques. Very little is known about otters in Laos – they are known from Nam Et Phou Louey National Park (unknown species) and at Nakai they have records of Asian small-clawed and smooth-coated otters. During the workshop a field visit at Nakai revealed spraint and tracks of Eurasian otters, confirming the presence of this species. It is possible that the hairy-nosed otter is also present in Laos as it does exist in neighbouring countries, but this is as yet unknown.

Participants were keen to set up a Laos Otter Network, linked to the IOSF Asian Otter Conservation Network. They will identify priorities for future work including field surveys, social surveys, further investigation of illegal trade and education/public awareness.

Following the workshop, Paul and Grace Yoxon of IOSF met with Mr Asoka Rasphone, Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to discuss further steps. The Lao government is very supportive of the new Network and is also keen to develop a rehabilitation facility for rescued animals.

IOSF always feels that it is vital that these events are not just talking shops but that they result in REAL action. This is not a conference but a training workshop, equipping people to go on to achieve otter conservation in their own country, where they know the culture and best practices for dealing with communities.

It was encouraging therefore, when one participant said at the closing session "This is not the end ... this is the beginning."

Taiwan

Paul and Grace were invited to attend a workshop on the “Conservation and Re-introduction of the Eurasian Otter in Taiwan”. The aim was to look at factors affecting Taiwan’s otters, ways of conserving the existing population and to investigate the possibility of reintroducing the species.

It is not known if otters are still present on mainland Taiwan, so a project has been started to investigate this. They are on the island of Kinmen and DNA work has been done to look into the population.

Paul gave a presentation on the factors affecting the presence or absence of coastal otters (his PhD subject) and Grace spoke on otter care and rescue.

Road deaths are a big problem and warning signs and wildlife warning reflectors have been tried but there is too much traffic. The otters need to be kept off the roads by otter-proof fencing, tunnels, etc.

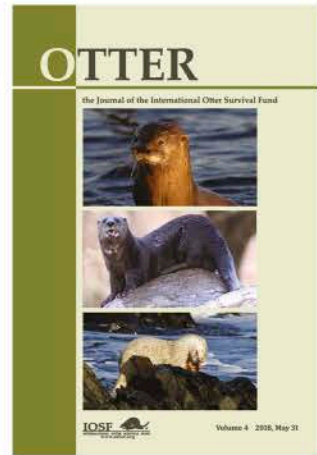
There are a number of lakes with plenty of prey but there is also a lot of new construction. The island has about 1.5 million tourists a year and such development can easily lead to water shortages. Some waterways connecting the lakes are choked with water hyacinth, which is another problem.

An important part of the workshop was meeting with local people, including representatives of Kinmen NGOs and local government, who are very supportive. It is vital for any conservation project that it works with the local people and organisations, so their input is essential.

OTTER

Journal of the International Otter Survival Fund

Volume 4 of *OTTER, the Journal of the IOSF* was published in May 2018 and is available both in print and digitally through the Otter Shop (www.ottershop.co.uk). It contains a broad spectrum of contributions from all over the world: preliminary observations of otters in Montenegro, new sightings in Sri Lanka, status and threats in Nepal, results of post mortem studies in Hungary, the issue of Japanese otter cafés, survey results from the Dee in Scotland and a review of records of albino otters. IOSF’s Paul Yoxon also looks at whether Eurasian otters really are flooding back in the UK. It also contains information and reports on the global work of IOSF.



Anyone wishing to submit a paper for Volume 5 should contact enquiries@otter.org for a copy of the journal guidelines for authors. The deadline for the receipt of papers is 1 February 2019.

Otter Rescue and Rehabilitation

UK

In the current year we have received nine otters – seven cubs, one sub-adult and one old adult. Three otters were released, two of which had arrived in the previous year. We still have four in care – the sub-adult was found thin and lethargic in Kylerhea (Skye) when it was about 10 months old. It had presumably lost its mother too early. It is now doing well and will be released at the normal age of dispersal – 12-15 months. The other three are cubs which will remain in care until next spring.



Kylerhea warily looking out from his pen

INTERNATIONAL

We receive many requests for help with otters from abroad.

Iraq: At the end of December IOSF was contacted by Omar Al-Sheikhly, our Middle Eastern coordinator, about an otter cub he had just received. IOSF identified it as a smooth-coat and therefore the very rare subspecies, Maxwell’s otter. The cub was called Maxwell, after Gavin Maxwell who wrote “Ring of the Bright Water” and who first identified the subspecies. IOSF continues to help and advise on the care of this rare animal.

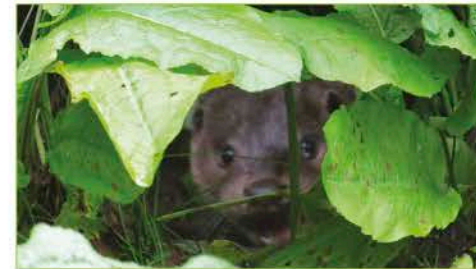
Myanmar: IOSF has been helping Ye Myint Lwin at Kyaukkyi who rescued three smooth-coated otter cubs from fishermen and has been caring for them at his elephant camp.

Chile: A marine otter (or seacat) is still in care after being rescued last year.

Taiwan: At the Taiwan workshop Grace gave a presentation on how we care for our otters on Skye and stressed the importance of keeping the animals away from the public so that they can be released. They want to set up an Otter Rescue and Education Centre as at present otters have to be flown for care at Taipei Zoo, 300km away.



Beatha and Aleris in theircroft pen



Mel being elusive

Four otters died: the old adult, a road casualty, two cubs, and they are awaiting post mortem.

Although we concentrate on otters, we also care for other wild animals and birds, such as hedgehogs, bats, seabirds and various small birds.

Research

UK

Skye otter population monitoring project

This is the fifth year of the Skye otter monitoring project and a number of sites will be visited in the next few weeks. So far all sites are positive but a complete report will be included in a future e-update.



Paul and Ben carrying out a section survey for the Skye otter population monitoring project

We are also continuing with our long-term camera trapping which is revealing a lot of data on behaviour and habitat use. It is interesting that in two sites otters are being seen far less in the summer but return in the autumn and over winter and spring.

Otter Post Mortems

Cardiff University continue to carry out post mortems on otters from Scotland and samples are collected for future analysis. This work is vital in order to monitor the health of our



otters, especially in view of the fact that otters in England and Wales are living much shorter lives than otters in parts of mainland Europe.

We are also supplying monthly spraint samples from the otters in our care, for PhD research.

INTERNATIONAL

Nepal: Rohit Raj Jha from Tribhuvan University received a small grant from IOSF to help with his study into “The Distribution Status of Smooth-Coated Otters and Anthropogenic Factors: A Case Study from Karnali Corridor, Nepal”. Some studies have been done in Nepal but they were largely focused inside Bardia National Park and little is known about the distribution and population status in corridor areas and outside the Park. His work looked at otters along the Karnali corridor which lies both



Rohit Raj Jha (circled)

inside and outside of the National Park. A report can be found in *OTTER, the Journal of the IOSF Vol. 4*, available at the Otter Shop.

Sri Lanka: A very enthusiastic group of young conservationists working for the Jetwing Vil Uyana worked hard to establish a safe haven for various fauna and flora by converting an abandoned area of paddy fields at Rangirigama, near the historical city, Sigiriya. In January Chaminda Jayasekara managed to catch an image of an otter in a camera trap both at night and in the daytime. These sightings add to earlier records of the presence of the Eurasian otter on the island and give an opportunity to gather more information on the declining population of otters in Sri Lanka.

More on this can be found in *OTTER, the Journal of the IOSF Vol. 4*, available at the Otter Shop.



Eurasian otter photographed at Vil Uyana, Sri Lanka

Illegal trade

The Pet Trade

Over the past 12 months the pet trade has really taken off, particularly in Southeast Asia, and the use of social media to portray otters as amicable, playful animals and the perfect pet is all too regular now. In a recent TRAFFIC article over 1,000 otters were found available online over a 4-month period in Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam and Malaysia. Much of the pet trade is trafficked through Southeast Asia with Thailand and Indonesia the most common sources. IOSF has also found adverts offering otters for sale in USA.

A simple search into a number of platforms will show you an otter doing things it was never meant to do and living in totally alien conditions. Asian small-clawed otters are the main species sought for pets but the three other species native to the area have also been found (Eurasian, smooth-coat and hairy-nosed).

Young otters are taken from their mothers who are often killed defending their litter. Cubs are notoriously difficult to rear and if they die they are simply replaced. In captivity, otters are subjected to a life of neglect and cruelty, far away from the life they were born into. As we always say, otters are wild animals and should be left as such.

Indonesia: Indonesia has had a demand for pet otters for a long time and this continues with the added pressures of other countries now interested in obtaining pet otters. But there is also good news from Indonesia. The Ministry of Environment and Forestry have signed a decree that means the smooth-coated otter is now fully

protected. This is a major step forward, as it means that three of the four native species are now protected. This is a major step forward, as it means that three of the four native species are now protected, but we must push for legal protection for the Asian small-clawed otter, which remains unprotected.

Japan: We reported in 2017's Annual Review about an otter café that opened in Kobe, Japan, which would likely drive the demand for pet otters. Since then, Japan's obsession with otters has started to boom. More 'otter cafés' are opening and in August 2018 an otter and two penguins were taken on to a train from central Tokyo to a station Southwest of the capital to mark the 50th anniversary of Keikyū Aburatsubo Marine Park in Kanagawa Prefecture! A staff member held the otter while passengers could take their photos. This is dreadful news as it will only drive up the demand from Japanese citizens to have their own pet otter.



Otters 'performing' at an otter cafe in Japan

© Yumiko Okamoto

Bangkok to Japan has now become the most used airline trade route in the world and of the 35 otters seized within Bangkok's international airport, 32 were destined for Japan.

Guyana: We are all too aware of the illegal trade problem across Asia but it has recently been brought to our attention that there is also illegal trade in giant otters in Guyana. Guyana has a similar demand for otters with pregnant females being a highly prized asset for traders. Christina Ward, of SavetheGiants.org, has made us aware of this problem of trade within the country and we shall be investigating this further together.

If you would like to contribute to IOSF's special Illegal Wildlife Trade Fund you can send a cheque marked 'Illegal trade' on the back or make a donation online at www.ottershop.co.uk

Conservation

UK

Kelp dredging proposals in Scotland

Marine Biopolymers have applied for a licence to dredge for kelp off the west coast of Scotland. The area in question is one of the best areas for Eurasian otters and is a region of outstanding beauty and exceptional marine biodiversity. Industrial machinery will rip up the kelp by the holdfast, totally destroying it and the ecosystem – invertebrates, fish, and all the way up the food chain to seabirds, seals and otters. In addition kelp acts to absorb carbon like the rainforest and helps to dissipate wave energy and thus reduce coastal erosion and further habitat destruction.

IOSF has been working with our partners, campaigners, stakeholders, environmental organisations, and marine biologists across the UK to stop this. And we are delighted to say that for once, common sense has prevailed and the Holyrood Committee has voted to ban it.

More on this issue at...

<https://www.facebook.com/nokelpdredging>

INTERNATIONAL

Proposed otter cull in Austria

After months of campaigning against the otter cull in Lower Austria the notice to allow the killing of 40 otters has been lifted. The Lower Austrian Government had decided to permit 40 animals to be killed and, only five days before the end of the legal cull, it was reversed. The delay in the decision meant that 20 otters were wrongfully killed within the area.

IOSF has been in correspondence with the Lower Austrian Government directly and also with Christina Wolf-Petre of the World Wildlife Foundation (WWF) who campaigned to end the cull. The permit was reversed due to the fact that the preliminary investigation by the authority was clearly flawed.

IOSF will continue to keep an eye on the situation so that it cannot be brought back next year.

The Philippines: We were delighted to hear from our friend Diana Limjoco, in the Philippines, that a planning application by Ocean Park had been abandoned. The proposed development would have been so large that it would have severely

damaged the natural environment of Turtle and Binunsalian Bays on Palawan. Palawan is regarded as the last natural frontier of the Philippines and is one of the top megadiversity hotspots in the world. The bays are an established marine sanctuary and were declared a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO.

Diana lives with her otters in Turtle Bay where the mangroves act as sea life nurseries, and form a habitat for various assorted native and unique species. These include Asian small-clawed otters, which are only found on Palawan and so are very vulnerable.

It seems that the Ocean Park proposal became too heavily political for the Seven Seas Properties to continue, but they do still plan to put up an inflatable water park with kayaking eco tours in the mangroves. However, Diana says "at least it will have a much lower impact than four Hotels, one with underwater rooms, and captive sea creatures". Diana has been asked to help to produce a more sustainable eco-tourism answer for the bay, which will also help livelihoods.

Thanks to all who signed Diana's petition, which gained almost 17,000 signatures. It shows that if we do stand together we can make a difference.



Turtle Bay area where otters' lives are threatened

© Diana Limjoco

Help IOSF

What can YOU do?

As Paul said at the beginning, when IOSF began 25 years ago we had no idea of all the great things which IOSF would go on to achieve. We just felt that we had to do SOMETHING, and with your help we have grown to what IOSF is today.

In the same way, some of our supporters feel that they can't do much but each and every one of us can do SOMETHING.

Social media has been a great development to help to spread the word about otters so just by sharing IOSF posts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram you ARE doing something.

On our website (www.otter.org) you will find a page on "Help Us" with many ideas on what you can do.

Like most charities, fundraising is important and there are suggestions for young and old – coffee mornings, sponsored events, dances, bakery and art competitions, school sales, etc. If you want to hold a raffle please contact enquiries@otter.org for details of IOSF's licence.

Remember IOSF in your will – leave a legacy to help otter conservation work continue in the future.

You can donate through Facebook, either by hitting the "Donate" button on IOSF's Facebook Page (@InternationalOtterSurvivalFund) or setting up a fundraiser for us on your page or ours.

When selling on eBay, think 'eBay for Charity' and donate through your sales.

Using Text Giving, UK followers can

donate to IOSF from their phone. Simply text IOSF and the amount you wish to donate (e.g. IOSF £10) to 70070.

If you have a business or are senior management, IOSF welcomes Corporate Sponsors.

But there are also other things that you can do:

- **Keep us up to date with otter-related news**
- **Forward your e-updates to friends and family**
- **Download and print the IOSF leaflet on our website and put it in shops, libraries, etc.**
- **Speak about otters in your school's "Show and Tell"**
- **Enter a picture, photo or poem into various general competitions to tell others about otters**
- **Calling all children – join Team Otter!**
- **Think of the otters when choosing a gift for a birthday or other important day**
- **Get involved in IOSF's World Otter Day**

We all love otters and together we CAN make the world a better place for them and for all species.

Payroll Giving



Donate to IOSF through Payroll Giving

Payroll Giving is a flexible scheme which allows anyone who pays UK income tax to give regularly and on a tax-free basis to the charity of their choice. You can now use this system to donate to IOSF.

Payroll Giving donations are deducted before tax so each £1.00 you give only costs you 80p, and if you are a higher rate tax payer it only costs you 60p. For example, if you donate £5 per month it costs the basic rate tax payer £4.00 (the taxman pays the rest!) Payroll Giving (also known as Give As You Earn or workplace giving) is a valuable, long term source of revenue, providing a regular income to IOSF to help us budget and plan ahead more effectively.

For more information go to www.givingonline.org.uk/International-Otter-Survival-Fund_2623/index.html

Social Media

Use social media to raise awareness of otters. Join us on Facebook (@InternationalOtterSurvivalFund), Twitter (@IOSF) and Instagram (@IOSF_Otters), share our posts and tell us what you are doing to help.

Other ways you can help

Check out our Fundraising Pack
www.otter.org



You can donate something through our Amazon Wish List www.amazon.co.uk



Turn your old car into a donation for otters through Giveacar www.giveacar.co.uk



Search the internet through www.everyclick.com



Earn FREE donations for IOSF when shopping online:



www.giveasyoulive.com

Easyfundraising.org.uk



www.thegivingmachine.co.uk



Evergreen Insurance Services
evergreeninsuranceservices.co.uk/international-otter-survival-fund/

Evergreen will give up to 25% of their commission income at no cost to you.



Are you in America? Contact us through enquiries@otter.org to donate through CAF America



PASS IT ON

Recycle your otter news by passing it on to friends and family; your local library or school; doctor's surgery or hospital; vet's waiting room, etc. Don't waste it, spread the word.

Thanks

Every year there are so many people to thank for their help in our conservation work.

Some work in education, research and otter rescue. Others help with fundraising and spreading the word. We appreciate the efforts of each and every one of you. Unfortunately we cannot name you all but we do have to make a special mention of the following:

Wolfgang and Traudl Gettmann and their otter Nemo, who sadly died in February of this year. Also Jenny Briggs, Dennis Furnell, Budjarn Lambeth, Princess Michael of Kent, Daphne Neville, John Noorani, Jonathan P. Tyler, Judith Young, Corry Motors.

Our Board as usual, has been very supportive of our work providing a lot of help and advice. So we would say thank you to Jackie West, Andrew Cameron, Andy Rothwell and also Samantha Holland, our copy-editor for the Journal and this Annual Report. Our work in Asia is led by Padma de Silva, our Asian coordinator and Chair of the Asian Otter Conservation Network together with our four Asian regional coordinators: Aad Adrean, Ling-Ling Lee, Jyoti Bhandari and Omar Al-Sheikhly.

And, of course, we have to thank the various organisations who have so kindly supported our work:

Action for the Wild (Colchester Zoo), Anderson-Rogers Foundation, Animal Friends Insurance, Dr Elizabeth Calder Memorial Fund, Craignish Trust, The William Dean Trust, The Beryl Evetts and Robert Luff Animal Welfare Trust, The Late Mrs Margaret Guido's Charitable Trust, The Mary Heap Charitable Trust, The Henderson Charitable Trust, Henry C. Hoare Charitable Trust, David King Charitable Trust, Lush Charity Pot, Alice Noakes Memorial Charitable Trust, Nurtured by Nature, The Pollyanna Pickering Foundation, Post Code Lottery, The Shirley Pugh Foundation, Rainforest Action Fund, The Roger Raymond Charitable Trust, The Rufford Foundation, St Marys Charity, Share Gift, The Spear Charitable Trust, Spartan Explorer Scout Unit, James Thin Charitable Trust, The Roger Vere Foundation, The Gladys Wightwick Charitable Trust, J and JR Wilson Trust.

Otter News on PDF

Help IOSF to put more money into otter conservation by reading your OtterNews online.

If you are happy to do this please email us at enquiries@otter.org quoting your sponsorship number, and reduce our printing and postage costs. If you prefer, we are still happy to send out a printed copy to you.

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ABOUT IOSF

IOSF is one of the world's leading otter conservation organisations and is the only UK charity solely dedicated to the protection and care of all 13 species of otter, based on over 20 years of scientific research in the UK and around the world.

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Charity number SC003875

IOSF is regulated by The Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR). IOSF has been vetted and approved to receive grants from CAF America; if you are a US donor wishing to make a tax-deductible contribution to support us, you may give to CAF America and recommend that the grant be made to IOSF.

Who's who at IOSF

Patron: Julian Pettifer | Presidents: Dennis Furnell, Laurence Broderick
Advisory Board: Andrew Cameron, Jackie West, Andy Rothwell
Head of Operations: Dr Paul Yoxon | Education and Research Officer: Ben Yoxon
Co-ordinator: Janet Wildgoose | Development Officer: Helen Stephenson
Asian Co-ordinator: Prof Padma da Silva
Asian Regional Co-ordinators:
SE Asia: Aad Adrean, Indonesia | South Asia: Jyoti Bhandari, Nepal
East Asia: Ling-Ling Lee, Taiwan | Middle East: Omar Al-Sheikhly, Iraq
Journal copy-editor: Dr Samantha Holland

A NOTE WHEN WRITING:

Could we please ask you to give us your sponsorship number whenever you write as it does help us to find your records more quickly. Thanks.



Otter Shop

We have an exciting selection of otter-themed gifts and goods, with something to suit every pocket and occasion. To see our full range visit www.ottershop.co.uk or follow the links on our website www.otter.org. Sales enquiries and orders can also be made by telephone (01471 822487).



Christmas Card: pack of 10 with envelopes. 1 pack £6.99
Greeting: With Best Wishes for Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.