

otterreview

the International Otter Survival Fund

2019



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From Paul...



I can't believe it's been 26 years since we started IOSF on that cold frosty day of 16 November in 1993. Since then we have moved on a lot

and our new otter facilities were constructed this year and are already in use. Thanks to all of you who donated for this and through Wildcrowd, but a special thanks to Jenny Briggs and the Nature Save Trust. Our first otter to use it is Karma who is enjoying the warmth of the new sleeping box and her extended outrun.

We also had good news in that CITES have upgraded the status of the Smooth-coated and Asian Small-clawed Otters. This trade restriction is vital for the survival of the two species, which have seen numbers in the wild plummet by at least 30% in the past 30 years. This decline is believed to have accelerated significantly in recent years due to a fad in Asia, and especially Japan, of keeping Asian Small-clawed Otters as pets. However, as always CITES will only protect them if it is enforced.

Earlier in the year we said goodbye to Janet and we would like to thank her for all she did to help IOSF. We then welcomed Aodhan, who has fitted in very well and is working on putting cameras in the new pens and streaming them to our website. We feel this will enable our supporters to watch the otters in care whenever they want without any disturbance to the animals.

Princess Michael of Kent has been a great supporter of IOSF's campaign against the illegal wildlife trade and we have been very grateful to her for her help. So we were very honoured when she invited Grace and I to the Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace on 15 May. This was in recognition of 25 years of caring for otters throughout the world and in particular for the work we are doing against the illegal trade. It was a beautiful day – in stark contrast to the weather when we attended a similar event at Holyrood Palace in July 2017. The Queen was represented by HRH Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall and Princess Anne and there was also an opportunity to wander around the gardens of the Palace.

As I write we are planning our first otter workshop in South America. This will be in Guyana and will focus on Giant and Neotropical Otters. Few people are working on these species and there is little data on numbers and distribution. Capacity building through training local people will provide more information and enable communities to earn extra income through regular surveying and monitoring. They can also develop sustainable eco-tourism to the benefit of the people, the otters and the environment. I will give you an update on this when I get back.

All of us at IOSF would like to thank you again for your help, which is such an incredible encouragement to us. Please keep supporting us and have a great Christmas and New Year.

The Year at a glance

OCTOBER

IOSF are on BBC Countryfile featuring the release of rescued otter, Ray, on the Isle of Skye.

NOVEMBER

On 16 November IOSF celebrates its 25 years of the conservation of otters.

DECEMBER

Paul and Grace Yoxon find their first ever cub in need and take it back to the rehab centre. She was later called Karma.

JANUARY

Phnom Tamao's new Smooth-coated Otter is named through IOSF's competition. The winning name was Sangha, meaning 'handsome' in Khmer, Cambodia's national language.

FEBRUARY

William Mgomo visits local fishermen and schools in Tanzania, and Peter Nyamenya, of KISTOC, surveys attitudes of local people to otters in Kenya.

MARCH

IOSF's education officer visits Broadford Primary School, the closest school to IOSF HQ, to talk on otters and environmental conservation.

APRIL

IOSF says goodbye to long-serving employee Janet, welcoming Aodhan to the team.

MAY

Paul and Grace attend Queen's Garden Party at Buckingham Palace; IOSF World Otter Day takes place on Wednesday 29th with events in over 30 different countries

JUNE

IOSF releases the new interactive game "Otter Madness", highlighting the threats faced by otters.

JULY

The proposed Austrian otter cull is halted thanks to pressure from a number of organisations including IOSF.

AUGUST

CITES upgrades the listings of Asian Small-clawed and Smooth-coated Otters meaning they have a higher protected status; IOSF's new facilities are opened with Karma being the first occupant.

SEPTEMBER

Bangladesh Team Otter Club started



Asian Otter Conservation Network

IOSF has again had a busy year in Asia and the Network now has an active Facebook page where people post photos and videos. We do not post exact locations of otter sightings as this could lead to disturbance and possible hunting threats. However, we do encourage people to send otter records or incidents of possible illegal trade to IOSF at enquiries@otter.org. This information is very important.

The listing of Asian species of otters was an important part of the August meeting of CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora). Until recently the only species of Asian otter listed in Appendix I of CITES was the Eurasian Otter (*Lutra lutra*). IOSF has been working with various other organisations to upgrade Asian Small-clawed (*Aonyx cinereus*) and Smooth-coated Otters (*Lutrogale perspicillata*) from Appendix II. At the August meeting it was announced that both of these species are now also Appendix I, which is the highest protective status CITES offers. Now we need to push for the upgrading of the Hairy-nosed Otter (*Lutra sumatrana*) too.



While this is obviously great news and hopefully deters trade in these two species, it is essential that the laws are enforced. It will close certain loopholes allowing trade and draw more attention to the precarious state of Asian otter populations. We must also remember that it only relates to legal trade and there is much we still need to do to prevent the illegal trade.

I have been working personally with Chaminda Jayasekara at Jetwing Vil Uyana, in Sri Lanka, who reported sightings of otters in Volume 4 of *OTTER, the Journal of the IOSF*. He has set up his “Protect Eurasian Otters project and has a team of enthusiastic young conservationists.

The following is a summary of activities compiled by the four regional co-ordinators of AOCN.



Southeast Asia: Aad Aadrean, Indonesia

Threats from the Pet Trade – See under Illegal Trade section **Increased Legal Protection in Indonesia**

Smooth-coated Otters are now fully protected in Indonesia but as yet there is no protection for Asian Small-clawed Otters. This species is most involved in trade as pets so we will continue to work for such protection to be extended to these otters.

South Asia: Jyoti Bhandari, Nepal



Nepal - Jyoti Bhandari carried out a study of the conservation status and awareness of Smooth-coated Otters in Bardia National Park. Pramila Thapa, is conducting an otter survey in Shuklaphanta Wildlife Reserve and Aarati Basnet is working to assess bygone and current evidence of otters in Budigandaki River.

India - Sayanti Basak's Master's degree thesis is "The resource use of Smooth-coated Otters in the Sub-Himalayan river systems of Uttarakhand." Surther et al published their work on the historical and current distribution of Smooth-coated Otters in Gujarat.

Bangladesh - Aziz published his research on Asian Small-clawed Otters in the Sundarbans mangrove forests, where they have been affected by chemical pollution from several recent cargo incidents.

Pakistan - Ahmad et al looked at habitat suitability for Eurasian Otters and found that there were very few areas with high habitat suitability.

East Asia: Ling-Ling Lee, Taiwan



China - In January 2019 a photographer spotted a live otter in Shanxi province. According to China News, monitoring over the past year has shown stable activity of Eurasian Otters in Sanjiangyuan National Park.

Taiwan - An otter workshop was held in Kinmen to discuss how to mitigate the impact of water-related "Forward-Looking Infrastructure" on otters.

Middle East: Omar Al-Sheikhly



Iraq - The Iraqi Green Climate Organisation took part in UN World Wildlife Day focussing on Maxwell's Otter (*Lutrogale perspicillata maxwelli*), a sub-species of the Smooth-coated Otter.

Lebanon - A case study was carried out looking at attitudes of local people in Hima Anjar/Kfarzabad towards otters and how this can be improved by working with local fish restaurants.

A full report on AOCN by Padma de Silva, and the study by Ramadan-Jaradi et al in Lebanon, can be found in *OTTER, the Journal of the IOSF Vol 5*.



African Otter Network

The African Otter Network (AON) was originally founded by a loosely organised group of otter biologists, wetland experts, and conservationists. It has now launched the Power of One initiative which aims to identify, support, and encourage local citizens in their efforts to preserve freshwater ecosystems for the benefit of wildlife and people. We often feel overwhelmed as individuals by the prospect of making a difference in conserving our ecosystems. But, the Power of One idea, one person, one initiative, one project, can have great benefits beyond one action. Here are the stories of two people working to make a difference in Tanzania.

James Leonard Mazelele, is employed as a chimpanzee tracker on Rubondo Island National Park, in the Southwest of Lake Victoria. The island is also home to Spotted-necked and African Clawless Otters. In his spare time James monitors the Spotted-necked Otters and we now know much more about their population status. He also shares his otter knowledge with colleagues and friends in other towns along the shore.

William Mgomo is a ranger in a game reserve in Southern Tanzania. He was introduced to otters at the IOSF 2015 African Otter Workshop and since then he has been extremely active in creating otter awareness in the community. He has interacted with more than 1,000 people in schools and fishing communities. Conflict at small, single-owner fish ponds is of concern and mitigation efforts at these fish ponds is being tested in one location.



© William Mgomo

A full report by Jan Reed-Smith, Director of AON, can be found in *OTTER, the Journal of the IOSF Vol 5*.

Education

Many problems faced by otters around the world are due to a **LACK OF AWARENESS**. IOSF is working globally to help people understand the importance of otters in the environment and offer steps to help them live peacefully side by side.



TEAM OTTER

Team Otter is IOSF's education programme aimed at reconnecting children and young people

with otters, nature and the environment around them.

As part of the programme IOSF is establishing Team Otter clubs worldwide to help children feel a sense of ownership and pride towards otters and a sense of duty to their care. They meet to learn about otters, wildlife, the environment and what we can all do to help. As more clubs are created, IOSF's Education Officer will help them to connect together with other clubs from different countries, continents and cultural backgrounds to share knowledge on their species and what their group is doing. This will give the children more of a worldwide awareness of otters and environmental conservation and how they are all working together.

UK

IOSF's Education Officer continues to reach out to children to deliver our message on otters and environmental conservation. In March, he visited our local primary school, Broadford, and spent the day delivering five sessions to different age groups.

In June he spent an evening with



© Badcaul Primary School

Ullapool Sea Savers (USS), the 2018 IOSF Otter Oscar winners. The following day, joined by the USS team, he visited Badcaul Primary School. Afterwards Ben and USS headed to Scoraig for field work so the group could see the correct techniques for otter spotting and how to identify their signs.

Since then USS has become part of IOSF's Team Otter club programme and Broadford is also hoping to start a club.

ABROAD

Bangladesh - Delip Bisharga Das, who attended our 2014 workshop, visited Pogose School, Dhaka, telling the entire school about otters and the environment. At the end of the day an IOSF Team Otter club was set up involving fifteen children. The



© Delip Bisharga Das

club aims to meet every month to discuss otters, conservation and what can be done to help conserve local wildlife and the environment. The Team Otter club will be led by Delip, supported by IOSE.

Cambodia - Kouprey Express, an environmental education NGO, celebrated World Otter Day by teaching over a thousand children about the benefits of otters in the environment. Using IOSE's education pack they learned about the four species in their country, the otters' role within the environment and what they can do to help. During the day they visited Phnom Tamao Rescue Centre, friends of IOSE, who have a rescue centre for wildlife, including otters. This gave the children a chance to see live otters to help them understand more.



©Kouprey Express

Guyana - In November 2019, IOSE is travelling to Guyana to conduct our first training workshop in South America. We will join with Save the Giants, who are already working with local communities, to deliver a capacity building workshop to encourage local communities to monitor, conserve and protect their local populations of Giant and Neotropical Otters. We will also visit local schools with the aim to starting a Team Otter club.

Kenya - In Kenya, Peter Nyamenya of KISTOC, who attended IOSE's Tanzanian workshop, has been co-ordinating a survey of different groups of people on Lake Victoria to discover more about their knowledge and attitudes towards otters. The survey involved fishermen, research scientists and students. As expected, fishermen did not like otters as they affect their catch. There was very little knowledge of otters amongst research scientists and students and only in areas like Dunga beach is there any awareness, so this must be extended to other areas.

A full report by on this survey can be found in OTTER, the Journal of the IOSE Vol 5.

Tanzania - Our good friend, and IOSE Tanzania workshop attendee, William Mgomo continues to work closely with fishing communities. In February he went to talk with fishermen from Linda Beach and three primary schools. He was pleased to find that the fishermen seem to have little problem with otters and they were interested to hear more about the animals and their behaviour. They were also interested to hear about the eco-tourist benefits of otters in Lake Nyasa. He then talked to over six hundred students at Mbamba Bay, Chinula and Ndengere primary schools and stressed the role of otters in the ecosystem and the importance of preserving our environment. Martin Bayo continues to work with local universities teaching students about otters



©William Mgomo

and part of his presentation teaches the basic techniques of otter surveying.

Montenegro - Nino Djurovic, of NVU Living Green, created seven IOSF Team Otter clubs across the country. The newly formed 'Team Otter' or 'ZaPazi Vidru' (meaning "Observe Otters" in Montenegrin) have taken part in programmes such as IOSF World Otter Day and continue to work on otters.



IOSF Resources

We have a number of resources available on our website which are all free to download at https://www.otter.org/Public/MediaAndResources_Resources.aspx

This includes videos in a number of different languages as well as English – French, Swahili, Chinese, Japanese, German, Spanish, Nepalese, Portuguese, Irish, Danish, Khmer, Sinhalese, Montenegrin, Italian and Arabic.

We also have our information leaflet available in German and French and are very grateful to those who have made the translations for us. If you think that you are able to help with more translations please do contact us.

There are also special children's resources to download free including the IOSF Education Pack, games and puzzles, etc at https://www.otter.org/Public/MediaAndResources_Resources_ForChildren.aspx

Interactive Material

During 2019 IOSF released its new interactive game, **Otter Madness**. The game allows users to act as an otter and guide 'Olga' back to her cubs by avoiding a number of threats. The threats include hunting, pollution and lack of prey as Olga makes her way through the river and land habitats. **Otter Madness** raises awareness of threats faced by otters globally and includes a number of otter facts!



Playing 'Otter Madness'

World Otter Day – 30 May 2019

IOSF World Otter Day was launched to raise awareness and support for otters and their conservation worldwide. Since 2014, the event has continued to grow and this year was again a massive success.

We had events in over 30 countries including Brazil, Cambodia, Chile, Costa Rica, Germany, India, Italy, Laos, Montenegro, Nepal, Pakistan, Poland, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, The Gambia, Uganda, Vietnam, USA and UK. These ranged from school events, fundraisers, community awareness and much more, all aimed at helping in the conservation of otters across the globe.

As with many similar events, social media played a massive part in spreading awareness for the day and **#WorldOtterDay** was trending at **7th in the world** at one stage!

We would like to say a massive **THANK YOU** to everyone who took part in whatever capacity in IOSF World Otter Day this year! Each and every one of you has helped us to achieve this.



As with every year, IOSF offered three World Otter Day grants and was fortunate enough to be able to offer a fourth thanks to

a kind donation from an anonymous donor. This year's grants were awarded for the following projects:



© Otters Up

Brazil - In Paumari, Ana Maria Montes Ferro, of NGO Otters Up, visited a local community and had an otter celebration with the whole community, raising awareness for the species and their benefits to the environment. The children had fun 'playing like otters' while the rest of the village learned about food webs and the role of people and otters in our ecosystem.



© Kiangkai Khoonsrivong

Laos - Kiangkai Khoonsrivong, who helped so much in our Lao training workshop in 2018, held

another workshop aimed at raising awareness for otter conservation and to reduce the illegal trade in the country.



© Leona Wai

Malaysia - Leona Wai delivered a human-otter conflict workshop at Batu Puteh, Kinabatangan, Sabah, focussing on the local fishermen. The aim was to enhance knowledge and awareness of otters in Sabah, plan solutions for any human-otter conflict and also to inspire fishermen to participate in community-based conservation.



© Karanta Camara

The Gambia - Karanta Camara visited local fishermen to encourage them to preserve their local otter populations. Since then a group has been established to continue otter monitoring in the area.

#WorldOtterDay

A small selection of other events that took place



California, USA - Riverbank Elementary School's first grade students learned all about the different species of otter



Gujarat, India - Suthar Akshit ran an awareness programme about Smooth-coated Otters at Kotna village near the Mahi River



Isle of Muck, Scottish Hebrides, UK - the primary schools from Muck and Eigg joined together to have a fun day learning more about otters and their habitats



Islamabad, Pakistan - Pakistan Wildlife Foundation collaborated with Faroozan TV at a local school, where Miss Minahil Safwan of PWF delivered a lecture on the ecological role of otters

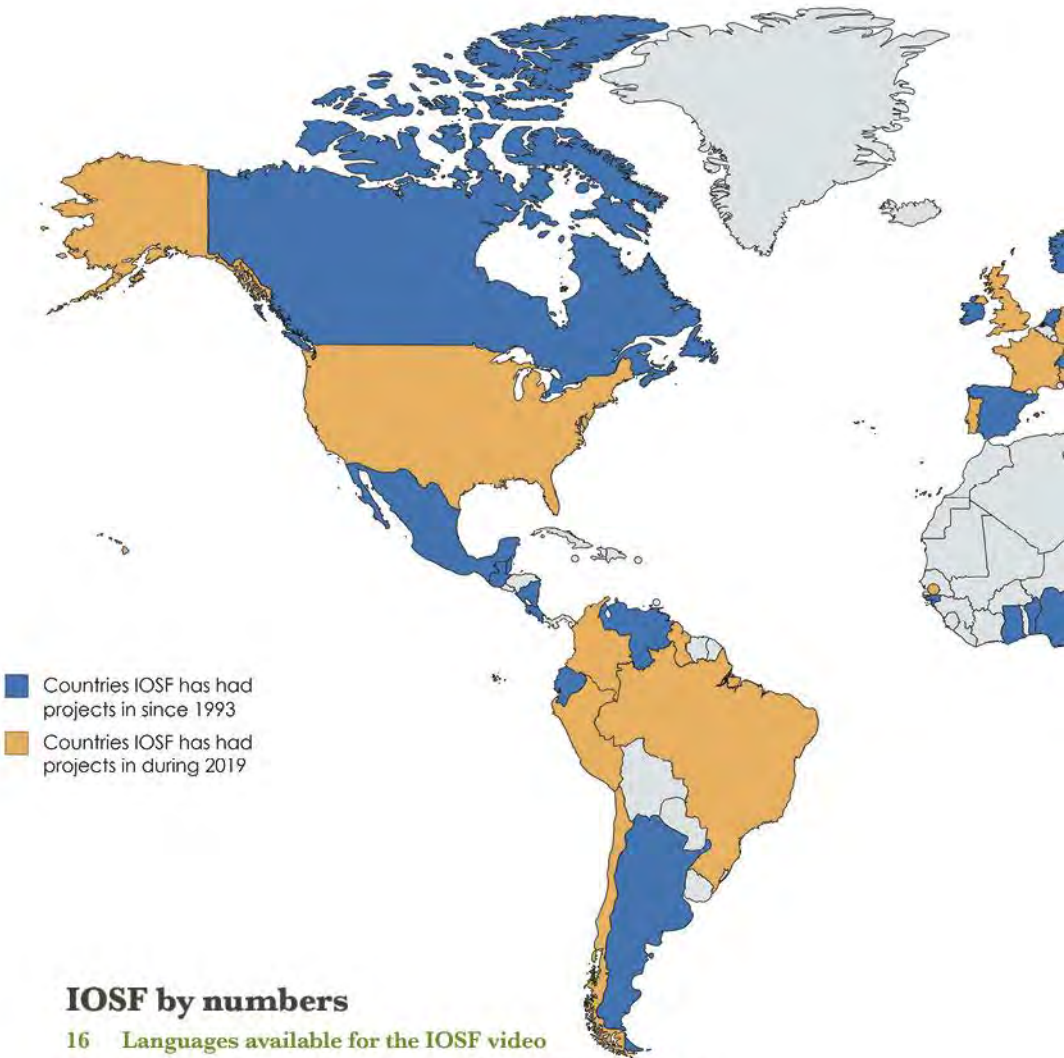


Dambulla, Sri Lanka - Chaminda Jayasekara visited to teach the children all about otters in a fun and engaging educational workshop



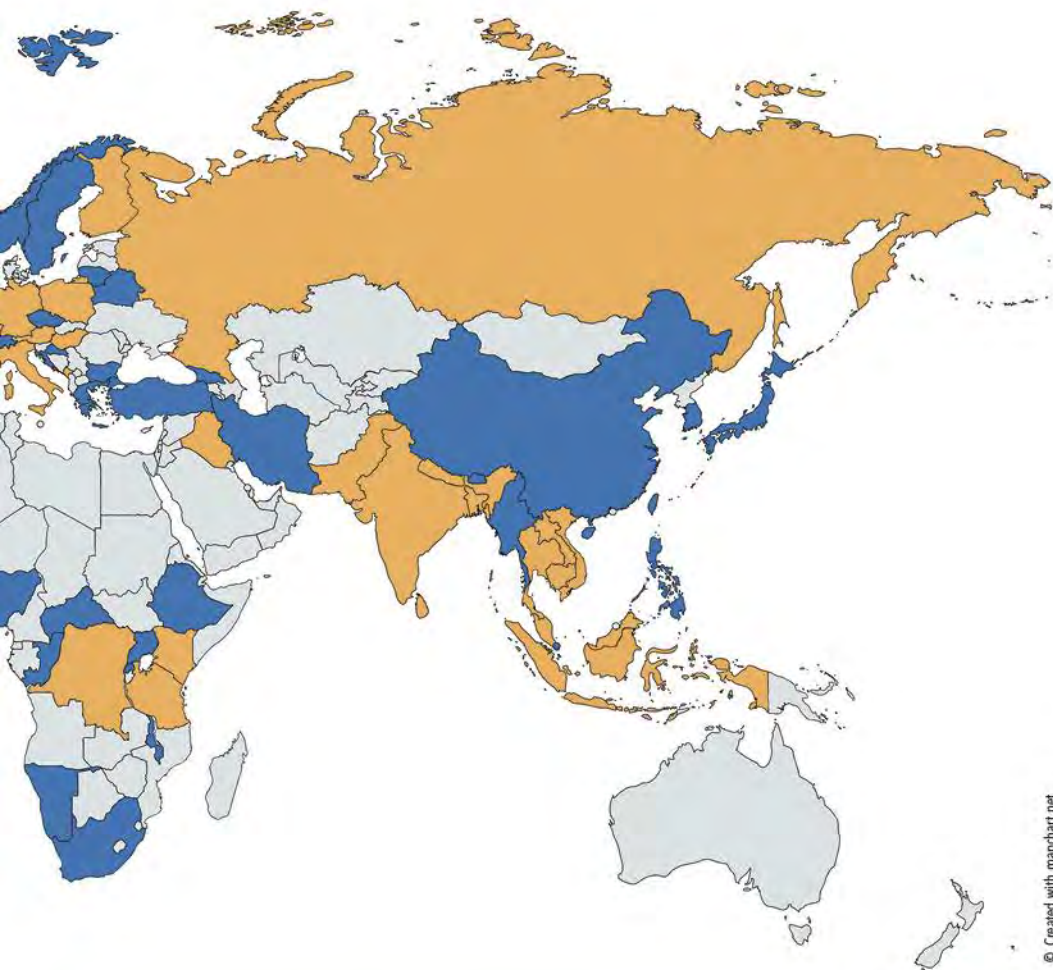
Morogoro, Tanzania - Martin Bayo organised a presentation to the students and staff at Sokoine University of Agriculture

2020 IOSF World Otter Day will be Wednesday 27 May



IOSF by numbers

- 16 Languages available for the IOSF video
- 18 Number of countries represented at IOSF workshops
- 26 Years of helping otters worldwide
- 38 Number of countries where we have helped cubs or injured otters
- 44 Number of countries where we have supported projects
- 64 Number of countries we have supporters
- 105 Number of cubs or injured otters abroad that we have helped
- 210 Number of cubs and injured otters we have treated at our Skye hospital
- 30,000+ supporters worldwide



© Created with mapchart.net

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.

Otter Oscars

Following another super response to this event and having given each submission careful consideration, on 1 December 2018 IOSF was delighted to announce the winners of the IOSF Otter Oscar Awards 2018. And, here they are:



©Janis Patterson

©Janis Patterson

Ullapool Sea Savers (USS) Young People's Award. (Scotland)

Special Award: Dr Donald Jefferies

Over many years, Dr Jefferies has worked on the status and conservation of the otter in the UK. Don identified the problem that pollution from organochlorines was having a drastic effect on predators, including the otter. He also worked with the Otter Trust to bring otters back to large parts of England. Don is an unassuming man who has done so much for otters and we are delighted to recognise this with our Special Award.



©Sarah Jane Dickenson

Dr Donald Jefferies, with his grandsons, receives his Award. (England).



©Jason Bedelph

Children's award - Ruby Bedelph. (Australia)



Chaminda Jayasekara - Community Achievement Award. (Sri Lanka)



Hans C. Ring - Photography Award. (Sweden)

The next Otter Oscars are now open for nominations and you can find more information at https://otter.org/Public/News_OtterOscars.aspx You can nominate yourself or someone else; young or old; amateur or professional; who has done a lot for otters.

Your nominations must be received by Friday 22 November and the results will be announced on Monday, 2 December 2019.



OBC Chinchimen - Group of Organisation Award. (Chile)



The Research Award went to Reckendorf, Anja; Siebert, Prof. Dr. Ursula; University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover, Foundation / Habbe, Dr. Britta; Krueger, Dr. Hans-Heinrich; Aktion Fischottererschutz e.V. / Oberlercher, Thomas; Fladung, Erik; Institute of Inland Fisheries Potsdam-Sacrow / Goeckemeyer, Steffen; Chamber of Agriculture Lower Saxony / Hahn, Albrecht; Association of Inland Fisheries and Pond Hosts in Schleswig-Holstein. (Germany)

Otter Rescue & Rehabilitation

UK

This year we have received four otters, three cubs and one juvenile, which was found in someone's kitchen near Dingwall. Sadly, one of the cubs died but the juvenile was able to be released after a short stay at the Sanctuary. Four other otters have been released and we currently have two otters in care - one is due to be released soon but the other is still too young and so will go in the spring.



Karma on thecroft

Our purpose-built facilities have now been completed. Until now the otters have had to be moved at each stage but the new enclosures include both nursery and pre-release pens separated by a gate. So in future the cubs will move to a nursery pen and when they are ready the gate will be opened to allow them access into the larger pen. They will continue to use the same sleeping box and when it comes to release we will simply close them back in which makes catching them easier!

Again, many thanks to everyone who enabled us to achieve this as it will greatly improve conditions for the otters for many years to come.



Release beckons for Oscar2



Aleris and Beatha are now back in the wild



Hairy-nosed otter

© PTWRC

International

As always, we are often contacted about otters in care abroad and to date we have helped with 106 animals.

Cambodia: Last autumn, Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescue in Phnom Penh received two otters from monks at a pagoda in Pursat. Monks are often given wild animals by kind people who do not wish harm to the animals, but cannot or do not want to care for them themselves. As the monks cannot refuse these 'donations', they often end up at Phnom Tamao. One otter was a Smooth-coated Otter and the other a female Hairy-nosed. This is the only centre in the world which has ever cared for Hairy-nosed Otters and it is vitally important to provide freshwater for this species so this is brought in daily from Phnom Penh.

Vietnam: Six rescued Asian Small-clawed Otters cared for by Save Vietnam's Wildlife (SVW) were released to the wild and another six are to be released later in the year.

Thailand: Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand are also caring for several Asian Small-clawed Otters which have been rescued from the pet trade.

Democratic Republic of Congo:

The first otter cared for by Rita Chapman and the Kikongo Otter Sanctuary was a Congo Clawless Otter called Mazu. She became famous throughout the country and did a lot for otter awareness. In April Rita received another cub called Fuzi, five days after her mother was killed by fish pond harvesters. We exchanged photos with Rita of our cub Storm which arrived at about the same time. Sadly neither Fuzi nor Storm survived, but it helps to be able to share experience and learn from each other. Rita is now carrying out essential maintenance work on the otter enclosure.

Chile: Just after New Year, we received an email from Rinaldo Verdi, of Chinchimen, as he had just received a Marine Otter (Seacat) cub which was only five days old. The female cub, Kalfu, had initial problems because of the diet but when this was changed she started to thrive. She is now nine months old and goes to the sea each day to prepare her for release.



Kalfu

© OBC Chinchimen

Finland: Pääkaupunkiseudun Eläinsuojeluyhdistys RY is an animal protection association which cares for injured and orphaned wildlife. Suvi Haikala contacted us when they received a very small Eurasian Otter, which was about two weeks old. Her eyes were still closed but she quickly began to grow and develop. The cub was called Littana and she was later joined by a bigger cub called Poikanen (cub in Finnish).

Germany: Geranda Olsthoorn has reared otter cubs before and one Sunday in August she was called for an otter road casualty which was now lying in a garden. It was a female and in spite of her injuries she was still trying to care for her two cubs. Unfortunately the female and the smaller cub did not survive but the bigger cub fought for its life and is now eating fish. Naturally she was called Sunday!



© Pääkaupunkiseudun Eläinsuojeluyhdistys RY



© Geranda Olsthoorn

OTTER

Journal of the International Otter Survival Fund



Volume 5 of *OTTER*, the Journal of the IOSF was published in May 2019 and is available to download free on the Resources page of our website (<https://www.otter.org/Public/MediaAndResources.aspx>) or a paper copy is available at the Ottershop

(www.ottershop.co.uk). It contains a broad spectrum of contributions from all over the world: First photographic documentation of Smooth-coated Otter in Mahi River, Gujarat, India; Preliminary study on the occurrence, distribution and traditional knowledge of otters in the Lake Victoria Basin, Kenya; Towards a cooperation between the Eurasian Otter and local people of Hima Anjar/ Kfarzabad, Lebanon; Preliminary results of first-ever otter survey in Chornobyl Exclusion Zone, Northern Ukraine; A survey of the Eurasian Otter on the River Don, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, 2017-18; The Eurasian Otter – A review of the current world status; The frequency and size of main prey items taken by the Eurasian Otter on the Isle of Harris, Scotland; Recent records of the Eurasian Otter in the Mercure-Lao River Valley, South Italy.

It also contains information and reports on the global work of IOSF.

Anyone wishing to submit a paper for Volume 6 should contact enquiries@otter.org for a copy of the journal guidelines for authors. The deadline for the receipt of papers is 1 February 2020.

Research and Conservation

UK

Skye otter population monitoring project: This is the sixth year of this project and most sites have been checked and proved positive. A complete report will be included in a future e-update. Our long-term camera trapping programme continues to reveal new data on behaviour and seasonal habitat use.

Water of Leith: IOSF is working with the Water of Leith Conservation Project and a student from Edinburgh University who is starting a research project looking at distribution, habitat use and diet of otters in that part of the city.



© Charlotte Neary

Eurasian otter in the Water of Leith

Otter Post Mortems: Dead otters are still sent to Cardiff University for post mortem and samples are collected for future analysis. There were recent reports that English rivers are so polluted that it is unsafe for people to swim in and this is clearly worrying for otters. Is this why otters in England and Wales are not living as long as those in parts of mainland Europe?

St Vigean's Conservation Network: In November we were contacted by Ralph Couatts of this Network, who was very concerned as an otter had been killed on the road near his home in Arbroath. The culvert

under the road had been blocked with bars many years ago and so the otter could not go underneath. Ralph contacted Angus Council and they promised to make their culverts more otter-friendly.

International

Austria: On 25 June, plans for a second otter cull were overturned by the Austrian state government (Landesverwaltungsgericht NÖ), following complaints by WWF and support from various organisations, of course including IOSF. Now there are plans to examine the otter situation more closely. The latest surveys suggest that populations in Lower Austria have continued to increase, and quoted figures are 800 - 1,100 animals. However, of course we know that these are based on spraint surveys and therefore give no accurate indication of numbers.

IOSF will continue to monitor this situation to ensure the cull is not reinstated.

Asia and Africa: More information on research and conservation can be found in the Asian and African Network reports, earlier in this issue.

Illegal Trade

As reported in last year's Annual Review, the pet trade continues to be a problem for otters, predominantly, Asian Small-clawed Otters. Trade in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand is increasing and many of the animals are sent to Japan and the US. The highest repeat route for trade is from Thailand to Japan with numerous captures of illegally traded animals.

Young otters are taken from their mothers from a very early age, some still to open their eyes, and forced into a life of cruelty and neglect. From experience we know that rearing young otters is very difficult but should the animal die

they will simply go and get another one!

Social Media

The growing use of social media to showcase 'cute, playful' otters continues to drive the demand for pets. If you do a quick search for otters on any platform it doesn't take long to find an otter eating from a dog bowl, in a harness or doing playful acts that are alien to their natural wild life. Furthermore, searches on some social media platforms soon reveal otters for sale as pets, despite 'laws' preventing sales of live animals on these platforms. It is easy to find a young Asian Small-clawed Otter for sale from as little as £40!

Social media platforms need to take more responsibility for the part they play in the illegal otter trade and ensure they are doing more to police 'adverts' offering otters for sale. IOSF continues to attempt to contact social media platforms but as yet have had no reply.

Indonesia

IOSF supported the Scorpion Foundation to

investigate a facility claiming to breed otters. This was done to support an article on the illegal trade by the New York Times. The investigation showed some of the conditions in which the otters were being kept. These were totally unsatisfactory and unlikely to encourage the animals to breed. The origins of the otters in the facility are unknown.

Indonesia continues to be an area where the trade and demand for pet otters is high. Social media groups are set up to facilitate the trade of otters, along with other wildlife.



© Yumiko Okamoto

Otter Café in Japan



© Scorpion Foundation

Japan

"Otter Cafés" continue to be a problem and are raising demand for the species as pets. As previously reported, these cafés allow the opportunity for customers to play with otters that have been taken from the wild.

There have been attempts to smuggle otters into Japan which have been prevented. For example, in January two men were arrested for trying to smuggle a baby Asian Small-clawed Otter which had come from Thailand.

Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam

Various organisations have rescue and rehabilitation centres to help otters taken from the illegal trade be reintegrated back to the wild. For more information please see the Rehab section.



© Scorpion Foundation

Help IOSF

What can YOU do?

Well, absolutely anything that you are able to and it does not have to be on a grand scale. We realise that it is not possible for some people to take part in or organise events, but most of us use social media these days and this is a great way of spreading the word and raising awareness. So please, if you can do something, please share our social media posts on Facebook (@InternationalOtterSurvivalFund), Twitter (@IOSF) and Instagram (@IOSF_Otters)

Follow us on Social Media



Visit our “Help Us” web page at

www.otter.org where you will find our downloadable fundraising pack. There are many ideas and suggestions for all ages but, of course, the only restriction is your imagination. If you want to hold a raffle please contact enquiries@otter.org for details of IOSF’s licence.

Other ideas:

- **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 (also available in German and French) and put it in shops, libraries, etc.**
- **Help to translate our leaflets and videos into other languages**
- **Speak about otters in your school’s “Show and Tell”**

- **Enter a picture, photo or poem for 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 have lots of free resources for you to download and use, including ideas and games for children, on <https://www.otter.org/Public/MediaAndResources.aspx>.

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

Facebook Fundraisers are proving a popular option to replace birthday presents or to collect donations for a charity event.

Selling on eBay? Please opt to support International Otter Survival Fund with your sales – eBay for Charity.

If you have a business or are senior management, IOSF welcomes Corporate Sponsors (https://www.otter.org/Public/HelpUs_CorporateSponsorship.aspx).

Let us make the world a better place for otters and all species.

Payroll Giving



payroll giving
in action



giving online

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

Become a regular giver to help otter conservation

<https://donr.com/iosf> 

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
<https://www.charitycar.co.uk/international-otter-survival-fund>



Search the internet through
www.everyclick.com



Earn FREE donations for IOSF when 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

We really could not do it without you... our supporters. Whether you are a fundraiser, an educator, working to protect and understand otters, or you just care for otters, you are all our otter champions. No matter how big or how small, every effort is appreciated and allows us to continue in our work.

We thank you.

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

Animal Friends Insurance, Brevard Zoo, The Marjorie Coote Animal Charitable Trust, Craignish Trust, Amersfoort Zoo, The Beryl Evetts and Robert Luff Animal Welfare Trust, The Mrs D M France-Hayhurst Foundation, The Hugh Fraser Foundation, The Late Mrs Margaret Guido's Charitable Trust, Susan H Guy's Charitable Trust, William Haddon Charitable Trust, Hebridean Island Cruises, Henry C Hoare Charitable Trust, Lush Charity Pot, The Mitchell Trust, Nurtured by Nature, Oklahoma City Zoo Trust, Rainforest Action Fund, Tesco Bags for Help, Thistledown Trust, The Walker 597 Animal.

And a special mention of the following:

John Noorani, Jonathan P. Tyler, Judith Young, HRH Princess Michael of Kent, Wolfgang and Traudl Gettmann, Dennis Furnell, Daphne Neville.

During the course of the year the IOSF Board supports and advises us, so we would say thank you to Jackie West, Andrew Cameron and Andy Rothwell. Padma de Silva is also on the Board and is our Asian coordinator/Chair of the Asian Otter Conservation Network and works together with our four Asian regional coordinators: Aad Adrean, Ling-Ling Lee, Jyoti Bhandari and Omar Al-Sheikhly. Our Journal copy-editor is Samantha Holland and does a great job, often at short notice.

Supporter Renewal Rates

Increase the value of your gift to IOSF:

giftaid it

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

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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.

Registered address: 7 Black Park, Broadford, Isle of Skye, IV49 9DE, Scotland
Tel: 01471 822 487 Fax: 01471 822 487 Email: admin@otter.org Web: www.otter.org

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 & Research Officer: Ben Yoxon
Development Officer: Helen Stephenson | Data & Communications: Aodhan Stoddart
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:

Whenever you contact us, please provide your sponsorship number as it does help us to find your records more quickly. Thanks.

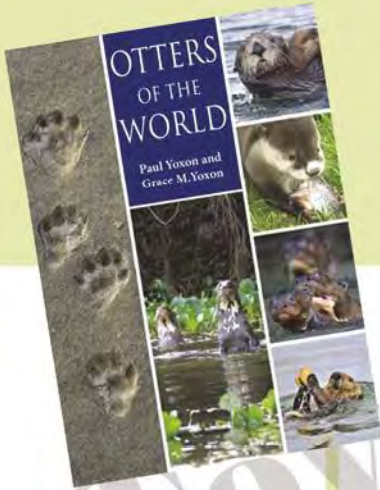


OtterShop

www.ottershop.co.uk

01471822487

Check out our selection of otter-themed products for the perfect gift idea for any otter lover. There is something to suit every pocket and occasion. Visit the Otter Shop to see our full range.



IOSF Christmas Card:
Pack of 10 with envelopes.
Greeting: All good wishes for Christmas
and a Peaceful New Year