



Otter News No. 122, April/May 2021

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Click on this link: <http://tinurl.com/o3lrsmx>

You will probably have noticed that there has been a bit of a gap in our e-updates. This is because there is so much happening here at IOSF with our plans for World Otter Day and the international Webinar. We have also been asked to join other Webinars in India, Bangladesh and Zimbabwe.

Of course we still have the otters in the Sanctuary and are actively fundraising for the new hospital.

You will read more about all of this later on but first ...



It's World Otter Day #WorldOtterDay

It's the day for us all to celebrate otters and raise awareness to their conservation, something so important to all of us!

There are many things people are doing for this special day:

- Posting on Social Media – there is still time to do this.
- Social media is such an important and great way to get our message across for otters and their conservation. We encourage you to post on social media, you can post a picture, tell us why you love otters and why you want to help. Use your imagination and showcase these amazing animals.
- Make sure you use **#WorldOtterDay** and link to IOSF accounts. If you are struggling for what to say on social media for World Otter Day - gain some inspiration from IOSF's WOD Social Media suggestions here <https://www.otter.org/images/WorldOtterDayPDFs/214.pdf>

**Please Be Sure You Do Not Post or Share Anything That Is, or May Encourage, Pet Otters.
WILD. MEANS. WILD.**

If you are holding an event

No matter how big or how small, each event is as important as the next. There is such a variety of things happening even in these difficult times: fundraisers, sponsored run, talks, walks, webinars, etc.

Please email ben@otter.org to tell us about it so that we can add it to our World Otter Day map below showing all the amazing events we already know about!



<https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1jY0IkVbvUEnrAfpS23rzhiWTF76tmeY7&ll=14.43847101769755%2C16.96273845000074&z=2>

IOSF WEBINAR

A special event for today is the IOSF "Otters of the World" Webinar.

We are thrilled to be joined by wonderful otter experts for this celebration, who will tell us about some of the amazing species we share the planet with.

Here is the programme:

Morning session (09.00-11.30 UK Time):

PAUL YOXON, INTERNATIONAL OTTER SURVIVAL FUND: "Global status of otter and the work of IOSF"

PADMA DE SILVA: "Otter conservation in Asia"

WOO CHEE YOONG: MALAYSIA NATURE SOCIETY - "Research on the Kuala Selangor otters (including the rare hairy-nosed otter) and the work of the Malaysian Otter Network"

SAVE VIETNAM'S WILDLIFE: "Rehab of rescued pet otters, the illegal trade and the threat to wild otter populations"

OMAR AL-SHEIKHLY: "The legendary Maxwell's otter, distribution, threats and conservation work in Iraq"

Evening session (17.00 - 19.30 UK time):

MEGAN ISADORE, RIVER OTTER ECOLOGY PROJECT: "Supporting conservation, one otter sighting at a time"

PABLO HERNANDEZ: "Conservation challenges for the Neotropical otter in Mexico"

BRIDGETTE SAN MARCO, SAVE THE GIANTS: "Giant otters in Guyana and the work of Save the Giants"

BEN YOXON, INTERNATIONAL OTTER SURVIVAL FUND: "Team Otter and the importance of children's environmental education"

WILLIAM MGOMO: "Otters, communities and reducing human-otter conflict in an important African wetland habitat"

We are delighted to have so many otter experts talk about their own expertise in their respective areas and can't wait to hear about all their work.

Otter Translocations to The Netherlands

Last month we included a piece entitled "Austrian Otters Saved from the Cull Moved to The Netherlands". This was about the translocation of otters from Austria to the Biesbosch area of southern

Holland to boost the population there and save them from being killed by the authorities in Austria.

This sounded like a perfect solution: otters aren't killed and the population in the Netherlands gets a boost, both in terms of number but also in genetics.

But these things are never that simple and Hans-Heinrich (Henry) Krüger contacted us to point out some flaws in the project. We have known Henry for many years. For over twenty years he worked at the Otter centre of Aktion Fischotterschutz at Hankelsbutel in Germany and now he runs his own consultancy (<https://www.mustela-consult.com/>)

Henry believes other important factors must also be considered before beginning on such a programme:

"I want to say some words about the article in the last newsletter about the translocation of Austrian otters to the Netherlands. You compliment this project as otter protection. But I think that this project is very counterproductive for otter protection. The Austrian otter hunters/fishermen get the possibility to say: Look, we are the best hunters ever, we don't brutally kill these hated otters, but we send them to the Netherlands where they can have a happy life and we are doing good work!

In reality there is no need to bring otters into the south of the Netherlands. The Dutch population is spreading and some years ago the German population reached the Dutch border so there will soon be otters in the south of the Netherlands and in Belgium without such a project. The translocation is only helping the otter hunters, not the otters! If we praise such a project it is hurrah from the wrong side!

In Germany the otters are spreading in all areas and we have to work harder to prevent otter culling than to build mitigation measures to help the otters.

Henry

Henry raises a very valid point as it could lead to fishermen in many areas saying if they can do that there someone can move ours too. As the Dutch population becomes more stable fishermen there will also complain and demand action.

One good part of the project is that it does bring new genes into the Dutch population, but if they were able to spread naturally from Germany they would do that anyway.

Mankind is very good at thinking we can control wildlife and the environment but we can't even control our own species! We bring animals in and then complain when they spread. Non-native species often out-compete the native species and then we have another problem. There are so many examples of this happening worldwide.

We must always make sure that whenever we consider such a project we look at ALL possible outcomes and knock-on effects.

IOSF always welcomes comments on our articles so please send them to enquiries@otter.org

Notorious Wildlife Smuggler Sentenced in Nepal

For many years, the Nepalese authorities had been trying to catch Kunjok Chhiring Tamang, who was wanted for smuggling parts from animals such as tigers, leopards and otters. In fact back in 2006 five people were arrested for possession of five pieces of tiger skin, 36 pieces of leopard skin, 238 pieces of otter skin and 113 kilograms of tiger bone. Four were found guilty with three receiving a sentence of seven years in prison and fined Rs 1 Lakh (100,000 Rupees), and the fourth jailed for five years. They confirmed that Kunjok



Eurasian otter ©Andy Coventry

was the mastermind behind the operation and as such the potential punishment was a fine of Rs 5-10 lakhs (500,000-1,000,000 Rupees) or imprisonment or 5-15 years or both. However, as he was not present at the trial his case was put on hold.

Kunjok is also known as Kunjok Lama, and has citizenship of three countries – India, Nepal and Tibet. He was finally arrested last July by a team from the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) from Kathmandu and his case was heard by the district court Rasuwa from the Langtang National Park.



Detail crop – otter skin
(Photo: Conservation International (Cambodia))

Naturally Kunjok tried to squirm his way out of the case by denying his identity but this was rejected and finally he was sentenced to seven years in prison and a fine of Rs one lakh.

The Park had been pushing for the maximum penalty, especially as he was the organiser behind it but at least this man is now behind bars. We also hope that it will act as some sort of deterrent to others involved in the illegal wildlife trade.

https://ekantipur.com/news/2021/05/06/16202803590498173.html?fbclid=IwAR0wdR8ZUm0V1JDISd1wMMWE8h3NSHDQTdTzh0f_Nyxh2KMnkSD9XUbAjc

Another Rescued Pet Otter (photos ©SUMECO)
We were recently contacted by SUMECO who had heard about another pet Asian small-clawed otter which needed help.

Of course they went straight to rescue the poor animal. However, when they examined him more closely they found that some of his teeth had been deliberately cut and the canines had been removed – such cruelty.

Sadly this means the otter can never be released as he would never be able to catch enough prey. We have seen videos of him and he is eating well, but this is when the food is provided and he doesn't have to catch it. So now, for the otters long-term care, SUMECO need to construct a larger enclosure for him and we have promised to support that.



This is just one example of the extreme cruelty these animals have to endure to satisfy some strange desire to possess it as a pet, regardless of the welfare of the animal or indeed the species in the wild.

Animal Wised has produced a video on “Why otters aren't good as pets” which you can see at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00jVwKowCgw>

A paper by Okamoto et al was published last year reporting on a study looking at the causes of injuries and disease in pet otters taken to animal hospitals in Nagoya and Tokyo between August 2010-May 2019 (Okamoto,

Y., Maeda, N., Hirabayashi, M. and Ichinohe, N. (2020). *The Situation of Pet Otters in Japan – Warning by Vets. IUCN Otter Spec. Group Bull. 37 (2): 71 – 79*. We have stressed many times the threats to otters from the pet trade and the otter cafes in Japan, as these simply drive up the demand for pets, which are then taken largely from the wild.

The authors of this new paper suggest that Japan may have become one of the most important countries involved in the trade because the retail price of otters there is over 300 times the black market price in Thailand - US\$9,000 or more per juvenile in Japan compared to just US\$30 in Thailand.

The study looked at 20 pet Asian small-clawed otters, which were either privately owned or in an otter café. Most of these were either already dead upon arrival at the animal hospital or in a critical condition. Kidney stones were the most common problem, followed by pneumonia and then dehydration. In addition, most had clearly not been given suitable food and in some cases they had not been fed correctly as the owner didn't like the smell of the resultant faeces. There were also nasty bite wounds, some self-inflicted. Other symptoms include alopecia and stress clearly caused by people constantly petting them in a café.

It is believed that nine of the otters had been imported illegally and the average age at death was just 1 year and 7 months – normally they would be living until at least 10 years of age.

As we have mentioned before the Japanese laws regarding ownership and trade in Asian small-clawed otters was improved in August 2019 with an upgrade to Appendix I in CITES and tighter regulations for owning an otter. This is a step forward but it is essential that these regulations are enforced.



Asian small-clawed otter in pet café,
Photo © Yumiko Okamoto

The plight of the new otter at SUMECO just highlights the cruelty and brutality that these animals suffer and we will continue to campaign to get this stopped.

If you would like to support the work of SUMECO caring for these rescued otters you can send a cheque marked "SUMECO" on the back or make a donation online at www.ottershop.co.uk

Phase II of The New Sanctuary Hospital Appeal

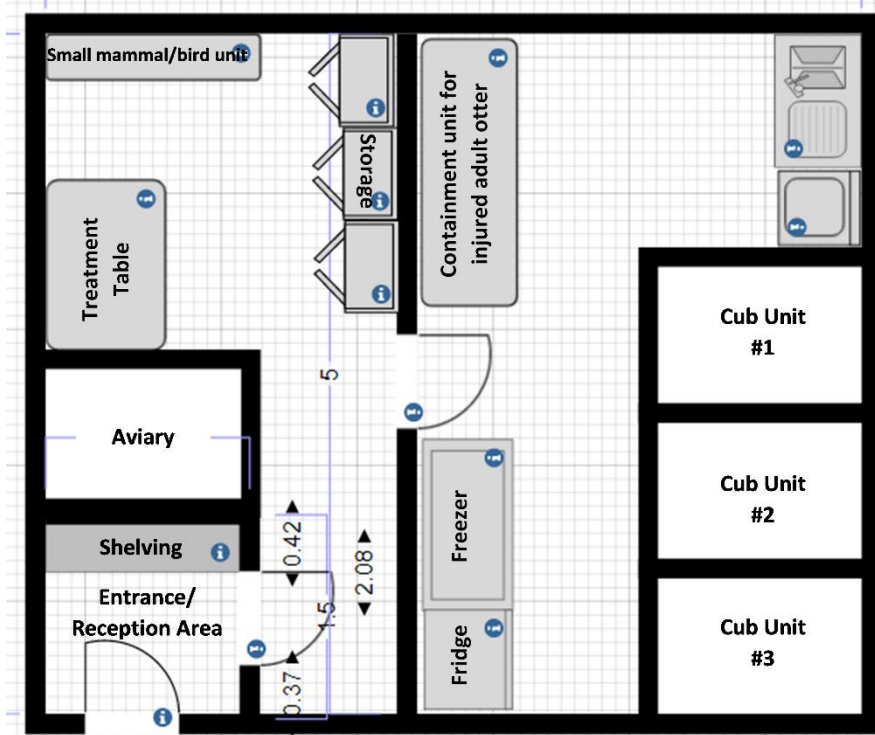
Firstly, we would like to thank all of you for your generosity and help in raising funds to upgrade our otter hospital.

The current hospital was built in the late 1980s when we were also very active in caring for seals following the outbreak of phocine distemper. Of course we still care for other species but now our main focus is on otters. To date, we have cared for over 220 otters here on Skye and helped and supported others in similar work in the UK and worldwide.

In Phase I we were able to build new outdoor enclosures on our croft, with a building for equipment, freezers and the indoor sleeping boxes leading out into the enclosures. These have proved invaluable and make the whole rehabilitation process so much easier for both the animals and ourselves.

The indoor hospital is used for young cubs, which need several feeds a day and have to be kept warm. It is also vital for intensive care of injured adults and the rehab of other wildlife casualties which arrive, such as stoats, hedgehogs and various birds such as buzzards and seabirds. It is, therefore, such an integral part of the work we do.

However, it is now showing its age and you can see the design of the new hospital below with the “dry room” for small mammals and birds, a “wet room” with cub units and washing area, and an entrance/reception area.



We have incorporated many of the excellent parts of the current facility with adaptations based on what we have learned through time. These will ensure a smooth transition for otters, and other wildlife, back to the wild where they belong.

The total cost of replacing the hospital is £25,650

To date we have raised over **£5,300**. Thank you so much.

You can help to support this appeal and there are several ways to donate:

1. The Otter Shop - <https://ottershop.co.uk/products/iosf-new-hospital-appeal>
2. Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/donate/2906953809583806>
3. Justgiving - [justgiving.com/campaign/iosfotterhospital](https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/iosfotterhospital)
4. By cheque – please make it payable to IOSF and mark “Otter Hospital” on the back. Send to IOSF, 7 Black Park, Broadford, Isle of Skye, IV49 9DE, Scotland

Now read on to see where your donations for otter care are spent.



Please support IOSF and help to ensure that important conservation and awareness work continues.

UK taxpayers:

*Increase the value
of your gift to IOSF:
giftaid it*

News from The Sanctuary

The eight otters in our care are all doing very well and eating loads of fish. Thankfully, our great fish supplier Andy Race from Mallaig always makes sure we have enough, even though it has obviously been far more difficult during lockdown. And our friends, Craig, Martin and DL, who are local fishermen regularly drop off fish to help the otters receive a varied diet including octopus and conger eel! Thanks to you all.

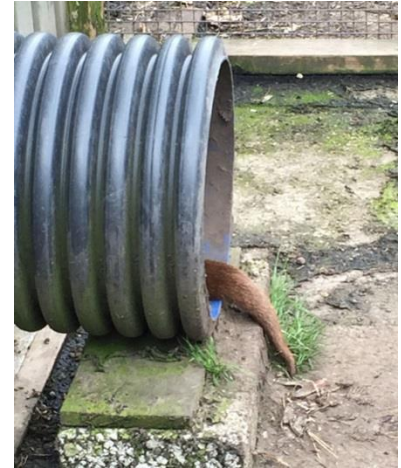
Bealltinn (right) has now been with us for over a year having arrived on 1 May – the name “Bealltinn” is the Gaidhlig May Day festival. She was not a young cub when she arrived from Mull but showed no caution around people and wouldn’t back off when someone approached. She is in a very



secluded enclosure where she doesn't see or hear anyone apart from when she is fed. She is slightly more wary now and is gathering grass and sticks for bedding in her box. This is a positive sign. However, normally when the otters are ready to go they dig a lot to try and get out of the enclosure but she seems quite content just to stay and have her fish delivered! Until she shows more natural wildness we cannot release her as we have to be sure she can survive on her own.



Laurie is another otter which didn't arrive as a young cub. He was already an adult but struggling to feed himself. Since his arrival he has put on weight but we rarely saw him active. So we put in some camera traps to see what he is up to and found that it is largely after dark that he comes out to play! And then he is very active digging around the fence of his enclosure - no wonder he is nearly always asleep when we go to check him in the day. Saying that, we did catch him in his pool on a couple of days which came as much of a



shock to us as it was to him! And the other day just his tail was hanging out – “I can't see you so you can't see me!”



Effie and Reva (left) are right little madams! They hate it when we have to change some of their stinky hay bedding and always run out and hide in a hole they have dug by their pool. Once it is all done they spend ages getting the hay just the way they like it. But they are always up to mischief. We often have to top up their pool with a hose especially if it has been dry. The other day they took the hose out of the pool completely so that we achieved nothing that day and we took the hose out of the enclosure. Not good enough - they simply reached through the fence to pull it back in and played with it. They have also been teaching Laurie these tricks, as one day when we went to check how his pool was coming on he too had removed the hose from the pool!

DJ and Louis (right) - the local otters - are also a handful! When we are feeding them there is a high pitched squabble and tug of war over the first fish. In the end they march off proudly with the bit they have won. In the meantime the rest of the fish sit there untouched for a few minutes. It is entertaining to watch but it is also natural behaviour that they would do in the wild.





When it came to choosing a name for our youngest cub, who was going to be introduced to Holly, we really thought it had to be Buddy! Buddy is such a fiery little character but, as you will remember, Holly had the trauma of being found very young (less than 500g) and losing her two sisters. But now she is a strong otter and very noisy! So the time came for their introduction and after a bit of uncertainty on both parts, they are now content to be together. They have been moved to an outside enclosure and are very private.

(Left) Buddy tackling a fish, while Holly remains hidden under the hay inside the byre.

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

Another way you help the otters is through the Wish List (https://otter.org/Public/HelpUs_WishList.aspx). These include items which we use regularly such as Hibiscrub, protective gloves, stationery, etc.

Covid 19 and Otters

There have been quite a few articles in the press regarding some of the Asian small-clawed otters in the Georgia Aquarium testing positive for Covid 19. Staff at the aquarium noticed that they seemed to be showing mild symptoms including sneezing, coughing and general lethargy. These otters are being monitored by vets and all are expected to make a full recovery, although the full impact of the virus on otters is unknown.

The otters do not have direct contact with visitors and have always been behind acrylic screens. According to the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in US there is "no evidence that animals play a "significant role" in transmitting the virus to people but it can spread the other way through close contact with an infected person. So it is believed that one of the aquarium staff who was asymptomatic passed it on. All of the recommended health and safety protocols have been followed and all staff members who have had contact with the otters have been tested.

There have been many different theories about the true origin of Covid 19 and it is believed to have come from wild bats. It has also been recorded in farmed mink, cats including big cats in zoos, and some great apes. It is certain that diseases can be passed from animals to humans, as in the case of bird flu and rabies, but here is a reminder of our responsibility not to pass things to them. This case is a distinct warning that we have a responsibility to animals including wildlife, domestic pets and livestock.

<https://www.heraldonline.com/news/nation-world/national/article250768474.html>

Hardy Otters

We all know how strong and resilient otters can be but sometimes we come across cases where we are just amazed at how they have survived. One such example was a smooth-coated otter (below) photographed by Vasanthan Jayaguru in the Karvery River in Tamil Nadu, India.

You can clearly see that a lot of its left back leg is missing and Vasanthan believes this may have been caused by a trap set by people. One local person also commented that he is concerned about the otter habitat in the

national parks.

Jayapraksh Bojan from Singapore, is a member of the Asian Wildlife Photographers Club, and he posted some amazing footage of an otter having a close encounter with a crocodile in Singapore. This could also be the cause of the injury as crocodiles are known to be in this area of the Karvery River.

<https://www.facebook.com/awpc.hk/videos/1205620636544449>



We have also had incidents showing such resilience. Years ago there was an otter killed on the road which was sent for post mortem. Even though we clearly knew the cause of death we still sent it for other information and samples for later testing. Anyway, when they did the PM they found it had already had a broken leg which had healed in the wild!

And of course there was the case last summer of the young otter with an eye injury which was photographed by John Williams on Bute. We see so many excellent photos of otters now but these photos by John are special as they enabled veterinary ophthalmologist to diagnose glaucoma. There was nothing that could be done to save the eye but John has continued to monitor the otter. Recently he gave us an update:

"The wee one is still around. I was away from home for a few months but on 10th January I found the cub on its own about a mile up the shore from its family holt. I watched it hunting in quite a choppy sea. Pretty much only feeding on crab. I followed it down the shore a bit and watched it come ashore and disappear into the bushes about half a mile away from the family holt.

My next sighting was on 22nd February and I was really surprised by this one. I was on a different stretch of shoreline about 6-7 miles north of the family holt and spotted an otter heading to the shore with a crab. I managed to get myself into a position to get photos and found it was our wee partially sighted friend. I was a wee bit concerned as where I saw it was right in between two different active family holts. Two different mums with cubs.

Next sighting was March 6th. And it was away back down the shore again much closer to the family holt again. I've been watching a couple of young otters in this area and on this week I spotted both had head wounds and scars so maybe a wee coming together there and a disagreement over territory? This was a lovely wee encounter though and I spent 4-5 hours watching. Again pretty much mostly crabs brought to the shore.

We have also had quite a few White-tailed Eagles roaming around this area over the winter and a man I met on this shore actually watched a pair of adult birds attacking a young otter near where this wee one comes ashore so it's possible these wee scars on the heads have come from that but probably more likely a couple of young otters arguing over territory.

My last sighting was 6th April. I'd spent a couple of hours watching another otter south of the family holt and I was heading north up the shore and spotted the wee partially sighted one coming to the end of its feed and heading home across the rocks so I now know where its wee hideaway is 😊

I've not been down that way since but I'm hoping to get down for a look soon."

It is wonderful to get these reports from John about the young otter and to hear that despite the disability it is still surviving in the wild. Here are a few more of John's photos:



The first shows how the eye was last summer and in the second you can still see the damaged eye. In the last he is happily munching on a crab he has caught.

For more of John's fabulous photos check out his Facebook page - Isle of Bute by John Williams

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



TEAM OTTER

Team Otter Broadford have had a busy wee while!

They have continued their quest to clean up the area and have collected around 200kg over the last month or so. They are not only focusing on reactive ways to remove litter but they want to stop it at source. They are now planning to write letters to local businesses encouraging reduced litter etc., creating an awareness videos and some other great ideas that the kids have come up with themselves. Furthermore, Reagan and Krista, of the group, were invited to take part in an advert to reduce plastic with Kids Against Plastic produced by Persil and Sky! So, keep your eyes peeled for that.

They have also spent a bit of time planting some trees to create a new, wildlife woodland and are excited to see that grow and allow wildlife, from bugs to birds, to prosper!

Furthermore, the amazing Ullapool Sea Savers have recently had Otter Road Signs installed in an area where they had concerns about otters dying on the roads. Poppy, the group's Otter Ambassador, campaigned and helped to fundraise for the new signs and hopes that they may stop otters from being needlessly killed on the road.

So, thanks Poppy and the rest of the team!

Competition Time

IOSF is delighted to launch our children's artwork competition for this year! As always, we have a focus on otters but plan to mix otters with another important issue that faces wildlife just now - LITTER.

Our artwork competition for this year will use otters to highlight issues with litter and ways that we can stop it! It's such an important issue and something that we all need to do more to stop.

Any artwork should be sent to IOSF at ben@otter.org and the competition is open for entries until **1st July**! We can't wait to see your efforts!



Art used with permission from artist **Laura K. Howell**

For more information on Team Otter check out our website (www.loveotters.org) or Facebook. If you are interested in forming your own Team Otter Club contact Ben@otter.org.

The Hazards of Wildlife Surveys in Iraq

You may well be thinking about the obvious risks in Iraq from unexploded munitions and terrorism, but people like Omar Al-Sheikhly face other potential dangers. Omar works in the marshes studying Maxwell's otter (a sub-species of the smooth-coated otter and recently he sent an email saying "Sorry for the late reply, I was in the marshes for the last two weeks, here you can see me and my cameraman were attacked by an angry water buffalo:)

He also shared a link on Facebook showing the frightening incident and we think they were very lucky not to be seriously injured. <https://www.facebook.com/100044845012903/posts/304368561067975/>

We are fortunate here in the UK not to encounter dangerous wild animals in our work, although otters themselves can be quite formidable. But we have to remember that our colleagues in other countries may run into various dangerous animals such as tigers, bears, jaguars, snakes, alligators, and in this case angry water buffalo.

Otter Under Car

Recently there was an article with a link to a video in the Comox Valley Record about an otter which had appeared under a car in upper Royston, Vancouver Island, BC, Canada.

The Stromquist family first saw it at about 8.30 but thought it was a cat so ignored it but the family dogs were not so pleased to see it.

The family live in quite a rural area and so are reasonably used to having visiting wildlife but they had never encountered an otter before. What is even more strange is that the nearest water is a couple of kilometres away.

MARS Wildlife Rescue recommended keeping the dogs away and then banging on top of the car to encourage it to leave and eventually it ran off towards the bush.

<https://www.comoxvalleyrecord.com/community/royston-family-surprised-to-see-otter-visitor-under-car/>

This reminded us of an incident back in 2009 when we were called to Eilean Ban, by the Skye Bridge. A visitor was staying in the holiday cottage there and her car was parked by the gate and she had spotted an otter on the back axle – how she saw it we have no idea! When we arrived all we could see was the tail hanging down like a

bell rope! When we tried to encourage the otter to leave it dropped down on to the road and then climbed up into the engine. There was no way we could get it out from there so we opened the gate away from the road and built a barrier to ensure it took that route to safety. Sure enough by the afternoon the otter was gone and the driver could continue with her holiday. I am sure our friend Julia will remember this incident and the photo she took below:



giftaid it



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:

http://www.otter.org/documents/IOSF_Fundraising_Pack.pdf

Otter Shop Product of the Month

www.ottershop.co.uk

It's **World Otter Day** – treat yourself to an otter adoption gift box and support an otter for 12 months, or longer if you decide.

IOSF Otter Adoption Gift Box – find them at the Otter Shop



Creature Candy

Creature Candy is a British homewares and gifts company, which raises awareness of declining wildlife species and supports charities working in conservation by donating 10% of the sale price.

For World Otter Day they are launching a new range of otter products featuring the image above. Prints, notebooks, and birthday/greetings cards will be the first of these otter products and 10% of each sale will come to IOSF.

They are hoping to launch more products in due course so check out their website

<https://www.creaturecandy.co.uk/otter-products>



NEWS IN BRIEF

Rare otter sighting in India

The sighting of otters in Uppalapadu Bird Sanctuary, Andhra Pradesh, has caused excitement among nature lovers within the area. Smooth-coated otters were first spotted in January but numbers have since grown to what is believed to be around 15 individuals. There were initial concerns that the otters could cause harm to the birds that use this area as a haven, attracting around 15,000 birds. Fears grew as an otter was found hunting a pelican. Of course, otters are predators and can eat birds and other large species, but they will generally stick to their preferred prey of fish and amphibians.

There will be further studies to observe how the otters effect the densely bird-populated area and ensure that all the species can co-exist harmoniously.

<https://scroll.in/article/990807/in-an-andhra-pradesh-bird-sanctuary-an-otter-sighting-has-raised-excitement-and-questions>

Concerns for Singapore's otters

A recent video on Facebook has shown a family of otters being chased in the city's Botanic gardens, all in the name of a better photo or video.

It is so important, for many reasons, to ensure that you maintain a safe distance from otters, and any other wildlife for that matter. Otters will not attack but are known to defend themselves should they feel threatened, and chasing them is one of those things that may do that. If the fear did result in defence, then the otters would be vilified and blamed, leaving no benefits for either the otter or the people.

Always, always, ensure you leave a safe distance between yourselves and otters, and all wildlife, and ensure your disturbance of them is at a minimum.

<https://mothership.sg/2021/04/people-chase-otters-botanic-gardens/>

River Otters returning to Long Island, New York

Once common on Long Island, North American river otters appear to be making a comeback. They are now being seen in two spots in the area and efforts have been made to help them travel between wetlands. One otter unfortunately died using a road to try and navigate around a dam. New plans are underway to create "river stairways" to ensure that the otters can safely pass between habitats without the perils of road crossings.

<https://patch.com/new-york/islip/river-otters-stage-long-island-comeback-little-human-help>

Otter eating Iguana

An expedition in Colombia believe they may have filmed the first ever sighting of a giant otter eating an iguana.

Otters, as we all know, feed predominantly on fish and smaller prey. However, giant otters have been known to feed on some of the area's more famous and dangerous large creatures, such as caiman and anaconda.

However, this is believed to be the first footage of this species eating an iguana!

<https://www.thefloridastar.com/articles/video-otterly-unique-scientists-baffled-by-iguana-eating-otter/>

Otter sighting in Spain

Natural Heritage in Spain, have confirmed, that after a period of nearly 50 years' absence, the Eurasian otter has been spotted in the Riofrio Forest, in Segovia. Initially, spraint and tracks were found, but after camera traps were installed, the otter itself was spotted, causing great excitement in the area.

The evidence of otters returning is a positive bioindicator of environmental health and is great for all species that live there.

<https://www.euroweeklynews.com/2021/04/20/national-heritage-confirms-sighting-of-rare-otter-in-riofrio-forest/>

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>

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 will take you to our dedicated web page concerning making a Legacy.

IOSF and partners Pledjar went live on Instagram on Thursday, 18 February. For anyone who missed it, you can watch it here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKRaWqg1xXo>



Simply download the Pledjar app - use code OSF001 and select IOSF as your charity of choice. You can then choose to round up your card payments and donate those extra pennies to help otters.

- **Android:** https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.pledjar.app&hl=en_GB
- **iOS:** <https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/pledjar/id1504894760>

Thank You...

We appreciate all your support for the projects we are involved in and towards our new otter hospital .

Thank you also to the William Dean (Countryside & Educational) Trust.

We can't do it without you.

Events <https://www.otter.org/Public/Events.aspx>

26/5/21 #WorldOtterDay

29/5/21 - **Ross Lawford** is fundraising for International Otter Survival Fund (justgiving.com) with a 24 hour walk along the Water of Leith in Edinburgh to raise funds and awareness of otters by talking to people he meets on the way. Please do support Ross and our otters:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/ross-lawford-otter1?fbclid=IwAR3SUQEsqjmqnOPwsnNEXICaWZQ9lj4-ZF7CTzq5KTcfNSVF-poWrOKRXU>

Ross is also joined by Joanne Waldie who also has a fundraising page

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/joannewaldie>

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

You can follow us on:



Keep Us in Mind

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:



<https://www.giveasyoulive.com/charity/iosf>



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



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

Regular and secure giving to IOSF and otter conservation... at your fingertips.
Text OTTER 10 to 70085 to donate £10 (or change the amount to however much you wish to give)



You can donate monthly via our partners at the DONR giving platform that allows an easy and safe way method to give. This can be as little or as much as you can afford. Visit <https://www.donr.com/iosf> to find out more.

Annual Supporters' Rates

UK and EEC Countries:

Adult: £24.00 per year

Child: £13.00 per year

Family: £34.00 per year

Life Membership (all countries): £350.00

All other countries:

Adult: £30.00 per year

Child: £15.00 per year

Family: £40.00 per year

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](#) 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



Charity Number SC003875

Join our IOSF mailing list. Click on this link:
<http://tinyurl.com/p3lrsmx>

www.otter.org

The International Otter Survival Fund
Working to Save the Worlds Otters