



Otter News No. 118, December 2020

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The Importance of Wetland Habitats – A Sri Lankan Story

(photos: Chaminda Jayasekara)

We all know the importance of wetlands; their importance to us, to wildlife and to the general health of the environment within the area. We were delighted to get this report from Chaminda Jayasekara, who is passionate about his project in Sri Lanka and the wildlife that has thrived as a result.

“There is no better example of what can be done to restore an area than Jetwing Vil Uyana’s story that started in the early 2000s. An abandoned plot of land previously used for slash and burn cultivation, locally known as chena cultivation, was selected as the site for the most ambitious hotel project in Sri Lanka. The idea was to build a luxury resort nestled within a lush wetland but there was one glaring problem – the wetland in question did not exist.



© Chaminda Jayasekara
Protect Eurasian Otters Project
Jetwing Vil Uyana, Sigiriya, Sri Lanka

Drawing inspiration from the wetland in Barnes in the outskirts of London, Jetwing embarked on a mission to convert the chena land into a thriving wetland. It was a daunting task: the land lacked floral diversity and a biodiversity survey carried out at the site prior to construction returned paltry results. Just 29 species of birds were reported from the site, along with 12 mammals, and a handful of other animals – a mere fraction of the rich fauna that comprises the North central regions of Sri Lanka.

As the canals and lakes were dug and the land replanted with native vegetation, the fauna began trickling in. Jetwing Vil Uyana’s doors opened in 2006 and, as of August 2018 the faunal diversity had swelled from pre-construction numbers and slowly but surely the wetland settled and stabilised. Jetwing Vil Uyana currently boasts of over 140 species of birds, over 20 mammals, with the numbers of butterflies, reptiles, and amphibians also showing marked increases.



Protect Eurasian Otters Project
Jetwing Vil Uyana, Sigiriya, Sri Lanka

*Among the resort’s new residents are Eurasian otters (*Lutra lutra*) whose presence is a testament to the quality of the habitat now available. While the initial sightings were fleeting nocturnal glimpses, they have become more and more at home in the hotel’s waterways and canals and can be found hunting even during the evenings. Camera traps, initially deployed around the property to study its population of fishing cats (*Prionailurus viverrinus*), has also captured fascinating behaviour of the otters and their comings and goings.*

*In addition to otters, several other rare and elusive creatures have taken advantage of the habitat on offer and moved in permanently. The grey slender loris (*Loris lydekkerianus nordicus*) was one of the first such creatures reported, with the first sighting being in 2010 and this year the Loris Conservation Project celebrates its tenth anniversary. Our Loris Conservation Site is, in fact, the first and only conservation area declared for this nocturnal primate in the island.*

Three of Sri Lanka's four wild cats have been recorded at the hotel, with the fishing cat being the most frequently spotted given the property's extensive riparian habitat. As aforementioned, a research effort to understand the behaviour and habits of this feline was launched with the aid of camera traps and has, to date, been quite successful. The knowledge gleaned has allowed awareness programmes to be carried out amongst the local people, dispelling misconceptions about this fascinating creature.

Alongside the mammalian diversity, the wetland habitat has also created a refuge for a myriad bird species, reptiles and amphibians including a host of migrants and endemics."

A great positive story which shows what can be done to restore habitat.

An Update on the Otters in Cambodia (Photos: PTWRC)

Nick Marx of Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescue Centre (PTWRC) has sent us an update on the otters in his care:

"At this stage it is difficult to say whether COVID-19 has had a definite impact on the illegal wildlife trade. Our rescues continue and during the third quarter of 2020, 400 new animals arrived through confiscation or donation, including three smooth-coated otters.

On 13 August, information about two smooth-coated otters in Battambang Province was reported by a



Hotline call. The Wildlife Rapid Rescue Team (WRRT) collected and transferred them to PTWRC. Two days later we received information about another otter being taken by its owner to a kick boxing gym in Phnom Penh. This animal is also now being cared for at PTWRC.

We have rescued six smooth-coated otters in the last six months. Initially this worried me. I have worked a lot with large carnivores, notably tigers and leopards and introductions with these species can be difficult and dangerous. I had classed otters in the same bracket because they too are predators. We do

not have the funds to construct new enclosures for every otter we receive, so we tried introducing an extremely tame male new arrival, who had no previous experience of his own kind, to two males that were already established at PTWRC. There were no problems, which encouraged us to customize a large enclosure for the otters, which used to house fishing cats. Here we gently introduced three new arrivals. This too went well, and we therefore transferred the next two otters that arrived into this enclosure once they had finished quarantine. The five otters have formed a pack and get along famously. Such nice animals, otters and we live and learn.

The otters we released into Angkor continue to keep us on our toes. They travel widely and are frequently seen. Fishing nets are always a concern and Dina gets his team to remove them whenever they are placed in an area frequented by the otters. One reason for not allowing the nets is because they become clogged with water plants and disrupt the water flow. The other, of course, is they could entangle and subsequently drown an otter. There is no hostility towards the otters from local people that we have noticed. Bunthoeun and I were alarmed and surprised when a video of a pair of otters running along a road outside, close to Angkor was posted on YouTube. Bunthoeun called Sarin, one of our excellent team who along with his son, Rith, care for and monitor our animals in Angkor. Sarin replied that he was feeding our otters at the time the video was taken and they could not be ours. Interesting...

The rains have started and this has caused a rise in water levels, which have flooded the new holt the otters dug. We are uncertain where they sleep now, but they seem to be spending more time in their old enclosure. The rise in water has made them travel more widely, probably in search of a new den site. They have ventured as far 5 or 6 km away, which is a little worrying, because it is outside the protected area of Angkor and there is a lot of human involvement here. However, populations of otters are now seen regularly in Singapore. If otters can survive in that busy metropolis ours should not have too much difficulty in Siem."



PTWRC continue to do a great job rescuing otters and other animals in trade and IOSF will continue to support them.

IOSF Rescued Pet Otters Fund

There are various centres in Southeast Asia caring for otters which have been confiscated from the pet trade. Of course this includes PTWRC in Cambodia, but we are also working with centres in Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand.

So we have set up a special fund to support these rescued pet otters.

Here is more information on these centres:

Save Vietnam's Wildlife (SVW) - In November 2019, a truck trafficking 19 Asian small-clawed otters and one monkey was stopped by police and the quick response team of SVW went to rescue the animals. Unfortunately, four otters had already died and the rest were in a poor condition with various wounds. They were given first aid before transfer to Pu Mat National Park for a further health check-up and intensive care. The eight males and seven females were all very small and four still had their eyes closed. Initially the keepers had to feed them a small amount of milk every three hours, day and night, but despite this three did not survive. The bigger animals have now been released but some still remain and two more came in at the end of September 2020.



Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand (WFFT)

- In 2019 WFFT received a 10 month old Asian small-clawed otter, who was yet another victim of the illegal wildlife trade. Pun Pun (below) was only two weeks old when she was purchased illegally through a Facebook page. The family thought she would make a cute and wonderful pet, but soon found that she wasn't so appealing when she started to



Both photos © WFFT

scream, scratch, bite and toilet all over the place. Luckily for Pun Pun she ended up at WFFT where she was initially placed in quarantine before being introduced to other rescued otters. This brought the total number of otters in their care to 17.

Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescue Centre (PTWRC), Cambodia -

You have already read about the great work of Phnom Tamao but they are also the only facility in the world which has experience in caring for hairy-nosed otters. This is not an easy species to look after as they are very susceptible to water quality and so fresh water must be brought in daily from Phnom Penh. In addition, they have 22 smooth-coated otters and one Asian small-clawed.



Indonesia - There are two centres in Indonesia, Cikananga on Java and SUMECO on Sumatra.

Cikananga currently have seven Asian small-clawed otters in care, all rescued from the pet trade. Some of these were in very poor condition and one (Rowena, below) had been surviving on dried catfood! With proper care and diet she soon began to put on weight.



SUMECO was caring for two Asian small-clawed otters, which have now have been released, and one Eurasian otter – a species which had not been recorded there in 80 years. Then they received three hairy-nosed otters so we immediately put them in touch with Nick Marx at PTWRC for advice. All were rescued from the pet trade. Sadly the smallest of the hairy-nosed otters, a female, did not survive but the other two males are doing very well.

We are still looking for names for these two little hairy-nosed otters and you can help us. All you have to do is [CLICK HERE](#) for more information. **All money raised by the naming will go to SUMECO for the care of these otters.**



A while back they received three young Asian small-clawed otter cubs, still with their eyes closed. Despite the best possible care all three of these sadly died.

THIS IS THE REAL COST OF THE PET TRADE!

All of these centres provide exceptional care and the otters are kept in enclosures which are as natural as possible. The aim for all is eventually to return them to the wild where they belong, but this has to be done very carefully so that they do not risk being hunted or caught again. The animals are assessed to make sure they are showing “normal” wild behaviour and then monitored after release to ensure they are integrating back into the wild. Unfortunately, if they are judged not to be able to survive in the wild then they remain at the sanctuary.

IOSF has set up this emergency fund to help these sanctuaries and their care of rescued otters. It is always hard for them to raise the necessary funds for food, vet treatment, etc. But now with the pandemic it is even worse. There are no volunteers to help with the care of the animals and many of the volunteers also contribute towards costs which keep the sanctuaries running.

You can HELP by DONATING at www.ottershop.co.uk. At check-out please use “add note to order” and type in “Rescued pet otters”

Thank you.

giftaid it



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Two Important Studies of Otters in UK Universities

The value of post mortem examinations

We have always said that post mortems can reveal really important information and Cardiff University are very active in this field. Last year they published a paper looking at the effects of a variation in otter diet. This was based on post mortem information on sex, weight and length from 610 dead otters from England and Wales between 1994-2010.

In the study they found that otters were found with empty guts and were therefore going hungry more in the latter years than earlier. Strangely enough they also found that this was more common in coastal habitats and these areas were the last to see otters starting to return. We have not seen this problem here on the West Coast of Scotland as there is an abundance of small fish available to them, but the authors suggest that it could be due to more human disturbance of coastal areas in England and Wales. They found that the prey type varied seasonally and regionally but the otters were successful in hunting all year round as there was no such variation in the evidence of lack of feeding.

Otters are opportunistic carnivores and will eat what they can catch but there is a difference in the amount of energy it costs to catch the prey compared with how much they get by eating it. We have written many times about the drastic decline in the eel population in UK and these are, or rather were, a favourite prey item in freshwater otters as they have a high calorific value. So the study found that there was a positive correlation between eating eels and salmonids and body condition of the otters. But the question is whether the otters are in better condition because they eat these fat-rich species or are those in better condition better at catching them?

As the eels have declined there appears to have been an increase in otters eating bullhead and stickleback but they don't have the nutritional benefit of eels and salmonids. However, fat-rich fish do accumulate toxic chemicals such as PCBs and organochlorine pesticides which were largely responsible for the disappearance of otters in the 1950s-60s. So it may actually be a benefit to the otters in the long term to eat more other fish.



There is a seasonal variation in diet but it has to be interpreted carefully. Eels were taken mostly at the coast in May as in April young elvers return from their migration. When amphibians are spawning otters eat a lot of them as they are so easy to catch but it seems as if there isn't a great benefit in terms of body condition. Again there is the question whether those otters in poorer condition are eating the amphibians as it is easy or that they aren't getting the value out of the prey so have poorer condition.

Younger otters tend to eat more crustaceans, again because they are easier to catch, so although they don't have as great a nutritional value, they are still important for otters learning to hunt.

It is interesting to note that males took prey which was 22% larger than that taken by lone females, but mothers with cubs took prey the same size as the males. This is possibly because she needs more energy to feed the youngsters.

It has been said many times that otters in the UK are increasing in number, but this study of the diet revealed by post mortem examinations shows that otters are still vulnerable to changes in prey availability which has knock-on effects on body condition. It confirmed that if prey availability is reduced then local populations decline but this may not be detected in national surveys which do not pick up this detail.

This paper clearly shows the value of post mortem data and how important it is to be careful when saying that otters are rapidly increasing. We have often warned against this as the data is so unreliable. If it is based on sightings or spraint (as in the national surveys) the same otter can be counted many times within their home range giving a false indication of high numbers. We cannot afford to be complacent and must continue our concerns over the protection of otters in UK.

The reference for the full paper is: **Dietary complexity and hidden costs of prey switching in a generalist top predator.** Rosemary J. Moorhouse-Gann, Eleanor F. Kean, Gareth Parry, Sonia Valladares 2020. *Ecology and Evolution*. 2020;10:6395–6408

Asian short-clawed otters learn from one another

A study conducted by the University of Exeter, University of Leeds and Royal Holloway into social interactions between Asian short-clawed otters has offered some invaluable information into their learned behaviours. The team set a group of otters a series of puzzles to get their food and found that individual otters learn by watching each other. Once they had learned the techniques, they were able to achieve this more by themselves.

Asian short-clawed otters are a very social species and social learning is important to their survival. Conservationists believe that this may be a way in which captive bred individuals can reintegrate into the wild which will help increase populations.

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/otters-solve-puzzles-faster-after-seeing-friend-do-it-first-180976446/>



Asian small-clawed otters
(photo: Don McCrady)

Oil Matters

Worries over new oil extraction methods

A group of researchers in Alberta, Canada, have found evidence that new oil extraction methods are having potentially catastrophic effects on the environment and otters. As in many areas and countries, companies are moving away from traditional methods to extract oil to other methods such as fracking and extraction from tar sands, and concerns have been raised about their environmental impact.

Local people in Alberta raised concerns of the correlation between extraction from tar sands and reduced otter litter size – and questioned whether there was perhaps a link. Previous research has suggested that the environmental impact of such methods could adversely affect the size of the otters' baculum (penis bone). The researchers examined otters at different distances from extraction sites and used a number of methods to investigate the strength and efficacy of the baculum, and therefore their ability to reproduce.

The study found that contaminants, a by-product of the tar oil methods, are likely to have a negative effect on the otter baculum, and therefore reproduction, potentially affecting populations in years to come. It is interesting though to see that otters exposed to other contaminants, such as hydrocarbon retene, strontium or iron, actually had stronger than normal baculums.

This association between pollutants and a reduction in the baculum has already been documented in the UK by Cardiff University Otter Project. In 2013 they published a report commissioned by the CHEM Trust which investigated otter health and the levels of persistent organic pollutants (POPs). They also found that baculum weights had been decreasing over time so this is clearly an important issue regarding the future health of otters and populations.

<https://phys.org/news/2020-12-river-otters-oilsands-baculum-strength.html>



North American River Otters
Photo: Shelanne Bulford

53 year old shipwreck threatens wildlife

Nootka Sound is an inlet which lies on the rugged west coast of Vancouver Island in Canada. The area was important in the fur trade in the late 1700s so many European traders visited, especially from Spain. In 1793 a Scottish political reformer, Thomas Muir, was banished to Botany Bay in Australia for 14 years but he escaped on an American fur trading ship called – The Otter!

On 4 January 1968 the 483-foot cargo ship MV Schiedyk grounded and sank in the Sound. Apparently the wreck is lying at a depth of just over 100m and now heavy fuel oil is leaking at a rate of 1-4 litres per hour. The first leakage appeared on the shore in early December but it is not known how much fuel was in the tanks.

As yet the impact on wildlife does not appear to have been too serious. One dead sea otter was found in December but it is not known if this was because of the oil. Another otter has been seen with an “oil sheen” but it is reported to be feeding and is being monitored to see if it is necessary to catch and treat it.



Sea Otter (photo: Loraine Mitchell)

Clearly sea otters are at risk but other species including humpback whales, harbour seals, Stellar sea lions and great blue herons are all present in the area.

So far the Spill Response Team has laid out over 3km of absorbent booms and removed 120 bags of organic waste and the containment seems to be keeping the oil away from sensitive wildlife habitat. Twelve boats, as well as planes, helicopters and drones are being used to monitor the situation and direct the crews responsible for the containment booms.

This incident shows that even after all this time shipwrecks and other potential sources of oil leaks pose a great threat to our wildlife.

<https://www.timescolonist.com/news/local/leaking-shipwreck-in-nootka-sound-keeps-crews-scrambling-1.24262750>

News from The Sanctuary

To be honest, we don't really believe in coincidences but something strange has happened over the last two months. In our last e-update we told you about the arrival of DJ who was found



Louis being weighed

just outside Broadford at the beginning of November. Then at the beginning of December another cub arrived but from the other side of the village in Harrapool, just along the road from us. We wondered if they might be siblings but the size difference is too great – it must be a coincidence.

Little Louis was wandering dangerously near the main road and approached a local dog-walker and screamed. She tried to leave him but he insisted on following so she contacted us straight away. It was far too risky for him to be left where he was, so we rushed to collect him. He was named Louis as he was near the township of Waterloo! He is a gorgeous little chap and has progressed from salmon on to whole fish and is gaining weight. We will have to wait and see if he catches up with DJ enough so that they can be put together as clearly that would be the best option.



DJ has grown a lot and, to our eyes, his face looks very like a hairy-nosed otter with his pronounced lip marking and head shape. He has a great appetite and loves the rocklings which our friendly fishermen bring. He is far more vocal than Louis and still squeaks for his food but then “swears” in otter language when we are too close.

As we told you, Effie and Reva don’t like being disturbed even if it is for fresh hay so they always run out to hide in their hole by the pool (right). This week Reva kept a keen eye on me from there to see when I had finished and it was

safe for them to come out for their fish.

You can see in the photo below that Bealltinn has grown into a beautiful otter and is in lovely condition. Usually when we go up she is in her sleeping box but she, too, doesn’t like being disturbed for fresh bedding.



Clearly though she is active when we aren’t around as it has been really cold over the last few days and we have found holes in the ice on her pond where she goes in.

IOSF Otter Adoption Gift Box – find them at the [Otter Shop](http://www.ottershop.co.uk)

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 Thank you

Donate to IOSF <https://www.ottershop.co.uk/donate-to-iosf-c2x11601155>

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



Team Otter Broadford has brought back the famous, Team Otter News. It has taken a while after a few meetings together but Struan and Reagan have put together a good start to the news, with Krista on camera duties.

You can watch Team Otter News here –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQSsbZoBKFU&t=2s>

Team Otter Broadford has also been working hard cleaning up the area and has some big plans for the coming year! Unfortunately though, with the renewed UK lockdown, these plans have been put on hold, but the kids will be back and busy once restrictions are lifted.

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.



ECO otter – find me at the [Otter Shop](#)



LEGACY - A LEGACY IS A GREAT WAY OF GIVING TO SOMETHING close to your heart and every gift will make a difference. After your family, have you ever thought of leaving something in your will to charity? Please consider remembering the International Otter Survival Fund in your will and help our work, protecting otters, to continue.

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

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

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

News In Brief

Otter is German Animal of the Year 2021

The otter has been named the Animal of the Year 2021 by the German Wildlife Foundation (GWF) so as to draw attention to how endangered it and its habitats are. As they announced this they said "*Hardly any other mammal combines the elements of land and water as perfectly as it does. Where otters feel at home, nature is still intact.*"

It is difficult to say how many otters there are in Germany but it is more common in the east of the country. However, human encroachment on their habitat and destruction of wetlands is threatening their survival and in some areas they can no longer be found.

<https://www.saechsische.de/tiere/fischotter-ist-tier-des-jahres-2021->



[5329095.html?fbclid=IwAR3B1ib_p1uqCl1khphqMjHMSCWm2zEDP6SaZX03o1E6fTQ6vamp_0RCt_o](https://www.loveotters.org/5329095.html?fbclid=IwAR3B1ib_p1uqCl1khphqMjHMSCWm2zEDP6SaZX03o1E6fTQ6vamp_0RCt_o)

Increased hunting in Pennsylvania

Until recently there had been a decline in the issue of hunting licences throughout the state but in 2020 the number increased by 7% with animals being hunted including turkeys, bobcats, snow geese and elk. There has been an especially big increase in speciality licences with 73% more issued for river otters, particularly in the north of the state.

According to a spokesman for the Pennsylvania Game Commission the reason is the pandemic: *“The pandemic left people with time they didn’t typically have. And people have been looking for things to do where they aren’t around other people, so they have been hunting, fishing and kayaking.”*

Isn’t it a terrible thought that if people have nothing else to do they have to go and kill something!

<https://triblive.com/local/regional/pa-hunting-licenses-up-7-shooting-range-permits-soar-93-turkey-permits-up-20/>

Another otter dies in a crayfish trap

Kevin Murphy, an environmental and wildlife enthusiast – not to mention a volunteer at Norfolk Wildlife Rescue – was devastated to find an otter trapped in an illegal crayfish trap on the River Wensum, Norfolk. As we have previously reported, this is not the first case of otters, and other wildlife, being trapped within this style of trap and is devastating news.

The use of illegal crayfish traps has increased since the start of the pandemic and they are causing more problems to other wildlife too. There are now calls for more education/awareness and people are encouraged to report any potential cases of use.

Another sad knock-on effect of the pandemic.

<https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/environment/dead-otter-river-wensum-crayfish-net-norwich-1-6940135>

Otters mistaken for calf killers

Farmers in the district of East Godavari, on the east coast of India, tried to kill two otters which they thought were responsible for killing calves. The villagers had not seen such animals before and assumed they were guilty. One otter escaped but sadly the other fell into an old well. The assistant director of the local veterinary department told villagers that the animal was a smooth-coated otter and posed no risk to calves. He believed that it was likely that a jackal was responsible for killing the calves.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/visakhapatnam/two-otters-mistaken-for-killer-of-calves/articleshow/79765793.cms>



Smooth-coated otters
Photo: Prof. MM Feeroz

More urban otters in UK

Salford - An otter has been spotted in the centre of Salford, Greater Manchester for the first time in a long time and it has caused quite a stir. The picture in the article, taken by Peter Openshaw, shows the otter enjoying the River Irwell, near the University of Salford. Mersey Rivers Trust was delighted by the news of the otters return and said it showed how their work is so worthwhile.

<https://secretmanchester.com/otters-river-irwell/>

<https://www.yahoo.com/entertainment/otter-spotted-fishing-bedford-floodwaters-140000492.html>

Arrow Valley Lake, Redditch – Otters in Arrow Valley Lake have also been in the news recently and have caused euphoria among visitors. That being said, it hasn't come without concerns from anglers about the otters and fish. We have said many times before, and it is no secret, that, yes otters eat fish. However, they have co-existed for millions of year and it is not in their best interests to "eat all the fish". The otters will live in balance with their ecosystem as is the way in nature.

<https://www.redditchadvertiser.co.uk/news/18973926.fishy-grumbles-arrow-valley-lake/?fbclid=IwAR1LWYKixsSlj8mle8WVX2QTwuvMDIBbuWio3EzkexBID1uD-nT8Ngr0a-0>

Fencing and signage to protect otters

Recently, otters on the River Stour in Dorset have been subject to increased hype and visitors have come to see this charismatic species and have even been known to enter the water to get closer. Now fencing has been put up to stop people getting too near and allow otters some safe areas. The fencing does not stop people watching them, or opportunities to take pictures, but ensures that the otters are offered safe distance, and minimal disturbance, to continue their natural lives.



We must all remember that otters are a protected species and disturbance is illegal. It is also important to know that they are wild animals and therefore we should act carefully. Approaching an otter in the wild, particularly in the water, puts yourself and the animal in immediate danger. Always maintain a safe distance for both you and the otter.

<https://www.dorsetcho.co.uk/news/18891928.signs-fencing-installed-along-river-stour-reports-otter-disturbance/>

Discarded fishing gear threatening wildlife on the River Ganges

A study along the River Ganges from the Himalayas to the mouth of the river in Bangladesh has found that wildlife, including some endangered species, is in danger of entanglement from discarded fishing gear. Fisherman, generally, do their best to repair their nets and other fishing equipment but when they are beyond repair they often discard them into the rivers. As the river nears the sea, the problem worsens. The Ganges is home to a number of species including otters, turtles and river dolphins and they are all at risk of entanglement or ingestion of the nets.

Although this study focused on the River Ganges, it is imperative that we all reduce waste as much as possible and dispose of it in a wildlife-friendly way.

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/11/201125091503.htm>

More on otter cafes

In 2018 Sharne MacMillan published a paper in our OTTER Journal (Issue 4) about the developing otter cafes in Japan and the threat this poses on wild populations of Asian small-clawed otters. These cafes are undoubtedly increasing the demand for pet otters, many of which are taken from the wild after the mother has been killed.

Now a new article has been published in Scientific American entitled "Exotic Animal Cafés Featuring Otters, Lizards and Owls Raise Alarms". This highlights the fact that 406 cafes were identified with 252 species of mammal, reptile and bird – 234 of these were endangered species.



However, in the article, Sharne points out that this is probably an underestimate as not all cafes are online and some may not appear in the search results.

There are other problems with the development of such cafes. If animals are bought as pets, the new owner may not know how to care for them, or may tire of them and dump them. This, in turn, could lead to diseases being transmitted to wild populations or even an invasion of non-native species.

Clearly more education and awareness needs to be done to reduce this threat not just to otters but to all wildlife.

https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/exotic-animal-cafes-featuring-otters-lizards-and-owls-raise-alarms1/?fbclid=IwAR3c_m2jy8T10au6StBZwVylCnTgx6-MOzijBldX3iXeUKjHc9DPTiWY2oI

A Short Film on Otters

A short film has been produced as an introduction to otters on Tewkesbury Nature Reserve in Gloucestershire. There is some close up footage and information about the importance of clean river water and undisturbed banks for their continued conservation.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fevqMvArVA&feature=youtu.be>

Thank You...

for your kind donations, generously given to support our work in otter conservation.

Thanks also to The Bryan Guinness Charitable Trust.

We can't do it without you.

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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/>



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>

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

All other countries:

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

Life Membership (all countries): £350.00

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

If you are reading this for the first time and would like to receive all IOSF mailings, click [here](#) 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
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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