IUCN SSC Species Survival Commission

Species

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2024-2025 Report of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and Secretariat

Stand-alone report
IUCN SSC Otter Specialist Group

The IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC)

The IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) is a science-based network of thousands of volunteer experts from almost every country of the world, all working together toward achieving the vision of "a just world that values and conserves nature through positive action to both prevent the loss and aid recovery of the diversity of life on earth."

Members of SSC belong to one or more of near 200 Specialist Groups, Red List Authorities, Action Partnerships, Task Forces, and Conservation Committees that make up the Network, each focusing on a taxonomic group (plants, fungi, mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fishes, and invertebrates), national species, or a disciplinary issue, such as sustainable use and livelihoods, translocation of species, wildlife health, climate change, and conservation planning.

Framed by the Species Conservation Cycle, SSC's major role is to provide information to IUCN on biodiversity conservation, the inherent value of species, their role in ecosystem health and functioning, the provision of ecosystem services, and their support to human livelihoods. This information is fed into the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

2021-2025 Species Strategic Plan

The IUCN Species Strategic Plan encompasses the joint work of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and a number of partnerships to achieve more than 2,700 targets proposed by the Network during the 2021-2025 quadrennium.

To accomplish those targets, the Species Conservation Cycle was established, which is the conceptual framework for the Network activities. The Species Conservation Cycle's main purpose is to guide efforts for valuing and conserving biodiversity through three essential components that are linked to each other:

ASSESS: Understand and inform the world about the status and trends of biodiversity.

PLAN: Develop collaborative, inclusive and science-based conservation strategies, plans and policies.

ACT: Convene and mobilise conservation actions to improve the status of biodiversity.

Their implementation requires two transversal components:

NETWORK: Enhance and support our immediate network and alliances to achieve our biodiversity targets.

COMMUNICATE: Drive strategic and targeted communications to enhance our conservation impact.

SSC Species Report

Annual progress in the implementation of the 2021-2025 Species Strategic Plan is documented in the *SSC Species Report*, which consists of a comprehensive description and analysis of the activities and results generated by the members of the SSC Network and Centers for Species Survival (CSS) each year. Each SSC and CSS group contributes to this document by providing a yearly summarised description of their achievements, which is presented in standalone reports.

Structure of the IUCN SSC and CSS Stand-alone Reports

Stand-alone reports summarize the activities conducted and results generated by each group member of the SSC and CSS. Following, is the structure of the stand-alone report and the contents under each session.

Title of the group

Photograph(s) of the Chair/Co-Chairs

Group information
Includes names of Chair/Co-Chairs, Vice-Chairs, Deputy Chairs, Red List Authory Coordinators, Program Officers, Species Survival Directors, and Species Survival Officers, their institutional affiliations, number of members and social networks currently active.

Logo of the group

Mission statement
Includes the mission of the group.

Projected impact for the 2021-2025 quadrennium
Includes the description of the impact on species conservation resulting from the implementation of the targets formulated by the group for the 2021-2025 quadrennium.

Targets for the 2021-2025 quadrennium
Includes the targets planned by the SSC or CSS group for the 2021-2025 quadrennium ordered alphabetically by component of the Species Conservation Cycle. Each target is labeled with a numerical code (e.g., T-001, T-012) that identifies it in the SSC DATA database and its status for the reported year is indicated (Not initiated, On track or Achieved).

Activities and results
Includes the targets for which activities were conducted and results that were generated during 2024 (full year) and 2025 (first quarter), ordered alphabetically, first by component of the Species Conservation Cycle, and second by Activity Category. Description of activities and results includes the indicator that best describes progress, its associated quantitative or qualitative result, and the narrative description of the activity conducted or result obtained. Each activity or result reported is linked to the Key Species Result to which it is mainly associated (e.g., KSR#1, KSR#5).

Acknowledgements
Includes the acknowledgements to funding agencies, partners, and persons who contributed to the progress of the targets of the group.

Summary of achievements
Summarises information of the group's strategic plan for the quadrennium and progress achieved implementing targets for all the components of the Species Conservation Cycle during the reported year.

Animalia

Fungi

Plantae

National Species

Disciplinary

Action Partnership

Task Force

Red List Authority

Committee

Center for Species Survival

Example for the recommended citation:
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2024-2025 Report

IUCN SSC Otter Specialist Group

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Mission statement

The Otter Specialist Group (OSG), founded in 1974: (1) provides leadership for the conservation of all 14 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 (4) promotes the wise management of otter species.

Projected impact 2021–2025

By the end of this quadrennium, we expect to reinforce people's engagement in the conservation of otters in Asia to reduce conflicts and illegal pet trade. Our focus is also on expanding our presence in Africa and implementing our knowledge of the status and conservation needs of African otter species, as well as on developing conservation strategies for species hotspots in Southeast Asia and isolated populations in Europe and Asia. We also expect to increase awareness and capacity building of our members through training on conservation planning and human-wildlife coexistence.

Targets 2021–2025

ASSESS

T-014 Ensure affiliation to OSG is mentioned in peer-reviewed papers.
Status: On track

T-015 Conduct Red List assessment for the Eurasian Otter (*Lutra lutra*) in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Cambodia, Myanmar, Malaysia, Lebanon, Borneo, Indonesia, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakstan, Azerbaijan, Syria, Mongolia, Jordan, Iran and Japan.
Status: On track

T-016 Conduct Red List assessment for the Eurasian Otter in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia.
Status: On track

T-017 Conduct Red List assessment for the Eurasian Otter in non-EU European countries.
Status: On track

T-018 Assess impact of hunting on North American River Otter (*Lontra canadensis*) in the US.
Status: On track

T-019 Assess impact of hunting on Smooth-coated Otter (*Lutrogale perspicillata*) in Iraq.
Status: On track

T-020 Assess impact of hunting on Smooth-coated Otter in the Russian Federation.
Status: No longer a priority

T-021 Circulate a questionnaire to members on climate change impacts.
Status: On track

T-022 Complete Red List assessment of all 13 otter species.
Status: Achieved

T-023 Make Red List training mandatory for assessors and the management team.
Status: On track

T-024 Assess threats to otter species in Sikkim, India and other key areas in the Himalayan region.
Status: On track

T-039 Complete Green Status assessment for all species.
Status: On track

T-043 Launch two OSG research projects in South Africa, Uganda and Benin.
Status: Achieved

T-078 Complete the Red List Assessment of *Lontra annectens*.
Status: Not initiated

PLAN

T-027 Expand Sea Otter (*Enhydra lutris*) plan.
Status: On track

Giant Otter Project Team - Capture of a male Giant Otter at the Miranda river, Pantanal
Photo: Caroline Leuchtenberg

Giant Otter Project team - installing a Camera Trap at a Giant Otter den
Photo: Caroline Leuchtenberg

T-028 Develop the Himalayan Otter Conservation Strategy.
Status: On track

T-029 Develop an action plan for endangered and/or isolated populations of Eurasian Otter.
Status: On track

T-030 Develop an action plan for endangered and/or isolated populations of Eurasian Otter in Africa.
Status: No longer a priority

T-031 Survey conservation plans already planned.
Status: On track

T-032 Ensure every threatened species has a plan.
Status: On track

T-034 Conduct a funding search for the 'Otters of Nepal' book for community conservation.
Status: Achieved

T-035 Plan a Sea Otter and River Otter conservation meeting.
Status: Achieved

T-037 Develop a conservation strategy for the Eurasian Otter in the Alps.
Status: On track

T-038 Use GSP guidelines on IUCN engagement in global policies – Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), CITES,

Giant Otter Project Team - Identifying a Giant Otter latrine at the Vermelho River
Photo: Caroline Leuchtenberg

Giant Otter Project Team - Installing an Awareness Sign "Do Not Feed the Animals" with the Municipal Military Police at Passo do Lontra, Pantanal
Photo: Caroline Leuchtenberg

Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) – to help OSG members becoming engaged in national policies.
Status: On track

T-040 Develop conservation plans for critical areas: Borneo as species hotspot.
Status: On track

T-041 Develop conservation plans for critical areas: Sub-Saharan Africa.
Status: On track

T-057 Develop a Nepal Otter Action Plan.
Status: On track

T-064 Produce a mini-version of the World Otter Conservation Strategy for broader distribution.
Status: Not initiated

T-065 Write and distribute How to Save an Otter conservation planning methodology book.
Status: On track

ACT

T-025 Enact Citizen Science initiatives in Asia.
Status: On track

T-026 Enact Citizen Science initiatives in Africa.
Status: On track

T-042 Reschedule meeting in Singapore to 2025 to set up a wildlife trade monitoring plan: local actions to enhance otter conservation in key otter trade source and consumer countries.
Status: On track

T-043 Launch two OSG research projects in South Africa, Namibia, Uganda, and Benin.
Status: Achieved

T-044 Develop eDNA probes for freshwater otter species.
Status: On track

T-045 Develop a standard survey protocol and guidelines for Asian species.
Status: On track

T-046 Develop a standard survey protocol and guidelines for African species.
Status: On track

T-047 Test and implement eDNA monitoring of Eurasian Otter (Himalaya, India, Nepal, Italy).
Status: Achieved

T-048 Prepare background materials for proposal to list Hairy-nosed Otter (*Lutra sumatrana*) on CITES Appendix I.
Status: Achieved

T-049 Develop Google Map of OSG research and conservation actions worldwide.
Status: On track

T-050 Sustain and expand the Himalayan Otter Network.
Status: On track

T-051 Expand the Lighthouse project experience to hotspot critical areas.
Status: On track

T-052 Promote an African Otter Network.
Status: On track

T-053 Promote an Alpine Otter Network.
Status: On track

T-054 Prepare an updated version of the 1983 CITES Otter identification manual.
Status: Not initiated

T-055 Control pet trade for Asian Small-clawed Otter (*Aonyx cinereus*) and Smooth-coated Otter.
Status: On track

T-056 Promote research on emerging threats in freshwater habitats.
Status: On track

T-071 Prepare new guidelines for otters in captivity.
Status: On track

T-074 Sustain Giant Otter conservation.
Status: On track

NETWORK

T-001 Promote funding of projects in Africa.
Status: On track

T-002 Promote funding of projects on pet trade in Asia (Indonesia, China, India, Nepal).
Status: On track

T-003 Trace distribution of partnerships across assess, plan, act, network and communicate.
Status: On track

T-004 OSG Otter Partners: extend participation in OSG activities to otter supporters and NGOs. Create guidelines for this new form of OSG membership.
Status: On track

T-005 Establish in-kind partnerships with local governments and NGOs.
Status: On track

T-006 Carry out members survey.
Status: On track

T-007 Identify gaps in OSG skills.
Status: On track

T-008 Strengthen collaboration with other IUCN components, i.e. IUCN National Committees, Freshwater Conservation Committee, Climate Change Specialist Group, Conservation Planning Specialist Group.
Status: Achieved

T-009 Survey and map OSG projects.
Status: On track

Giant Otter Project Team - Our Coordinator and Veterinarian conducting a necropsy of a dead animal found at the Negro River, Pantanal
Photo: Caroline Leuchtenberg

T-010 Support European Union-funded projects for otters.
Status: No longer a priority

T-011 Involve research institutions, associations, zoos, NGOs, national parks and Veterinarian Health Service in roadkill collection and necropsies.
Status: On track

T-012 Train in conservation planning.
Status: On track

T-013 Document on threats to freshwater species.
Status: On track

T-036 Expand involvement with Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA), World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) and One Plan approach.
Status: On track

T-068 Build capacity of people involved in projects in Africa.
Status: On track

T-076 Create an Otter Youth Circle and promote capacity building within their members.
Status: On track

COMMUNICATE

T-058 Expand World Otter Day community celebrations on multimedia.
Status: On track

T-059 Expand World Otter Day community celebrations in Asia.
Status: On track

T-060 Expand World Otter Day community celebrations in North America and Canada.
Status: On track

T-061 Expand World Otter Day community celebrations in Central and South America.
Status: On track

T-062 Expand World Otter Day community celebrations in Europe.
Status: On track

T-063 Giant Otter (*Pteronura brasiliensis*) day village celebrations in Peru and Brazil.
Status: On track

T-066 Expand available OSG otter educational materials to new countries and languages.
Status: On track

T-067 Strengthen the collaboration with IUCN One Programme and work more closely with the Commission on Education and Communication.
Status: Achieved

T-069 Hold the XVth International Otter Congress.
Status: Achieved

T-070 Establish an OSG Newsletter.
Status: Achieved

T-072 Publish OSG Bulletin regularly.
Status: Achieved

T-073 Organize the 1st Eurasian Otter Workshop.
Status: Achieved

T-075 Celebrate 50th OSG anniversary (1974-2024).
Status: On track

T-077 Organize the 2nd Eurasian Otter Workshop.
Status: On track

T-079 Organize the 16th International Otter Congress.
Status: On track

Activities and results 2024-2025

ASSESS

Green Status

T-039 Complete Green Status assessment for all species. (KSR 6)

Number of new Green Status of Species assessments completed: 6

Result description: Activities during 2024 included: (1) An online meeting organised on June 2024 with OSG species coordinators and Magdalena Cygan from the IUCN SSC Green Status of Species - SSC Integration Task Force to plan and organise the assessment of otter species but the Eurasian Otter (already published); (2) The Green Status of the Sea Otter has been completed by the species coordinator Shawn Larson with the collaboration of Riley A. Pollom, and is now published; (3) The Green Status of the Smooth Coated Otter has been completed by Sayanti Basak and Syed A. Hussain, and is now waiting for revision by the IUCN SSC Green Status of Species -SSC Integration Task Force; (4) The Green Status of the Neotropical River Otter (*L. longicaudis*) has been drafted by the species coordinator Marcelo Rheingantz. However, the recent description of the new species *Lontra annectes* in Central America (De Ferran *et al*. 2024) claims for a revision and reassessment of the species which is now restricted to South America; (5) The Green Status assessment for the Marine Otter (*L. felina*) has been drafted by the species coordinator Jeffrey Mangel, and (6) The Green Status assessment for the Congo Clawless Otter (*Aonyx congicus*), the Cape Clawless Otter (*A. capensis*), and the North American River Otter have been initiated by the OSG species coordinators.

Red List

T-015 Conduct Red List assessment for the Eurasian Otter (*L. lutra*) in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Cambodia, Myanmar, Malaysia, Lebanon, Borneo, Indonesia, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakstan, Azerbaijan, Syria, Mongolia, Jordan, Iran and Japan. (KSR 7)

Number of countries that have done National Red List Index (NRLI) or nationally disaggregated global RLI: 3

Result description: A survey of the Eurasian Otter in Kazakhstan was run and published in 2024 by the species co-coordinator Alexsey Oleynikov [Oleynikov, AY. (2024). 'Otter distribution and status in Kazakhstan'. *OTTER*, Journal of the International Otter Survival Fund]. Although unsuccessful, a grant proposal to develop the National Otter Conservation Strategy in Kazakhstan was submitted for the IUCN Red List Grant on July 2024. A review and recommendations for conservation of the species were published. An essay on the Eurasian Otter was prepared for the *Red Book of Kazakhstan* (accepted for publication, to be published in 2025). A literature review of the Eurasian Otter in Central Asia was prepared jointly with Melissa Savage. In Iran, the distribution of and threats to the Eurasian Otter were assessed in the Anzali Wetland, Iran [Naderi, S, *et al*. (2017). 'Distribution of and threats to the Eurasian Otter (L. lutra) in the Anzali Wetland, Iran'. *IUCN Otter Spec. Group Bull*, 34(2), 84-94], and new records of the species in the Caspian Sea were reported (Karimi and Badelu, in press). The distribution of the Eurasian Otter in Morocco was studied using a comprehensive database comprising over 600 observations from traditional surveys conducted over a century and 24 years (Mahamoud *et al*. *in press*). Findings indicate that prior to the 1950s, the European Otter was extensively distributed across intermediate-altitude aquatic ecosystems in Morocco. However, since then, there has been a notable decline, with the species becoming increasingly rare in the southern regions and along the densely populated or cultivated Atlantic plains. Its presence in certain agricultural areas suggests a potential adaptation to environmental pressures.

Research activities

T-014 Ensure affiliation to OSG is mentioned in peer-reviewed papers. (KSR 5)

Number of scientific publications about species research that acknowledge SSC affiliation: 11

Result description: Eleven articles have been published acknowledging affiliation to IUCN SSC Otter Specialist Group. Authors instructions for the *IUCN Otter Specialist Group Bulletin* are being updated by the Editor in Chief by including the request to specificy author's OSG affiliation when submitting the manuscript.

PLAN

Planning

T-027 Expand Sea Otter (*E. lutris*) plan. (KSR 8)

Number of conservation plans/strategies developed: 1

Result description: In 2024, a support letter was provided by the IUCN SSC Otter Specialist Group for the Confederated Tribes of Slietz Indians' 2024 pre-proposal for an America the Beautiful Challenge grant for Sea Otter reintroduction planning.

T-028 Develop the Himalayan Otter Conservation Strategy. (KSR 8)

Number of conservation plans/strategies developed: 1

Result description: The Fourth Himalayan Otter Network Workshop is being planned in Kathmandu in 2025 or 2026.

T-030 Develop an action plan for endangered and/or isolated populations of Eurasian Otter in Africa. (KSR 8)

Number of species conservation plans/strategies developed: 1

Result description: WWF North Africa is considering the inclusion of the Eurasian Otter (*L. lutra*) as a focus species for conservation efforts in the region. As an initial step, WWF is planning to conduct a survey in Garaa Sejnane, one of the most significant wetlands in northern Tunisia. This area lies within the Otter's distribution range and is in proximity to Lac Ichkeul, historically regarded as a crucial habitat for the species in Tunisia, as noted by Macdonald and Manson in 1982. The aim is to develop a preliminary action plan for the conservation of the species in Tunisia.

T-032 Ensure every threatened species has a plan. (KSR 8)

Number of species conservation plans/strategies developed: 4

Result description: In 2024, work was carried out on four species conservation plans: (1) The OSG Marine Otter coordinator Jeffrey Mangel participated in the first of two preparatory/info gathering meetings being held by the Peru government toward the establishment of an action plan for the Marine Otter. A second meeting will be held in January 2025; (2) The Marine Otter coordinator Jeffrey Mangel co-authored chapter 4 of the book Marine Otter Conservation; (3) The OSG Marine Otter coordinator is also preparing a section on Marine Otters for the Handbook of the Mammals of Middle and South America, in preparation for *Springer Nature*, and (4) Conservation plans for Sea Otters are in place in the US and Canada. A survey of conservation plans has been planned. New reintroductions currently being planned.

T-034 Conduct a funding search for the '*Otters of Nepal*' book for community conservation. (KSR 8)

Number of conservation plans/strategies developed: 1

Result description: A new otter survey and monitoring guideline booklet for Nepal, in Nepali, has been published in 2024, that will be part of the book.

T-057 Develop a Nepal Otter Action Plan. (KSR 8)

Number of conservation plans/strategies developed: 1

Result description: Nepal will complete its Nepal Otter Action Plan in 2025, in collaboration between WWF Nepal, the Small Mammals Research and Conservation Foundation, and the government of Nepal. Also in the planning stage is the Fourth HON Workshop, at Kathmandu in 2025 or 2026.

Policy

T-037 Develop a conservation strategy for the Eurasian Otter in the Alps. (KSR 9)

Number of policies where SSC members provided technical input: 1

Result description: Gran Paradiso National Park is supporting the creation of an online geodatabase to share data on Eurasia Otter across the Alpine range, in collaboration with Alessandro Balestrieri. An online meeting was held on March 13, 2025. The meeting was organized by the Italian Gran Paradiso National Park that is coordinating actions for an international strategy for otters in the Alpine range. The meeting was chaired by the OSG member Caterina Ferrari from Gran Paradiso National Park, and attended by OSH Co-Chair Anna Loy, OSG members Andreas Kranz from Austria, Irene Weinbergen and Sarah Hummel from Switzerland, Valentina Ruco, Marco Pavanello fand Patrizia Gavagnin from Italy, and Michele Guerini from the Alpine Network of Protected Areas (Alparc), Alessandro Balestrieri and Paolo Carlo Maria Tremolada from the University of MIlan, Laura Martinelli form the Alpi Marittime Natural Park, and Virginia Barca from the University of Udine. The meeting discussed about sharing and mapping data on otter presence and threats in the

Poster of the webinar organized by the Otter Youth Circle on November 24, 2024
Design: Simon Rohner

Poster of the Otter Youth Circle webinar 25 August 2024 by Sivasothi 'Otter joy from around the world and how it reached Singapore'
Design: Simon Rohner

Alpine region. The data will be stored on a WebGIS platform, with one or two editors by country ensuring for data quality, input and requests. The data will contribute a distribution map of 10x10 km cell grid map that hosted by the Lutralps website. The network also set other objectives, including monitor otter populations effectively, contribute to otter recovery efforts, organize workshop or training for Park rangers, encourage people to submit new records, working on communication and awareness towards the species and its habitat. The next step will be to sign a formal agreement among partners committed to promote the return of otters in the Alpine range.

ACT

Conservation actions

T-026 Enact Citizen Science initiatives in Africa. (KSR 10)

Number of areas under management for the species or group of species: 3

Result description: A recent survey in Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda run by the OSG coordinator for the Spotted Necked Otter (*Hydrictis maculicollis*), Hélène Jacques, reported otters are probably plentiful in protected or less populated area. Mainly the Spotted Necked Otter but also probably Congo Clawless Otter near the Democratic Republic of Congo. Also, an African World Otter Day Competition is planned for the World Otter Day in 2025. Finally, an African meeting has been planned for 2025, likely in South Africa, aimed at extend the African Otter Network and engage communities in otter research and conservation.

T-050 Sustain and expand the Himalayan Otter Network. (KSR 10)

Number of threatened species benefiting from *in situ* conservation action: 3

Result description: The first biannual Newsletter from the Himalayan Otter Network was released by Jyoti Bhandari on July 2024. The newsletter announced that the Darwin Initiative funds a Three-Year Project in Nepal. The newsletter also reported that in March 2024 the Wild Otters team leaded by the OSG South Asia coordinator Katrina Fernandez conducted a survey on 11 rivers/streams and found signs of Small-clawed Otter activity in the rivers Siang, Yamne, Siku, Deopani, Dri, Difu,Lohit, Lai, Malwa and Dibang, as well as one unnamed jungle stream. The team also engaged with local communities and discovered that otter hunting and trade are prevalent in the region. This highlights the urgent need for conservation efforts to protect otters. Finally, Sunita Khatiwara reports an assessments of the feral dog population in two protected area landscapes in Sikkim: Kyongnosla and Pangolakha. Preliminary findings indicate a correlation between the increasing feral dog population and the presence of military establishments and open waste disposal sites. To address this issue, the team has been organising periodic awareness meetings with the army and local communities while also implementing sterilization efforts to manage the feral dog population in the area. The newsletter reported the following articles addressed to otters in Himalaya published: (1) Jamwal, PS, *et al*. (2023). 'Environmental DNA revealed high accuracy in detection of the Eurasian otter in Himalaya'. *Aquatic Conservation: Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems*, 12; (2) Mohan B. *et al*. (2023). 'An unusual sighting record of Eurasian otter (*L. lutra*) in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal'. *OTTER: The Journal of the International Otter Survival Fund* 64-71; (3) Jyoti Bhandari, B. *et al*. (2023). 'Conservation status survey of Smooth-coated Otters (*Lutrogale perspillata*) in Babai River of Bardia National Park, Nepal'. *OTTER: The Journal of the International Otter Survival Fund* 144-152; (4) Purna Man Shrestha, S. *et al*. (2023). 'People's perceptions of the Eurasian Otter (Lutra lutra) conservation in Mugu District, Nepal'. *OTTER: The Journal of the International Otter Survival Fund*. 128-143; (5) Acharya, PM, *et al*. (2023). 'Predicting the Distribution and Habitat Suitability of the Smooth-coated Otter (L. perspicillata) in Lowland Nepal'. *Global Ecology and Conservation* 46; (6) Acharya, PM, *et al*. (2022). 'Review of Environmental Policies and Otter Conservation in Nepal'. *IUCN Otter Specialist Group Bull*. 39(1): 44 – 55; (7) Ranjana P., *et al*. (2021). 'A rare photographic record of Eurasian Otter (*L. lutra*) with a note on its habitat from the Bhagirathi Basin, western Himalayas, India'. *Journal of Threatened Taxa* 13(13): 20072-20077. On December 2024 the 2nd biannual Newsletter from the Himalayan Otter Network was released by Jyoti Bhandari. The newsletter announced the upcoming launch of the Himalayan Otter Network Data Centre hosted by the University of Molise, Italy. Slated to be fully operational by February 2025. The newsletter also announced a new PhD research project in Nepal by Mohan Bikram Shrestha, aiming at completing a survey of otters in Nepal and studying threats primarily associated with dams constructed in rivers, by comparing prey availability and otter diet upstream and downstream of dams. Results from research and conservation activities for

otter in Himalaya were published in the following articles: (1) Awasthi, B, *et al*. (2024). 'The effects of biological quality on the presence of the Smooth-coated Otter in Far Western Nepal'. *IUCN Otter Spec. Group Bull* 41(2): 71-87; (2) Awasthi, B, *et al*. (2024). 'Behavior and Activity Patterns of Smooth-coated Otters in Shuklaphanta National Park, Nepal'. *Journal of Institute of Science and Technology* 29(2): 19-28; (3) Giri, P, and Shrestha, PM. (2024). 'Local peoples' knowledge, perceptions, and conservation threats to Eurasian otters in the Kali Gandaki Watershed in Myagdi District, Nepal'. *IUCN Otter Spec. Group Bull*. 41(5): 216-231; (4) Javid, M, Ahmad, K, and Ilyas, O. (2024). 'Once distributed throughout the Kashmir Valley, now on the verge of extinction: A sighting of the Eurasian Otter in the Gurez Valley, Jammu and Kashmir'. *IUCN Otter Spec. Group Bull*. 41(4): 189-196; (5) Norbu, L, *et al*. (2024). 'A Survey of Otters in the Kholongchu and Upper Drangmechu Rivers, Eastern Bhutan'. *IUCN Otter Spec. Group Bull*. 41(3): 125-139; (6) Menzies, RK. (2023). 'An update on Asian Small-clawed Otters (*A. cinereus*) from Namdapha Tiger Reserve, Arunachal Pradesh, India'. *IUCN Otter Spec. Group Bull*. 40(4): 225-229; (7) Kathariya, R, *et al*. (2023). 'Effects of habitat variables on the distribution of Smooth-coated Otters (*L. perspicillata*) along the Kauriala branch of the Karnali River, Nepal'. *IUCN Otter Spec. Group Bull*. 40(3): 165-174. On February 18 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between IUCN SSC Otter SG and the University of Molise. The MOU is addressed to collaboration and cooperation with the IUCN SSC OSG Himalayan Otter Network (HON) initiative. It will serve as a pivotal resource for research and conservation of the three otter species occurring in the Himalayan region.

T-055 Control pet trade for Asian Small-clawed Otter (*A. cinereus*) and Smooth-coated Otter. (KSR 10)

Number of threatened species benefiting from *in situ* conservation action: 1

Result description: A recent article by the OSG member Yumiko Okamoto (Okamoto, Y, *et al*, 2024) published in the *IUCN Otter Spec. Group Bull* surveyed the current trade of Asian Small-clawed Otter (*A. cinereus*) in Japan. Results reported 382 live Asian Small-clawed Otters imported into Japan between 1986 and 2019. However, since the species has been upgraded in Appendix I CITES, there has been one import only for scientific purposes, and no illegal imports of this species were reported in Japan.

T-074 Sustain Giant Otter conservation. (KSR 10)

Number of technical documents provided to support conservation actions: 1

Result description: The 3rd International Giant Otter Workshop was held in Lima on February 2025, and brought together 35 participants from 18 institutions and 9 countries, fostering a broad exchange of knowledge and experiences. Among the participants, 53% had *ex situ* conservation experience, 20% *in situ*, and 27% in both areas. Key outcomes include: (1) development of a collaboration strategy for *ex situ* Giant Otter conservation, (2) creation of a coexistence plan between humans and giant otters, based on the Theory of Change methodology, and (3) definition of the IGOA (International Giant Otter Alliance) work plan. The event strengthened partnerships and established guidelines for future actions, making a significant contribution to the conservation of the species.

Technical advice

T-045 Develop a standard survey protocol and guidelines for Asian species. (KSR 10)

Number of technical consultations provided to support conservation actions: 1

Result description: A new otter survey and monitoring guideline booklet for Nepal, in Nepali, has been published in 2024.

T-048 Prepare background materials for proposal to list Hairy-nosed Otter (*L. sumatrana*) on CITES Appendix I. (KSR 10)

Number of technical consultations provided to support conservation actions: 1

Result description: At the leader meeting in Abu Dhabi on October 2024 OSG Co-Chairs reached the IUCN Deputy Director Global Species Programme Richard Jenkins to get advices in preparation of the CITES standing Committee meeting in February 2025 in Geneva, where OSG intends to promote the listing of *L. sumatrana* from Appendix II to Appendix I of CITES. An online meeting with Richard Jenkins was held on January 3, 2025 to plan further steps

T-052 Promote an African Otter Network. (KSR 10)

Number of technical consultations provided to support conservation actions: 1

Result description: OSG contacted the African Aquatic Conservation Fund through which Ohilalekan Michael SALAMI working on Spotted-necked Otters in Ondo State, Nigeria was asked to become member of the OSG.

NETWORK

Capacity building

T-068 Build capacity of people involved in projects in Africa. (KSR 2)

Number of people trained in conservation action: 1

Result description: An African World Otter Day Competition is planned for the World Otter Day in 2025, as follows: (1) Each participant proposes, organises and carries out an event for WOD24, aimed at small communities and coexistence; (2) Only African countries will be allowed to participate; (3) After WOD24, a report will be sent by the participants to the African Otter Network (summary, photos, videos); (4) The African Otter Network (AON) will publish the various entries to their Facebook page; (5) The entry with the most likes will win – there will be a commission available to avoid any "pay for like" Facebook schemes; (6) The winner will receive a monetary prize that will come from the sales of '*Otters: Folklore, Myths*' bookand Legends, and (7) All participants will receive a certificate.

Membership

T-009 Survey and map OSG projects. (KSR 2)

Number of SSC members recruited: 2

Result description: Researches and surveys on Asian otters have been searched in the literature for the last ten years (2014/2024). A geodatabase was created for 49 countries and four species (*L. lutra*, *L. perspicillata*, *A. cinereus* and *L. sumatrana*) and is now waiting publication on a OSG web map.

T-076 Create an Otter Youth Circle and promote capacity building within their members. (KSR 2)

Number of SSC members recruited: 2

Result description: The Otter Youth Circle organised two online webinars, attended by more than 50 participants. One was held in August 24, 2024, entitled 'Otter joy from around the world and how it reached Singapore: a conservation journey', held by the Asian OSG coordinator N. Sivasothi. The webinar has been registered and can be seen on IUCN SSC Otter Specialist Group YouTube. In November 26, 2024 a webinar entitled 'Otter's vulnerability to climate change' was given by the OSG Co-Chair Anna Loy.

COMMUNICATE

Communication

T-063 Giant Otter (*P. brasiliensis*) day village celebrations in Peru and Brazil. (KSR 13)

Number of digital communication outputs developed in relation to specific taxonomic groups: 1

Giant Otter Project Team - Educational Activity at Corumbá Local School-Pantanal
Photo: Caroline Leuchtenberg

Result description The first Newsletter of the Giant otter Project was released on April 2024, covering the following topics: (1) The Giant Otter Project featured in the Nosso Ambiente Journal; (2) A litter of Giant Otters in the waters of the Rio Negro delights the audience; (3) Giant Otter Naming Campaign: Empowering Public Engagement in Biodiversity Conservation with 10 years of population monitoring – the database boasts more than 400 identified giant otters; (4) New children's series from the Giant Otter Project launched in February – we lausnched on social media a children's series aimed at sparking curiosity in kids and introducing them to the fascinating world of giant otters. With the goal of providing information about the species in a playful and accessible manner, the series aims primarily to educate and engage young viewers in species conservation. Each month, children will have the opportunity to embark on a new episode, filled with facts about the behavior, characteristics, and much more of Giant Otters. With vibrant illustrations, captivating narratives, and carefully selected information, the series not only seeks to impart knowledge but also to inspire respect for wildlife from an early age; (5) Documentary Reveals Environmental Threats in the Pantanal: Earlier this year, the Giant Otter Project participated in the production of a documentary about the environmental threats facing the Pantanal, and (6) The Giant Otter Project participates in the Podcast 'ABC do Pantanal'.

T-072 Publish OSG Bulletin regularly. (KSR 12)

Number of Species e-bulletin, Save Our Species newsletter, SSC Groups' newsletter editions produced: 4

Result description: Four issues of *IUCN SSC Otter Specialist Group Bulletin* were regularly published in 2024: volume 41(1), 41(2), 41(3), and 41(4). A total 20 original contributions were published plus a viewpoint and four notes from the Editor.

Scientific meetings

T-079 Organise the 16th International Otter Congress. (KSR 12)

Number of scientific events in which the members participated: 1

Result description: The International Otter Congress was held in Lima, Peru, from 24 to 28 February, 2025. With 86 participants from 22 countries, and seven sessions (Success Stories, *In situ* and *Ex situ* Conservation Planning and Actions, Emerging Threats and Trade, Conflicts and Coexistence, Advance Techniques for Otter Monitoring and Research, Red and Green Status Assessment, and Education, Communication and Networking), two workshops ("Necropsies protocols for otters" and "Monitoring otter species using eDNA"), and two round tables (IUCN SSC Otter Specialist Group Strategic Plan 2026–2030 and Discussion with Peruvian government representatives), as well as an opening lecture by Gonzalo Medina Vogel "long standing otter research and conservation in Chile"; seven invited speakers (Klaus Koepfli, Elizabeth Chadwick, Magdalena Cygan, Tim Shikora, Arno Gitleb, Silvio Marchini), 50 oral presentations and 27 posters.

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Summary of achievements

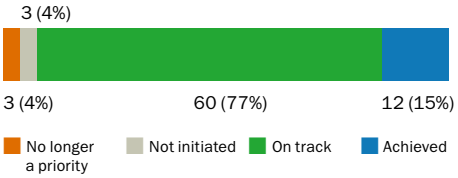
Total number of targets 2021–2025: 78

Geographic regions: 36 Global, 9 Africa, 5 America, 20 Asia, 8 Europe

Actions during 2024-2025:

Assess:	3 (KSR 5, 6, 7)
Plan:	7 (KSR 8, 9)
Act:	7 (KSR 10)
Network:	3 (KSR 2)
Communicate:	3 (KSR 12, 13)

Overall achievement 2021–2025:



Black Rhino (*Diceros bicornis*)
Photo: Save The Rhino Trust Namibia

Marsh Cinquefoil
(*Comarum palustre*)
Photo: Magnus Goransson

Azores Nursery Spider
(*Pisaura acoreesins*)
Photo: Paulo A.V. Borges

Suweon Treefrog
(*Dryophytes suweonenis*)
Photo: Amael Borzee

Phallus aureolatus
Photo: Juliano Baltazar

Eurasian Griffon (*Gyps fulvus*)
Photo: Andre Botha

Black and White Snapper
(*Macolor niger*)
Photo: David B. Snyder