



Otter News No. 125, August 2021

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Otters on Prince Edward Island, Canada Our latest OTTER Journal published in May 2021 included “A review of trapping of North American river otters (*Lontra canadensis*)” by Ben Yoxon.

In this he stated “These otters are only absent in two areas: Hawaii, which never had otters, and Prince Edward Island where more recently there have been incidents of otters being caught in beaver traps. These are believed to have swum across from Nova Scotia or New Brunswick and perhaps have reclaimed some of their previous habitat.”

Otters on Prince Edward Island were wiped out in the early 20th century by a combination of habitat loss, poaching and trapping. However, a recent article suggests that as sightings are becoming more common they may actually be returning naturally and without the aid of a restoration project.

People always assume these otters are freshwater animals because of the name “river” otters, but they have been known to use coastal habitats for many years. In fact, J Scott Shannon followed five generations of river otters in Trinidad Bay in NW California for 25 years and documented it all in “An Otter Family Album” at <https://www.otters.net/>.

It seems as if the current population on Prince Edward’s Island is only a few dozen, but camera footage of a female with cubs is evidence that they are breeding in the Kensington area. Clearly this is a very small population but hopefully it will continually to grow and repopulate their former island home.
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-river-otter-revival-1.6163104>

Download Issue 7 of the OTTER Journal (2021) containing Ben’s paper at
https://otter.org/Public/MediaAndResources_Resources_Journal.aspx



Chinchimén – Marine Otter Release

For the first time in Chile, an adult marine otter or seacat, known locally as Chungungo, has been released back to the wild following a period of time in rehabilitation.



Chinchimén, an organisation that IOSF has worked with on a number of occasions, rescued the individual which is approximately 8 or 9 years old. With symptoms of hypothermia, malnutrition and stomach issues upon arrival, three weeks of treatment and expert care has meant that this otter was able to return to his natural habitat and live the rest of his years in the wild. Chinchimén will monitor the otter to determine if his rehabilitation was successful.



This organisation has already successfully reintegrated two “Chungungos” who came to their rehabilitation centre as young cubs. The two previous otters were only 2-3 weeks old on arrival and after two years of rehabilitation they were released.



Rehabilitated Marine Otter © Chinchimén



Thanks to Javier Trivelli and the rest of the Chinchimén team for their updates and hard work for otters in their area.

<https://chinchimen.org/>

Otter in Peru

A few weeks ago, IOSF was contacted by Arca Zoológico y Zocriadero in Iquitos, Peru, about a Neotropical otter cub that had been rescued in the area. It had been rescued by a fisherman and was very small but it did have tiny teeth.



Albino Neotropical otter cub, Peru
© Arca Zoológico y Zocriadero

IOSF immediately contacted our network of experts in rehab of this particular species and to ensure that the carer gained as much information as they could to help with the rearing of this little otter. Since then, the otter has grown well and is now eating whole fish!

This wasn't any normal otter cub, and was actually an albino or leucistic otter, as you can see in the pictures.

The park continues to be in constant contact with IOSF and we will keep you up to date on its progress.

Update from Sumeco (Photo ©Sumeco)

In Indonesia, our partners at SUMECO have rescued another otter from the pet trade. As you know, SUMECO are rehabbing two otters, Sam, the Eurasian otter and a small Asian short-clawed otter that you have been helping to name. It is not too late to submit your name for this otter – just go to <https://ottershop.co.uk/products/donate-to-iosf?variant=41016595316895> to make a donation, then click "Add a note to your order" during check out where you can leave the name you think will suit the Asian short-clawed otter. The closing date is 30th September.

As you can see from the picture below, that this latest otter was not in the best condition upon its arrival. SUMECO have since put it in a new, small enclosure for constant monitoring and it is seen here sleeping after a good feed!



The original two otters in their care, Sam and the first Asian short-clawed otter are doing well. There have been initial discussions over the possibility of releasing Sam but, to begin with, a Eurasian otter population must be identified in order to determine where it can go.

This shows the cost of the pet trade. Thankfully, for these otters, they have been rescued and have a chance to return to the "wild life" they were born into.



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.

News from The Sanctuary



DJ and Louis – 'The Boys'

As always, IOSF's sanctuary is keeping us on our toes and busy. The four otters in our care are doing really well.

DJ and Louis, the two closest to release, are acting as we'd expect them to as they get nearer to freedom. In fact recently, Helen, who doesn't normally work directly with them, had to check out a problem with the otter cam on their nest box. The two otters behaved with suspicion and became very reserved, so much so, that Louis was totally displeased and didn't come out for the remainder of the day and even over the next few days both were far more wary. Although it sounds quite amusing, this is actually the sort of behaviour we want from our otters as they get closer to release. We do not want them comfortable with humans as this will only be detrimental to them when they are back in the wild. So this behaviour sets them in good stead.

There have been positive moves from Holly too. Holly really is a



beautiful little otter, but her beauty is matched by her cheeky and inquisitive nature. Holly is always out and patrolling her large enclosure. Recently, we did a little maintenance work in her area which she closely inspected and she has also started digging out little holts near to her pool. The two “holts” are about 30cm deep and well used; somewhere she obviously shelters in. She is still using her sleeping box but it is very encouraging to see her creating her own sheltered areas too!



Then there is Bealltinn, also doing well. You will all know about our reservations about releasing Bealltinn due to her more relaxed nature when it comes to us. She is very laid back but has been showing more encouraging signs. We have been blessed with a sustained period of dry, warm weather and Bealltinn has created a shelter somewhere in her pen where she spends most of her time. Although we didn't see her for a few days, fresh spraint and disappearing fish meant we knew that she was still there! When we did finally find her in her box, she let us know in no uncertain terms that we were not wanted. This is good to see but she still doesn't seem keen on the water!!

Outwith the otter world, we have some updates on other species we are caring for. The Tawny owl that is blind in one eye has been transferred to Blue Highland Bird Rescue for their expert knowledge on species such as owls. They are monitoring him and will look at various options with a view to release if he is considered capable of surviving in the wild.

The two Barn owls are less “balls of fluff” and much more like owls now! We have also had a bat which was released back to the wild and two hedgehogs that remain in our care and are gaining weight!

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 our Amazon Wish List (https://otter.org/Public/HelpUs_WishList.aspx). These include items which we use regularly such as Hibiscrub, protective gloves, stationery, etc.





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

UK taxpayers:

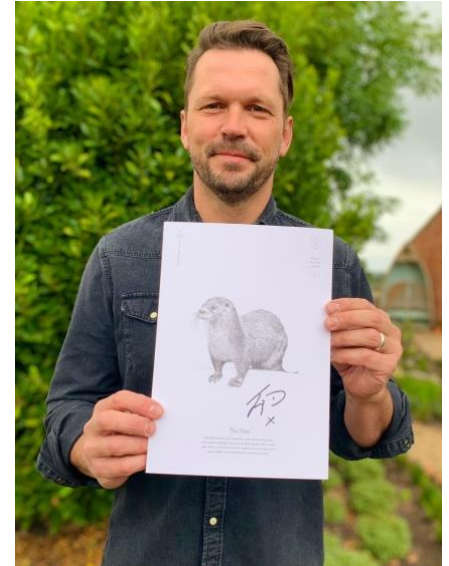
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Big Fundraiser for Wildlife

Creature Candy has drawn together a number of 'famous' faces from **Naturalists, TV presenters and influencers, to be ambassadors to a number of wildlife species and related charities.** The aim is to fundraise for each charity through the sale of 100 A4 signed prints of their related species.

Jimmy Doherty has literally signed up to be the otter ambassador and help fundraise for IOSF and our work. 50% of each print sale will come to us. So now is your chance to get involved - just click through to the otter page on the Creature Candy website
<https://www.creaturecandy.co.uk/celebrity-signed-prints/jimmy-doherty-signed-otter-print>



An Overview of a German Webinar about Otter Conservation

The German NGO "Action for Otter Conservation" held the biennial webinar about otter conservation in Germany in June 2021.



The main reason to hold this webinar was to bring together otter and conservation experts from the whole country. There are sixteen different federal states in Germany each with different nature conservation and hunting laws. With this in mind it is difficult for NGOs to act in a coordinated way for the aims of otter conservation. The virtual conference offered the opportunity to hear professional local researchers who have great experience in the ecology of otters and other mammals.

The Eurasian otter once lived throughout Germany in rivers and lakes and marshes but in the second half of the 20th century their numbers were greatly reduced. The most recent range map from the Action for Otter Conservation shows a blank for otters in much of the western and southern parts of Germany. But it can be said that the otters have recovered to some extent over the last decades.

The webinar was split into two parts, each session focused on different areas of Germany. The two webinars were attended by nearly 100 people and 14 presentations were offered.

In the northern and western part of Germany some studies have been conducted in the last years or are ongoing. These studies are mainly providing an update of the current status of the otter populations and are drawing attention to the serious threats. The main cause of mortality is traffic accidents. Bridges crossing wildlife movement corridors are often sites of traffic accidents and habitat fragmentation. Therefore, bridges should be extended to span uplands that provide movement corridors for otters and other terrestrial wildlife. In most projects and studies plans are made to replace old bridges or to improve the existing bridges.



Non-invasive genetic monitoring based on the genetic profiles obtained from DNA extracted from otter faeces (spraints) are chosen in some areas for monitoring the population. Even in the cities of Hamburg or Berlin you can nowadays observe otters.

In the southern part of Germany, in Bavaria, otters were nearly extinct in the last century and they are protected by hunting law since 1960s. However, numbers continued to increase slowly in the last decades and first they spread into the fish farming area. The result was that the fish farmers began to complain about otter predation and they were calling for a cull. The authorities gave permission to kill some otters ignoring the protection through the European Fauna and Flora Habitat Directive and that the area of this federal state is only partly covered by an otter population. Two NGOs, the "BUND"-Bavaria and the "Action for Otter Conservation" were concerned about the recent permission for the cull and started an ongoing court case against the authorities. We should hope that the judgement will stop any killing of otters in Bavaria.



Eurasian otter, mother and cubs. ©Graham Britten

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If you want to watch some of the presentations (in German) they are now available online at <https://aktion-fischotterschutz.de/laufende-projekte/tierforschung/tagungen/ergebnisse-der-tagungen/>

Dr. Hans-Heinrich Krüger

Following this report, Hans-Heinrich has just sent us this email: "The NGOs have won the court case! No otter cull in Bavaria!" This is great news and we would thank all involved in achieving this decision by the courts. It also helps when other organisations call for a cull as it sets a precedent, so hopefully there will be no further culls in Austria either.

Otter Shop Product of the Month

www.ottershop.co.uk

'Otterly Madness' has been with us a relatively short time, but many have become so familiar with and enjoy the simple, fresh otter sketches by James Williams, you'd think we had known them longer.

James's first otter illustration came about late in 2020...
"I love the playful and carefree nature of these furry aquatic animals, and it's safe to say, I was obsessed with capturing this onto a page. I dashed to my local art shop in South London, picked myself up a Winsor & Newton watercolour set and returned home eager to bring it to life."



After sharing his new otter friends online, James realised there was a market for otterly obsessed people like him, looking for a card or gift with a difference. And so, Otterly Madness Facebook page came about, followed by products of cards, prints and stickers. James kindly donates a % of his profits to IOSF.

So, you will be happy to learn that we have a small selection of Otterly Madness products available at the Otter Shop. Just click here <https://ottershop.co.uk/collections/new-products/products/copy-of-james-williams-otterly-madness-artwork>



BEAR Scotland Donates to IOSF

Earlier this month, we were thrilled to receive a £1000 donation from BEAR Scotland as part of their new charity initiative which focuses on local and regional causes across the country. The Company invited staff to nominate local charities important to them and Environmental Adviser Sarah Rauch-Lynch nominated IOSF due to 'her passion for looking after the environment as well as her knowledge of the importance of the work and research that IOSF carry out'.

Sarah said: "I nominated the IOSF because they are a local charity based on the Isle of Skye who work hard to protect otters and raise awareness of the species in Scotland and worldwide."



Otters are one of Scotland's most iconic native species and we regularly encounter them on the North West trunk road network along our coasts, rivers and canals. We are equally as passionate about protecting otters in the team here at BEAR, so it is great to support such a fantastic charity."

Fraser Struthers, BEAR Scotland's Ardelve Depot Supervisor, met with Helen and Ben to hear about the work they carry out to protect otters (photo above ©BEARScotland).

<https://www.bearsco.com/international-otter-survival-fund-receives-1000-donation-from-bear-scotland/>

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

Thank You...

Thank you all for your continued support via many channels (direct donations, Facebook Fundraisers, sponsored challenges). It is inspiring.

Also, thanks to Nurtured by Nature, Bear Scotland, Samantha Holland

We can't do it without you.



The return of the school-term in Broadford meant the start of two otter clubs within the village. The existing club is for primary school pupils but some children have now moved up to the high school but still want to continue Team Otter activities, which is very encouraging. They are all looking at new ways in which they can help their environment and work with other groups to achieve that too.

The younger group did their first litter pick in a few months following their holidays. They had planned to cover a large area near their school but only managed around 150 metres and yet still picked up four full bags of rubbish! It is great to see kids doing this, and caring for their environment, but we need to stop littering in the first place!



The older group sat down for their first ever session. We had an initial discussion about what we are planning to do and the kids came up with some great ideas on things that concern them, and steps we can do to make things change! Keep an eye on this one.

As always, a massive thanks to our passionate volunteer, Nicholas Kelly. Also, to the lady, who never left her name, who kindly donated money for the kids to get an ice cream after the litter pick. A valuable lesson for the group, if you do something good, something good will happen to you!

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



Otter Oscars

We are still accepting nominations for an IOSF Otter Oscar 2021! You can nominate someone, including yourself, in any of the following 6 categories:



- Young Person (under 18)
- Community Achievement
- Group or Organisation
- Research
- Photography or Artwork
- Special Award



PLEASE NOTE:

You can nominate in more than one category but please submit only one nomination per category. You can nominate yourself.

Nominations will be accepted until 26th November and winners will be announced in the week commencing 6th December.

Submit your nomination here -

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScpBO7orWI_7ncmaYtIPL8EFnd1bEYUvzy2qM-YQixiYD-LvA/viewform

News in Brief

Smooth-coated otters in India

Recently, there have been two instances of otters spotted in India. Firstly, in the Kondakarla Ava lake of Atchutapuram Mandal in Visakhapatnam, where smooth-coated otters have been seen for the first time. The East Coast Conservation Team and Green Paw had set up a study, including camera traps, to monitor threatened mammals within the area and found the otters.

Although people are glad to see them, some, including fishermen, don't want to start seeing them all the time. They are concerned about the damage that otters are doing to their fishing nets and this is something which needs to be monitored in order to come up with a solution to a potential problem.



<https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/andhra-pradesh/2021/aug/10/smooth-coated-otters-spotted-at-kondakarla-ava-lake-in-vizag-2342578.html>



Swing over to the west coast of India and the same species has been spotted in Navi Mumbai's Kharghar creek. It is believed that this sighting, photographed by birders, was the first in the area in a number of years and there have been calls for authorities to act upon this and take steps to protect otters, and other species, within the region.

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/smoothcoated-otters-spotted-in-kharghar-creek-in-navi-mumbai-101628877596475.html>

Video of Singapore's wildlife including the famous otters

We all know that Singapore is a busy city but amongst all the hustle and bustle there are still places where wildlife can be found. "Wild City" is a series narrated by Sir David Attenborough which looks at the hidden wild side of the city.

The episode called "River World" took seven months to film using state-of-the-art natural history techniques and equipment. It looks at life on the rivers and lakes through the eyes of young wild creatures including, of course, the otters. There is beautiful footage of the first ever group of otter cubs born including their first swimming lesson and learning to catch their prey. The adults in the family group frantically rush the cubs to the bank to escape the attention of a hungry monitor lizard.

The wild cast also includes monkeys, snakes, turtles, endangered Lesser Whistling Ducklings and insects but of course the real stars of the show are the otters.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wE5PaUvVG-U> – 47mins

Video of otters in a Dutch city canal

Our Dutch neighbour, Piet van Barneveld, sent us a link to video footage of otters in the Zwolle city canal. Four otters have been seen swimming through by a resident of a houseboat on the canal, and in the video, taken in April, you can see a mother and her cub feeding and playing.

<https://youtu.be/VSNvVUGw1Qo>



Otters in St. John River causing pirate-themed boat in Fredericton to sink

When Dwayne Craig built his pirate-themed boat, the Captain Kidd, little did he know who his new neighbours could be. The boat sits on the St John River in Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada and for a few months Dwayne and his dog, Buddy, enjoyed a quiet pirate life, sometimes sleeping over on the boat.



Then his boat was discovered by a group of North American river otters. At first they just seemed to be coming and going and splashing about in the water but then they decided to make a proper home under the pontoon.



And that's when things started to get a bit out of hand – they brought in about 200 pounds of shell and seaweed and packed it in so tightly that the boat actually began to sink lower into the water!

Dwayne is quiet happy to have the otters but obviously he was concerned that he might actually lose his boat. So he cleaned all their shells and seaweed out of the gap between the pontoons and the deck, hoping that would solve the problem. But the otters are determined and within just two days it was full again. Dwayne added weights to the bow to try and level the boat but it wasn't enough to raise the stern.

"I got to give them their two weeks' notice is all there is to it." Dwayne jokes but he doesn't mean it. "People have suggested I block it off, [from the otters] but I don't know. Maybe I'll let them live under there.... But it does kind of smell like seaweed." Instead he plans to take the boat out of the water for the winter and do some improvements including a bit more flotation.

Good luck to you Dwayne.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/fredericton-boat-otter-1.6165130>

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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

donr

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.



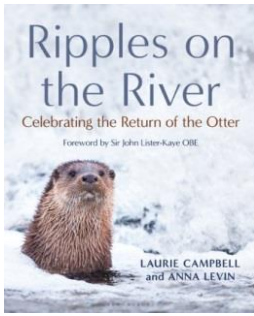
<https://giveacar.co.uk/charities/international-otter-survival-fund/>

Giveacar is a not-for-profit social enterprise that can turn your old car into cash for any UK charity. With free collection, your car will be auctioned or sold for scrap, depending on its condition, and the proceeds (minus our service fees) raised going to a charity of your choice.

Find out more at <https://giveacar.co.uk> or call 020 7736 4242



Don't Forget



Bloomsbury publishing house are giving IOSF supporters the opportunity of an **exclusive 25% discount** on this hardback version of **"Ripples on the River"**, only at www.bloomsbury.com using discount code **OTTER25 (UK only)**. Offer ends 30th September.

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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/>

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UK and EEC Countries:

Adult: £24.00 per year
Child: £13.00 per year
Family: £34.00 per year

All other countries:

Adult: £30.00 per year
Child: £15.00 per year
Family: £40.00 per year

Life Membership (all countries): £350.00

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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**.

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Working to Save the Worlds Otters

