



Otter News January 2024

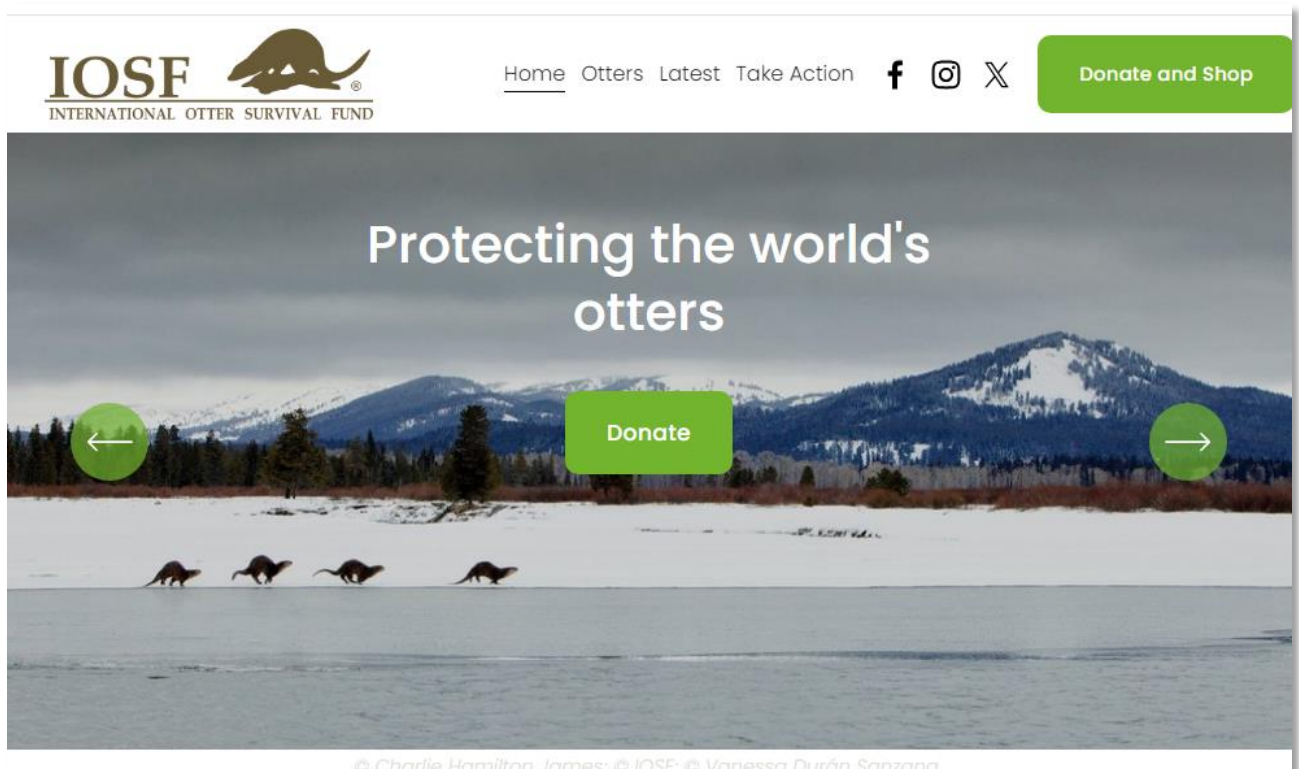
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<http://tinyurl.com/p3lrsmx>

Please share our news



New Otter.org

Firstly, some exciting news. Some of you may already have seen our new website.



This has taken a lot of hard work, particularly by Ben and Callum with the help of Dougi, and we are delighted with the end result.

You will find all the usual information on otters, our work, and the children's section but in a much newer and easier to use format.

We hope you will enjoy it.

IOSF Student Research Grant

If you are thinking of applying for the IOSF Student Research Grant for 2024 time is **running out**.

This project is for students who have completed their first year's studies. It is designed to help them learn about field survey techniques under the guidance of Andrew Rothwell, an experienced otter surveyor. It will also provide them with the basis of their degree dissertation and we would hope that it could lead to more ecological



work on otters in the future.

All applications have to be received by 29 February so contact enquiries@otter.org for more information and an application form.

IOSF Otter Oscars



We are always excited by the quality of work in the nominations received for the IOSF Otter Oscars. However, this always makes for difficult decisions for the panel but there have to be winners and it is great to announce the Winners for 2023:

Community Achievement - Salami Olalekan Michael, Nigeria.

Salami Olalekan Michael is involved in The Otter Awareness Campaign and Conservation Education Program in Igbokoda, Ondo State, Nigeria. Here they are raising awareness and sharing knowledge about otter ecology through on-site visits and educational outreach; also encouraging sustainable practices in communities, such as ecotourism and regulating fishing gear.

Group or Organisation - Projeto Ariranhas, Brazil.

Projeto Ariranhas was found in 2019 by Caroline Leuchtenberger (biologist) and is based on nearly two decades of studies and conservation efforts focused on the Giant otter (*Pteronura brasiliensis*) in the Brazilian Pantanal. By promoting human coexistence with this species, the Project aims to transform the Giant otter into a symbol of a balanced ecosystem.

Research - Cardiff University Otter Project, Wales, UK.

The Cardiff University Otter Project was set up in 1992. Over 30 years on, the CUOP continues as a long term environmental surveillance scheme, which uses otters found dead to investigate contaminants, disease, and population biology in England, Wales and Scotland.

Photography/Artwork - Jorge Valenzuela, Chile.

Jorge's image of a Marine otter (*Lutra felina*), running at full stretch across its beach, is unusual in that so many photographs of this amazing otter species are of it in the ocean.



Young Person - Asher Scott McCarty, United States.

Asher is dedicated to otters and has shown this in various ways, including sharing information with classmates and educating people about them. Asher has also adopted local otters and raised money for IOSF, using tireless and resourceful efforts.

Special Award - Dr. Hiroshi Sasaki Professor, Japan.

Dr. Sasaki has studied Asian otters since the 1990s. He is currently professor at Chikushi Jogakuen University, Chairman of the Asian Otter Conservation Society of Japan and involved in setting up new regulations for keeping captive otters in Japan. Dr. Sasaki has carried out a lot of genetic work particularly on extinct Japanese otter and also on identification of otter which appeared on Tsushima Island, Japan in 2017.



Congratulations to all of the winners.

Look out for more photos on our website... as we get them!

News from The Sanctuary

The weather here on Skye has been changing constantly over the last month. Earlier in the month there was a lot of snow, but our otters seemed quite happy with that. We seem to have had a lot of gales and rain especially over the last couple of weeks but now the forecast is for more snow soon.



Little Louis and Maggie seem particularly happy to enjoy the snow and have been spending a lot of time outside exploring.

Eden and Winston are very private and we rarely see them out. They are now big strong otters and we are starting to make plans for their release.

Bealltinn does not seem to be a fan of the wind and rain and from what we see she just runs out and grabs her fish and goes back to her box. Like the others she was happier in the snow and we found little slides on to her frozen pond.

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 <https://ottershop.co.uk/products/donate-to-iosf?variant=32787580616842>



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



Since the turn of the year, it's been a busy few weeks for Team Otter Broadford and the kids have been working hard!

The group have been working on litter picks, an environmental podcast with Radio Skye and have been interviewed by the West Highland Free Press, our local paper.

Here are some highlights of what we have been up to:

1. A litter pick of Harrapool with Struan, John and Ruairidh of the High School group
2. A clean up of the Co-op, our local supermarket by the Primary School group – collecting a massive four bags of litter, and that was only half the job!!
3. Dylan and Struan have started work on their environmental podcast. They have interviewed local residents of Broadford to get their thoughts on the impacts of environmental issues such as climate change, and what their concerns are. The following day, the group, along with Radio Skye, interviewed all Team Otter members on their thoughts on being involved with Team Otter, and their concerns for the wildlife/natural world.



- Just this week, we were joined by Willie and Daniel from the West Highland Free Press who interviewed the children on what Team Otter is, what we do, and their concerns for the environment. They were also talking to Dylan and Struan in more detail about the podcast!

A big thanks to Radio Skye, the West Highland Free Press and our helper, Nicholas, as always!



For more information about Team Otter, visit our website (<https://www.otter.org/our-work-team-otter>) and Facebook. If you are interested in forming your own Team Otter Club contact Ben@otter.org.

Big Give Christmas Challenge



We want to say a BIG thanks to everyone who supported our 2023 Christmas Challenge for our Team Otter project, connecting kids with Nature. So, whether you are our Champion, Pledgers or Donators; we are grateful of your support in helping us reach our target for this great project. Today's children will be the decision makers of the future and we aim to ignite a passion within them to become stewards of their local and global natural world.



Your continued support through donations and sponsorships inspires our otter conservation work and helps to drive us forward, for which we are grateful.

Special thanks go to the following:

Blinks Trust, Kilverstone Wildlife Charitable Trust

Corporate Sponsors:
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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 <https://www.otter.org/take-action-corporate?rq=corporate>





Plans for World Otter Day 2024 are coming on and we are currently working on this year's Webinar. As usual there will be two sessions to allow people from different time zones to join us.

Three IOSF grants of £100 are on offer again. These grants are towards the running of a World Otter Day event such as an education day, awareness campaign, or otter research!

Follow the link below to find out more and apply. Closing date is Friday 22 March 2024
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfs_H1vRoec2_a0BkaQAzH00a-OpXdYNICFAoj1-7-iYsya8Q/viewform?usp=sf_link

Update on the German Otter Cull

The call for a cull in Germany has been going on for a long time now as fishermen in Bavaria claimed that they were having a major impact on fish stocks.

The issue ended up in the courts as conservationists fought to prevent this from happening and we recently received an email from Hans-Heinrich Krüger from www.mustela-consult.com with the following update:



"In the last month I was involved in the court case fighting for the otters in Bavaria. The government said that they should be killed at the ponds. But in the first step we have won the case. We submitted an urgent application (The Aktion Fischotterschutz, Die Deutsche Umwelthilfe und der BN-Bayern) and it worked - the culling is stopped. But the main hearing will happen in some month (years?)."

This is indeed good news and thanks go to all those involved in pursuing this case to protect the Bavarian otters.

Good News about Pollution Monitoring

On 24 January the Environment Minister, Steve Barclay, announced that water companies will no longer be able to self-monitor pollution from their own treatment works. He also called for more responsibility and powers to be given to the Environment Agency (EA) to deal with companies that discharge raw sewage.

Since 2009 water companies have been able to monitor and report on pollution incidents themselves with little or no input from the government or environmental regulators. Their reports are supposed to be checked annually by EA but in many cases this simply doesn't happen.

In 2022 there were more than 300,000 sewage spills into the rivers and seas – this is horrific. It is argued that some are "legal" under permits from EA but of course many are "illegal". And if they are checking themselves it is easy to classify the spills as "legal" - this has been described as "marking their own homework" and it has to stop.

These changes are supposed to come in within the next year and there are also calls for bonuses and



incentives to be withheld for companies who breach the regulations and allow such spills to happen on a regular basis.

Clearly this has a knock-on effect for otters and other aquatic organisms. How can people claim that otters are everywhere in the UK when the water is so clearly polluted? Is it any wonder that they are turning to people's fish ponds to try and get good clean fish to eat? If the waters are cleaned up as they should be then we can go towards a balanced ecosystem with good prey availability for our otters.

<https://buff.ly/3HDSZjv>

Wheldrake Ings

There were various articles in the media saying that the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust had confirmed that otters are breeding at Wheldrake Ings for the first time since the 1960s. This followed a video of a female and cubs playing on the ice.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-humber-67761064>

<https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/country-and-farming/wheldrake-ings-otter-filmed-playing-with-cubs-at-yorkshire-wildlife-trust-reserve-in-first-evidence-of-breeding-since-1960s-4100260>

Of course it is good news that the otters are breeding there, but IOSF have records of them breeding much more recently.

In 2009 we were contacted by someone who was concerned that part of the reserve had been dredged and willows uprooted, even though otters were recorded as present. Furthermore about two years previously two cubs had to be rescued and were taken into care when a nursery holt was damaged.

So the Trust has known that they are breeding in the area since at least 2007-8 and these records must surely be in their database. Yes we know that the media can change things when they report matters but such "facts", which are clearly wrong, have presumably come from the Trust.

The Trust website has been updated so that it now says "they are breeding again in the area in what is thought to be the first time in years."

It is important that when we send out information to the public and the Media that we get our facts correct.

Otter Shop Product of the Month

www.ottershop.co.uk – click through to the Home page

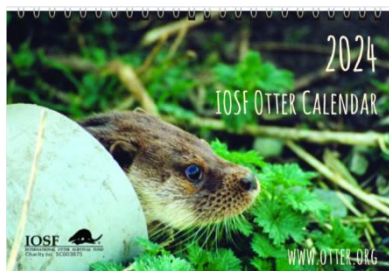
Don't forget that Valentine's Day is very close. Why not download, print and send (or email) our donation e-card... just follow the link to get yours

<https://ottershop.co.uk/search?q=valentines>



Save, Save, Save

Bargain hunters will be interested in our 2024 Otter Calendar reduced price, and discount at cart on our Christmas cards:



News in Brief

Another otter dies in a snare

Another otter has suffered an agonising death as a result of a snare in Little Bowden, Leicestershire. The otter was found with a deep wound caused by the snare which was still attached. It was taken to the vet but had to be euthanised due to the severity of its wounds.

By law a snare has to be checked every 24 hours but clearly this did not happen in this case. We have had similar incidents on Skye in the past.

The Police and RSPCA are investigating this incident and anyone with information should contact PC Kelly Tones from Leicestershire's Rural Policing team on 101, quoting reference 24*39510.

In November's e-update we reported that Scotland and Wales are both taking steps to ban these horrific devices of torture. So now it is time for England to follow the lead and ban them there too.

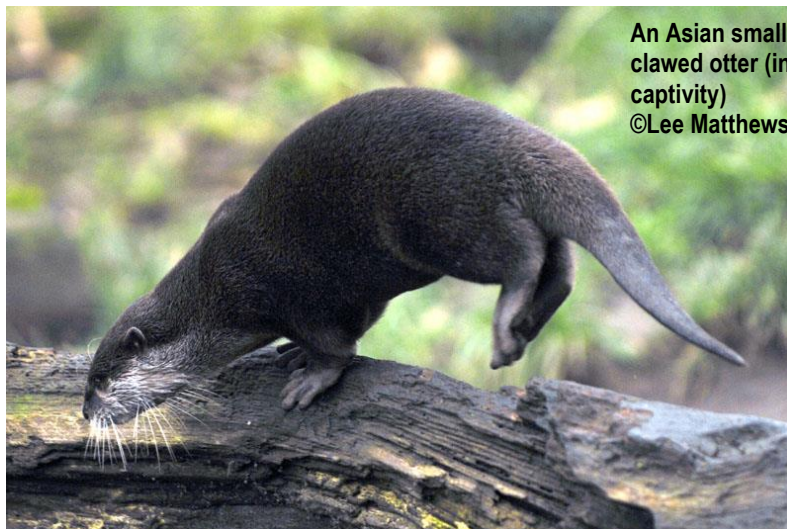
<https://harboroughfm.co.uk/otter-dies-after-being-caught-in-snare/>

New sighting of Asian small-clawed otter in Assam

The Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve in Assam has started the year with new photographic records of two mammal species – the binturong and the Asian small-clawed otter. This brings the number of mammal species in the Park to 37.

The photo of the otter was taken by the Park's Divisional Forest Officer, Arun Vignesh, after a training session for Park staff organised by the Wildlife Institute of India and Assam Forest Department. Smooth-coated otters were already known to be present but this is the first record for the Asian small-clawed otter.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/two-new-mammalian-species-added-to-kazirangas-fauna/article67762072.ece#:~:text=The%20two%20mammals%20are%20the,Wildlife%20Protection%20Act%20of%201972>



An Asian small-clawed otter (in captivity)
©Lee Matthews

Hungry sea otters are restoring the habitat in the California marshlands

In some areas fishermen are worried that the sea otter's appetite for shellfish could pose a real threat to their fisheries. However, in California they are proving to be a positive asset in reducing erosion. The striped shore crab digs, burrows and eats the roots of the marsh grass pickleweed. This plant holds the banks together and so the crabs' activities are causing the marshlands to look like "Swiss cheese" and collapse. The good news is, that it turns out that one of the favourite foods of the otters is the striped shore crab and so they are helping to reduce the negative impact of the crabs on the habitat.

<https://www.euronews.com/green/2024/02/01/crabs-turned-this-marshland-into-swiss-cheese-until-sea-otters-arrived-to-keep-them-in-che>



More potential problems for pet otters

We have said so many times that photo and video images of otters being “cute” continue to encourage the pet trade. These images appear on social media and just make people want an otter of their own. Often these are posted by actual pet owners or Otter cafes, but we were disappointed to see that two zoos, namely the Keikyu Aburatsubo Marine Park in Tokyo and the Dubai Aquarium are also doing the same. In both zoos, the otters are kept in a clear enclosure with little ventilation holes so that the public can hold their “hands”.

We have written to both zoos pointing out our concern and are awaiting a response.
<https://www.thechronicle.com.au/technology/science/zoo-in-dubai-lets-you-hold-hands-with-otters/video/40955690bd3d4acb9229d607d5032bed>

Image of The Month (©Giff Beaton)

Giff Beaton was actually birding in Honduras, when an otter was spotted in the river near to them and were able to watch it for a while. Following a commotion, the otter left the water and headed up the beach with its catch of a large crab which it took into the brush, not to be seen again. How fantastic for Giff to have such an amazing encounter with this Neotropical otter and to share this wonderful image with us.



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

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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 makes 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 <https://www.otter.org/take-action-legacy> will take you to our dedicated web page concerning making a Legacy.

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YOU can raise FREE donations when you shop online...

It's simple and costs no more than what you spend:

Donate – one-off or regular



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





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





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



OR, scan and add our charity code 62575




<https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/donate?cid=630>






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





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



Vehicle Disposal – yes, even your old vehicle can earn great donations whether it's scrap or auction (fees apply)



Annual Adoption Renewal 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? Then please SHARE 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](#).

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Working to Save the World's Otters

