

IUCN SSC Otter Specialist Group

2020 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



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: conduct 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) co-host the 'European Otters in the Alps: towards a common strategy across boundaries' meeting, October 2018; (3) develop the Nepal Otter Action Plan.

Act

Conservation actions: (1) expand projects of the African Otter Network; (2) expand the number of educational materials available for download on the OSG website and in print.

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

Network

Synergy: expand the OSG Otters in Zoos Task Force.

Communicate

Communication: (1) publish the Global Otter Conservation Strategy; (2) publish two issues of the OSG Bulletin per year; (3) launch the Indian subcontinent otter project.

Scientific meetings: (1) prepare the Eurasian Otter Workshop, Croatia, October 2020; (2) prepare the 14th International Otter Congress, Chengdu, China; (3) prepare and participate in the 2nd Nepal Otter Network meeting; (4) prepare the Third Himalayan Otter Network Meeting, Kathmandu, Nepal, February 21–23, 2020; (5) organise the XV International Otter Congress in Europe; (6) prepare the Sea Otter River Otter joint meeting at Seattle Aquarium.



Near Threatened Neotropical Otter, *Lontra longicaudis*
Photo: N. Duplaix

Activities and results 2020

Assess

Green List

i. Green List assessments were completed for Eurasian Otter (*Lutra lutra*), Congo Clawless Otter (*Aonyx congicus*), Sea Otter (*Enhydra lutris*), Hairy-nosed Otter (*Lutra sumatrana*) and Neotropical Otter (*Lontra longicaudis*). Results will be published in: Grace, M.K., et al. (In press). 'Testing a global standard for quantifying species recovery and assessing conservation impact'. *Conservation Biology*. (KSR #11)

Red List

i. Red List assessment of 13 species has been completed and submitted. (KSR #1)

Plan

Planning

i. The Nepal Otter Action Plan has been conceived and realised within the Himalayan Otter Network. It represents the first part of the action plan for Nepal and is focused on research needs. (KSR #15)

Act

Conservation actions

- i.** Projects of the African Otter Network have been achieved in Benin and Uganda.
- ii.** Educational materials are available for download on the OSG website and in print: map and information expanded to other languages in Russia and African countries.

Network

Synergy

i. The OSG Otters in Zoos Task Force has two leaders, one in the US and one in the UK. (KSR #29)

Communicate

Communication

- i.** Four issues of the OSG Bulletin were published in 2020. (KSR #28)
- ii.** Project Lighthouse was accomplished. A website has been developed, devoted to filling knowledge gaps on the three otter species occurring in India: Smooth-coated Otter (*Lutrogale perspicillata*), Asian Small-clawed Otter (*Aonyx cinereus*) and Eurasian Otter. (KSR #28)

Scientific meetings

- i.** The Eurasian Otter Workshop, Croatia, has been re-scheduled for February–March 2021.
- ii.** The Third Himalayan Otter Network Meeting was held in Katmandu, 21–23 February 2020, attended by 25 participants.
- iii.** Ongoing agreements are in place with the Parc National du Mercantour (France) and Parco Regionale Alpi Marittime (Italy) for a trans-boundary organisation of the XV International Otter Congress.
- iv.** The Sea Otter and River Otter joint conference originally was to take place in 2020 but planned dates had to be changed several times because of the pandemic. As the conference planning committee prefers that this meeting be held face-to-face, it is anticipated to take place in March 2023.

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Summary of activities 2020

Species Conservation Cycle ratio: 5/5

Assess	2	■■
Plan	1	■
Act	2	■■
Network	1	■
Communicate	6	■■■■■■

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

KSR: Key Species Result