



## Otter News No. 128, January 2022

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Click on this link: <http://tinyurl.com/p3lrsmx>

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### News from The Sanctuary

We are delighted to say that work will start on the new otter hospital in mid-April. The actual plan for the building has changed a bit and we are working with a local building company who have been very helpful.



Storm

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has so kindly donated to make this possible. We will keep you up to date with progress once it begins.

So how have things been at the Sanctuary in the last month? Over the last couple of weeks we have had extreme gales but damage has been minimal. A part of the ridging on the hospital came off and a gate up to the croft pens was blown off its hinges but that was about it. And all the animals were totally unaffected.

It therefore seems appropriate to start this Sanctuary News with Storm. He is doing very well and still very private but we have learnt the knack to check on him. Put the fish in and retire quickly... then, go back to check he has come out for dinner!

Holly is her usual bouncy self. Always ready for her fish whenever it appears and she quickly runs up the enclosure to eat in peace.

Bealltinn is keeping her head down in the weather but has taken a bit of vegetation in for extra bedding which is good to see.



A haughty Holly



Bealltinn

*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](http://www.ottershop.co.uk)*



## New Wildlife Hospital in Ireland

Some of you will remember the Irish otters which were brought over to the IOSF Skye sanctuary as there were no facilities for their long term care in Ireland. We received quite a few including Guinness and Tipple, and Erin (in the photo below),



Erin

and we always noticed that the Irish otters were darker than ours in Scotland – dark chocolate compared to milk! Indeed this difference in colour was mentioned in one of the recent Winter Watch programmes in Ireland.

In 2021 things changed and the cubs no longer have to face such a long journey. Emma Higgs who used to organise the transfers set up Irish Wildlife Matters (<http://irishwildlifematters.ie/>) and she has now opened a wildlife hospital just outside Navan in Co Meath.



Since opening they have seen quite a few otters, including four orphaned cubs. There were also four adults, all with toxins in their system. Unfortunately, only one of those patients survived and the incident was reported.

For more information and how to contact if you find any injured wild bird or animal, not just an otter, go to their website [www.wri.ie](http://www.wri.ie)

## Otter Shop Product of the Month

[www.ottershop.co.uk](http://www.ottershop.co.uk)

Show your love... give an **IOSF Otter Adopt Valentine gift box** this Valentine's Day (left).

We also have a [donation e-card](#) for you to print off and give (or email) and [adoption e-voucher](#) for when time is short.



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*





## IOSF World Otter Day 2022

**IOSF World Otter Day 2022 is fast approaching (25 May) and we are excited to see all the planned celebrations from all around the world.** I know most of you will be well aware of World Otter Day and why we celebrate it but, for those that don't know, IOSF launched World Otter Day to celebrate otters and, most importantly, raise awareness for their conservation. Otter lovers across the world use this day to showcase what is great about them, celebrate their favourite or local species and raise awareness of what is causing them to be threatened, such as pollution and illegal trade.

We are delighted to say that we already have events for this year planned in over 20 countries, which is amazing! We have just started to put our World Otter Day map together which you can see at (<https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=14bwlPiHyuKmnXrES8yZh81V-r1fNLmUb&ll=1.9762437502315109%2C0&z=2>). This will be updated regularly and events will be added over time.



*Do you plan to hold an event for World Otter Day?*

*We'll let us know, we'd love to help and add it to our map to showcase and highlight what you are doing.*

As always, IOSF is offering World Otter Day grants to three event holders. The three small grants for £100 each are to help people to hold events and celebrate otters in their local area. Our application form is available [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfs\\_H1vRoec2\\_a0BkaQAzH00a-OpxdYNICFAoj1-7-iYsya8Q/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfs_H1vRoec2_a0BkaQAzH00a-OpxdYNICFAoj1-7-iYsya8Q/viewform)

We will also be using social media again to showcase the day and celebrate the amazing world of otters, raising awareness for conservation and drawing attention to their threats. Please join us by tagging IOSF's platforms and using **#WorldOtterDay**

**Let's enjoy celebrating otters together this May!**

And don't forget to take a look at our World Otter Day Resources on the IOSF website (<https://otter.org/Public/MediaAndResources/Resources/OtherEducationalResources.aspx>).

## A Decline in Otter Numbers in Wales

**For some time now there has been a general impression that otters in the UK are recovering well from their decline in the 1950s and 1960s.** This has led to quite a complacent attitude towards otters and that this "good news" story means we no longer have to worry about them. People were saying that otters are now "everywhere" but IOSF has always warned against this attitude and pointed out how vulnerable our otters are. Now it seems that there are questions about the population in Wales.



There has been a lot in the media recently about a decline in the Welsh otter population which was initially highlighted by Eleanor Kean and Liz Chadwick of Cardiff University Otter Project (CUOP). They had coordinated surveys of six rivers in 2015 and 2016 and noticed there were fewer signs than in the previous national survey. So they pushed for a nationwide survey. This revealed that for the first time since national surveys began in the mid-1970s, there was a substantive decline in the percentage of positive sites. The positive trend in the proportion of survey sites in Wales which had signs of otters had been unexpectedly reversed.

Their report underlines the need not only to investigate the reasons for this decline in Wales, but also the need for up-to-date assessments of the status of otters in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, to see if trends in other parts of the UK are following a similarly worrying reversal or not. A new survey is now being planned for England and it is hoped that Scotland and Northern Ireland will soon do the same.

IOSF is now planning to hold a one-day workshop in the autumn to bring people together who are involved in otter surveying with the aim of creating a coordinated system of monitoring otter distribution in order to identify any decline, or indeed any increase.

We are still working on the details and will update you as we progress.



Eurasian otter ©S W Powles

### Become an IOSF Life Supporter

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

## The Body Shop UK

At the beginning of January, **The Body Shop UK** decided to 'start the year as we mean to go on, giving back to the people & the planet'. So, they opened up nominations for their Twitter followers to tag a charity they wanted to benefit from The Body Shop UK's £250 given to two social or environmental charities. And guess what! Yes, IOSF was one of the two charities randomly selected from those nominated. So we want to say a



big 'Thank You' to those who nominated us and to The Body Shop UK for running this event. It certainly is a great way to start the year.

**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 [http://otter.org/Public/HelpUs\\_CorporateSponsorship.aspx](http://otter.org/Public/HelpUs_CorporateSponsorship.aspx)



**This month's Team Otter report comes from Nepal with more exciting Team Otter work, this time at Chitwan National Park.** IOSF was delighted to support Paras Acharya and his team at Resources Himalaya Foundation (RHF) during their project entitled "Education and Formation of Team Otter Clubs in Chitwan National Park, Nepal"

Chitwan National Park is located in the south of Nepal, on the Indian border, and is one of Nepal's most famous national parks, home to species such as rhinos and tigers. The programme was aimed at raising awareness of otters and their conservation in schools across the Park's buffer zone by holding educational workshops with a view to starting Team Otter clubs in the area.

The RHF team visited eight schools delivering their programme covering aspects such as otter ecology, biology, habitat, behaviour and conservation issues especially with regard to otters, reaching out to a total of 323 children.

Following this outreach, they discussed the possibility of creating Team Otter environmental clubs where children would learn more and be responsible for the environmental protection around their own area. 38 children from five schools went on to form five Team Otter clubs.



The project was a huge success and the children were very engaged in otter/wetland conservation talks. It was an interactive programme and the children's interest and engagement increased throughout. One of the main issues faced by otters both in Nepal, and worldwide, is fishing conflict but thanks to this programme it will help to develop a strong sense of stewardship and responsibility in otter conservation, riverine habitat preservation, and mitigating the environmental issues of river basins. Children and local communities will gain more of an understanding of the benefits of otters and therefore otters will face less persecution. The formation of the Team Otter clubs will enhance the awareness about values and importance of riverine indicator species and arouse the desire, commitment, dedication and motivation to help in the mitigation of aquatic mammal conservation issues in the future. There are now plans to reach out to a bigger audience, using the Team Otter clubs, and participate in World Otter Day activities this year.

**For more information on Team Otter, check out our website ([www.loveotters.org](http://www.loveotters.org)) or Facebook. If you are interested in forming your own Team Otter Club contact [Ben@otter.org](mailto:Ben@otter.org)**

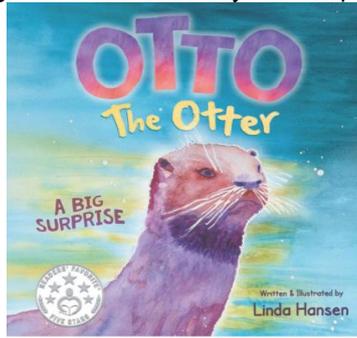


## New Children's Book - Otto the Otter: A Big Surprise

**There's a new book available for otter lovers 4-8 yrs old.** Written and illustrated by Linda Hansen, it tells the true story of a North American river otter's regular visits to a family's small pond. An otter they called Otto and who captivated them as they watched from their house, respecting its wildness. Then one day, Otto brings a surprise.

Young readers will be enthralled by the colourful watercolour illustrations in this book and enjoy the story they help to tell, of a family's observations of a wild otter.

Available at Amazon [Amazon.co.uk : Otto the Otter, A Big Surprise](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Otto-the-Otter-A-Big-Surprise)



## Litter Problems – Again!

**I don't know how many times we have to face problems caused by litter.** Our own Team Otter Bradford are passionate about removing it from our village and on Monday they collected between 80-100kg from one small area. They regard it almost like a treasure hunt but they are also working on posters to prevent people dropping it in the first place. It is great that they are doing this but they could do so many other positive things if people just took responsibility for their own rubbish

So many beautiful places worldwide are plagued with this problem – even on remote beaches and on trails in the Himalayas. Clearly there are the problems with plastics that we see everywhere but there are other things such as fishing gear which has been disposed of carelessly.

Recently there was a post on Facebook about an otter in trouble in Singapore. According to the post *“Developing news - Little Zoukie (Gen 4) got itself hooked with a fishing bait since yesterday. Otter Working Group (OWG) has been informed and they are trying their best to help. This is a very tricky situation - it is very tough to isolate the single pup out from the family.”*



## And Now to Oil

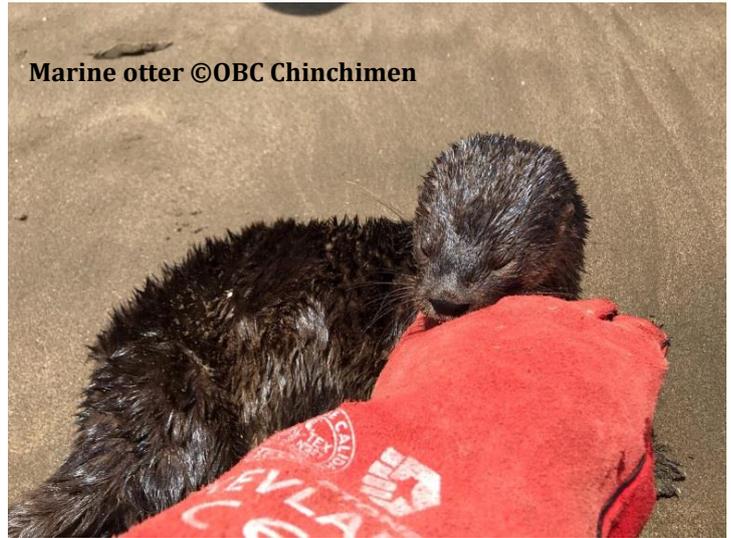
**We have recently been in contact with Javier Trivelli of OBC Chinchimen. Javier and his team do a lot of work with marine otters (also known as seacats) on the Pacific coast of Chile.** This includes education and also rescue and release of otters from the region. In 2021, Chinchimen successfully rehabbed an injured adult otter back to the wild – following the successful rehab of many otter cubs!

Just last week, Chinchimen rescued a female with concerns over her health and these concerns were realised when she sadly lost her life. What made this even more sad was the fact that the female otter appeared to be a mother but despite tireless efforts from the Chinchimen team, no cubs could be found. We hope that the otter cubs are old enough to survive on their own and continue their mother's legacy.



On 22 December, in Quintero Bay, a crack in an unused pipeline saw 200 litres of oil spill into the ocean. A number of organisations reacted quickly and thanks to their great efforts and favourable weather conditions the spill was contained.

Role on almost 3 weeks, and 20km along the coast, on the long beach of Cachagua, Chinchimen were collecting the female otter in question. As mentioned, the otter died and was sent for post-mortem to determine the cause of death. This revealed that there was oil in the stomach. It is likely that the December spill was the cause and a "bubble" had escaped from the group's efforts to contain it, and this came at the expense of this otter's life.



Marine otter ©OBC Chinchimen

Unfortunately, this is not an isolated incident and it is so sad to see the impact that we are having on otters and the natural world. We all, people and businesses alike, need to make more of an effort to reduce our impact and help these animals.

Although a sad story, positives can be taken from the close collaboration between relevant organisations to try and rescue this otter and also identify the issue. Obviously, OBC Chinchimen played a big part but they were assisted by the Municipality of Zapallar who helped with the rescue of the otter, the Namku Foundation (for their clinical and veterinary care assistance) and ONG Panthalasa for their post-mortem analysis. We know that like these organisations we can and should all work together to make a difference moving forward.

*giftaid it*



**GIFT AID IS A SIMPLE WAY TO INCREASE THE VALUE OF YOUR GIFT TO IOSF - at no extra cost to you.** If you pay tax in the UK, IOSF can reclaim the basic rate tax (25%) on your gift. So, if you donate £10, it is worth £12.50 to IOSF.

It is a simple process to sign up to Gift Aid - all you have to do is make a Gift Aid declaration. If you are donating online, just select the "Yes" option on the Gift Aid box on the donation form. Alternatively you can download and print out the Gift Aid Declaration on page 13 of our Fundraising Pack which can be found at:

[http://www.otter.org/documents/IOSF\\_Fundraising\\_Pack.pdf](http://www.otter.org/documents/IOSF_Fundraising_Pack.pdf)

## Illegal Trade – Japanese Cafes

Many of you will have seen this image by Lucy Liew which we have been using on social media to draw attention to the illegal wildlife trade in otters.

There is also a very good video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V2tZ40dMHmY> which looks more closely at the issue.



The link between the rise in otter cafés in Japan and the demand for pets is clear. In 2017 70% live otters seized in SE Asia were en route to Japan and in 2018 Sharné MacMillan published a paper in the [IOSF OTTER Journal No 4](#), entitled "Too cute! The rise of otter cafes in Japan". She warned that these cafes could lead to an increase in demand for pets and unfortunately this is exactly what is happening.



This is why it is so important to support the various centres in SE Asia who care for these animals when they are confiscated. For example the Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand (WFFT) currently have 17 otters and urgently need to build more enclosures. They can then take in even more otters and rescue them from the cruel conditions in which they live.

**If you would like to support the appeal to help WFFT you can send a cheque marked "WFFT" on the back or make a donation online at [www.ottershop.co.uk](http://www.ottershop.co.uk) Thank you.**

## Betty White (remember the Golden Girls?)

**IOSF recently received a donation in memory of Betty White (actress and comedian), who died on 31 December 2021 just 17 days short of her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.**

We were curious as to the reason for this donation and Sarah (who is a zookeeper and works with otters) told us "I'm afraid I never had the opportunity to meet Betty White. As a zookeeper myself, it was especially meaningful to see a non-zoo person with such wide appeal appreciate the work zoos do-and do their best to educate others about it.

*But Betty White did more. Not only did she support zoos, she supported rescues. And she'd been doing that her entire life. Otters have been an important part of my life and I do what I can to help them. I've educated otter caregivers on best practices, nutrition, habitat, behavior, breeding, rearing, etc -for ASCOs and sometimes NAROs. That work has meant a lot to me.*

*Betty White's birthday, and her early passing, were a good opportunity to highlight the work she did and a time to honor her efforts by helping those who do that work, to continue it. I have long watched IOSF from afar (one day, I hope to visit). IOSF helps otters in so many countries -from tracking their habitats, to lobbying governments regarding otter safe practices or preventing destruction and poisoning of their areas, to training people in otter home countries about those animals. I've followed otters IOSF has rescued in the UK and their lives at the sanctuary.*

*Betty White inspired so many people and did so much for animals. She gave me lots of laughs on television, and with her gone now, adding a little extra support in her name, is my way to say thank you."*

## You Can Help... with stamps and metals

**We have teamed up with Stamps n All to fundraise with stamps and metals, old and new.** There's a range of items you can send in: stamps new and old, metal - keys, medals, watches, coins, costume jewellery; visit [www.stampsnall.co.uk](http://www.stampsnall.co.uk). Send small amounts direct to Stamps n All, Dept IOSF, PO Box 245, Plymouth PL5 2WX. Special collections can be arranged for large amounts (coins min 10Kg, other items min 15Kg) call 01752 296269 (Monday/Tuesday/Thursday) 9am-5pm.

**YOU CAN HELP...**

**IOSF**  
INTERNATIONAL OTTER SURVIVAL FUND

For further details please contact:  
Email [enquiries@otter.org](mailto:enquiries@otter.org) ☎ 01471 822 487 [www.otter.org](http://www.otter.org)

We can accept any of the following to help us to raise vital funds.

Charity Number SC003875  
Company Number 109031

**HELP YOUR CHARITY - INSIST ON USING REAL STAMPS WHEN YOU POST ANYTHING!**

In order to improve fundraising for charities that collect stamps, always insist on REAL stamps when posting anything (instead of a computer generated label). If you ask nicely you could get commemorative stamps and maybe even a circular date stamp! (Depending on service used.)

**Stamps, First Day Covers or old Envelopes and Postcards\***

- \*Leave foreign stamps (of any date) or UK stamps postmarked BEFORE 1970 ON envelopes and postcards - DO NOT REMOVE THEM! They can be worth more as a collectible item complete.

**Coins and Bank Notes**

Any and all, old and new, from ANYWHERE in the world, obsolete or otherwise.

**Precious Metals**

Including broken jewellery, old trophies, gold, silver etc.

**Watches**

Digital quartz or manual wind, working or not.

**Metals**

Household ornaments, keys and cutlery - **HOWEVER, please contact "Stamps n All" via the number below BEFORE SENDING.**

**Costume Jewellery**

**Medals**

Not limited to military items - any medals and metal badges accepted.

**For a complete list of items you can turn into funds for your charity, please visit: [www.stampsnall.co.uk](http://www.stampsnall.co.uk)**

**HOW TO DONATE YOUR ITEMS...**

(a) Hand your donation to the charity, or (b) we accept small lots posted direct to the address below. **VERY IMPORTANT!** Please mark envelopes with your charity's Dept CODE, because unmarked donations are automatically allocated to The Veterans FARM-ABLE Foundation (Charity No.1175204).

**\*Stamps n All, Dept IOSF, PO Box 245, Plymouth PL5 2WX**

**\*Please attach correct postage to your parcel - this is NOT a freepost address.**

Special collections can be arranged (minimum weights apply: Coins 10kg, Other items 15kg). please telephone 01752 296 369 on Mondays, Tuesdays or Thursdays from 9am to 5pm.

Stamps n All (Globe Trader) purchases all goods it receives from Charities for fundraising, offering a fair market rate for the donated goods, and as such Stamps n All makes a profit from the goods purchased.



## News In Brief

### Otter monitoring in New York

DEC (New York State Department of Environmental Conservation) are to continue their North American River Otter monitoring programme to try gain more of an understanding of population trends across the state. As we know, and has been mentioned many times, North American River Otter populations were largely depleted by heavy trade for fur and major efforts in New York state around the turn of the century are helping them to recover.



Surveys in 2017 and 2018 showed that otters now occupy almost all of the suitable habitat. Now, winter surveys will take place to gain more information on how the otters continue to do and offer more information on aspects such as population trends.

<https://www.adirondackalmanack.com/2022/01/dec-to-continue-river-otter-surveys.html>

### Otters in Slovakia

After years of absence otters seem to be returning to Bratislava, Slovakia. The local forestry company, named Mestské Lesy v Bratislave, has been searching for signs of the otter for years but, until now, have had no success. Recently signs have been found, such as spraint, which has confirmed the presence of otters along the Vydrica River (ironically named after the Slovak for otter "Vydra").

It is great to see the otters return to the area and increase hopes for their continued revival!

<https://spectator.sme.sk/c/22817003/after-years-of-absence-river-otter-returns-home.html>

### Otters in Peterborough, UK

Eurasian otters have been spotted on the river Nene, in Peterborough, England. The wildlife enthusiast, Peter Brotherton, who spotted the otter, said that seeing otters in the middle of the city was one of the most thrilling experiences he has had working with animals for over 30 years.

Residents and visitors alike have been asked to respect the otters and enjoy watching from a safe distance – something we should follow for all wildlife encounters.

<https://www.peterboroughtoday.co.uk/news/incredible-video-shows-otter-feeding-at-peterboroughs-ferry-meadows-as-park-visitors-urged-to-give-animals-space-3536912>

### Asian small-clawed otters in Singapore

We are all familiar with the images of otters in Singapore, particularly those shared on social media. These are smooth-coated otters but there is another species also present in Singapore. Less is known about the Asian small-clawed otters which are also present but they are much more rare. According to The Otterman, Sivasothi, since the 1990s when he began his work this species has become restricted to the north-eastern islands.



European otter ©Stephen Powles

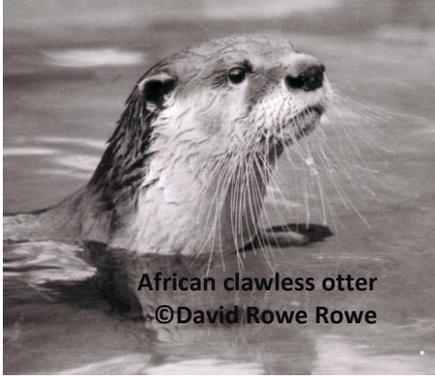


Asian small-clawed otter  
©Don McCrady



## African clawless otter sightings increase in the Cape

There have been more reports of sightings of African clawless otters in the Western Cape, but with that comes a warning to watchers to keep a distance. There is a concern too that the increase in sightings is because people are encroaching into the otters' habitat more.



African clawless otter  
©David Rowe Rowe

In South Africa they are protected by law under the Animals Protection Act and the Threatened and Protected Species Act. Nicki Wright, an African wildlife specialist, said "If you have the privilege of seeing otters in the wild, remember to stay back and give them their space. We can co-exist in our shared spaces by respecting each other and understanding the otters' needs."

This is so true. Any animal will defend itself and its young from what they regard as a threat – be it a person or a dog off a lead. These are wild animals and we must treat them with respect.

<https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/western-cape/keep-your-distance-expert-warns-as-african-clawless-otters-sightings-increase-in-the-cape-e53786ed-f4db-41c8-9bb8-504d53c5fe4c>

## Thank You...

everyone, for your continued support via many channels (direct donations, Facebook Fundraisers, sponsored challenges). Your generosity helps keep us motivated.

And to Trusts and organisations:

Marsh Charitable Trust, Big Wild Thought, Old MacDonald's Farm, The Body Shop.

***We can't do it without you.***



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.



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

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Find out more at <https://giveacar.co.uk> or call 020 7736 4242

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You can follow us on:



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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/>

OR, scan and add our charity code  
**62575**



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#### 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

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### 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  
7 Black Park  
Broadford  
Isle of Skye IV49 9DE  
Scotland

Email: [enquiries@otter.org](mailto:enquiries@otter.org)  
Tel/Fax: ++(0)1471 822487



Charity Number SC003875

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[www.otter.org](http://www.otter.org)

**The International Otter Survival Fund**  
Working to Save the Worlds Otters