

# IUCN SSC Otter Specialist Group

2019 Report



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## Number of members

338

## Social networks

Facebook: IUCN SSC Otter Specialist Group  
Instagram: iucn\_otterspecialistgroup  
Twitter: @IUCN\_OSG  
Websites:  
<https://www.otterspecialistgroup.org/>  
[www.himalayanotternetwork.org](http://www.himalayanotternetwork.org)



## Mission statement

The Otter Specialist Group (OSG), founded in 1974: (1) provides leadership for the conservation of all 13 otter species; (2) determines and reviews on a continuing basis the status and needs of otters, and promotes the implementation of necessary research, conservation and management programmes by appropriate organisations and governments; (3) communicates the status and conservation needs of otters and promotes the wise management of other species.

## Projected impact for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

By the end of 2020, we hope to reduce the extinction risk of four Asian otter species, our current high priority. We published the Asian Otter Conservation Manifesto in 2016 and our Global Otter Conservation Strategy in late 2018. The Strategy lists regional conservation priorities for each of the 13 otter species and the budgets required, which will help accelerate project funding and implementation. We published our second and third TRAFFIC reports on the Illegal Otter Trade in Asia in 2018, which will expand targeted conservation actions and community programmes. In South America, we bolstered national initiatives and programmes for three endangered otter species in Brazil, Peru, Chile and Argentina with targeted field research, local assistance from NGOs, and national parks. In April 2019, we held our 14th International Otter Congress in the Tangjiahe Nature Reserve, Sichuan, China, with 140 participants from 39 countries in attendance. Representatives from Chinese Nature Resources and National Park ministries participated and pledged to finance a China-wide survey with the OSG's assistance.

## Targets for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

### Assess

Green List: collaborate with setting up an Otter Green List.

Red List: Red List reassessment of 13 species.

### Plan

Planning: (1) discuss conservation of otters at the 'Southeast Asian Otter Conservation Planning Meeting', Singapore, September 2018; (2) expand projects of the African Otter Network; (3) co-host the 'European Otters in the Alps: towards a common strategy across boundaries' meeting, October 2018.

Policy: advise for uplisting of two Asian otter species to CITES Appendix I.

### Act

Conservation actions: expand the number of educational materials available for download on the OSG website and in print.

### Network

Synergy: expand the OSG Otters in Zoos Task Force.

### Communicate

Communication: (1) publish and distribute the Global Otter Conservation Strategy; (2) publish two issues of the OSG Bulletin per year.

Scientific meetings: (1) prepare the Eurasian Otter Workshop, Croatia, October 2020; (2) prepare and participate in the 14th International Otter Congress, Chengdu, China; (3) prepare and participate in the 2nd Nepal Otter Network meeting.

Sea Otter, *Enhydra lutris*  
Photo: Nicole Duplaix



African Spotted-necked Otter, *Hydrictis maculicollis*  
Photo: Galway



## Activities and results 2019

### Assess

#### Green List

i. A close collaboration with the Green List has produced quick results setting up an Otter Green List. By 2019, eight out of 11 Green List assessments were completed. (KSR #11)

#### Red List

i. No Red List species status have been changed. All 13 species and distribution maps have been updated. (KSR #1)

### Plan

#### Planning

i. Projects of the African Otter Network: two research projects have been funded in Benin and South Africa and are due to start in late 2020. (KSR #15)

#### Policy

i. At the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP18), two species of Asian otter were successfully uplisted from Appendix II to Appendix I. Eighty percent of the parties to CITES voted for the uplisting of the two Asian otter species to Appendix I. (KSR #21, 26)

### Act

#### Conservation actions

i. We are expanding OSG otter educational materials to new countries/languages, including Siberia (Russia), Lao PDR, Taiwan, and Indonesia. We are also promoting World Otter Day to encourage community celebrations in Asia, Europe, North America and South America. Many educational materials are available for all 13 otter species, including: species information, maps, games, colouring books, posters, postcards, and the *We Love Otters!* book.

### Network

#### Synergy

i. In an effort to expand our close association with otter *ex situ* efforts, we have collaborated with both Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) small carnivore and European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) otter Taxon Advisory Groups. There are two new TAG coordinators for the US and Europe. Our close collaboration with the Conservation Planning Specialist Group (CPSG) will continue. (KSR #29)

### Communicate

#### Communication

i. The OSG bulletin is published online, which allows for rapid peer review and publication. Two bulletins were published as scheduled. (KSR #28)

#### Scientific meetings

i. 14th International Otter Congress, Chengdu, China: one-hundred and forty participants from 39 countries attended the meeting. Funding for a China-wide survey was assured at the meeting. (KSR #28)

ii. The 2nd Nepal Otter Network Meeting took place 15–16 February 2019, in Pokhara. The Himalayan Otter Network has been very active in the field and in planning since its first meeting in 2017. It is currently developing its country-wide otter action plan. (KSR #28)

### Acknowledgements

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### Summary of activities 2019

Components of Species Conservation Cycle: 5/5

Assess	2	
Plan	2	
Act	1	
Network	1	
Communicate	3	

Main KSRs addressed: 1, 11, 15, 21, 26, 28, 29

KSR: Key Species Result