

## SHORT REPORT

### EVIDENCE OF THE PRESENCE OF *Lutra lutra* IN TALEQAN, ALBORZ PROVINCE, IRAN

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**Abstract:** Little information is available for the Eurasian otter (*Lutra lutra*) in Iran. According to previous data in national environmental organization of Iran, they are distributed near rivers and water source of northern, north eastern provinces and some areas of southern provinces. Their population is decreasing due to environmental hazards.

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#### INTRODUCTION

The Eurasian otter (*Lutra lutra*) and the smooth-coated otter (*Lutragale perspicillata*) are the two otter species occurring in Iran (Tajbakhsh, 1995). Like in other countries, *Lutra lutra* has an aquatic life-style in Iran. They can be found in wet lands and rivers of Mazandaran, Azarbajejan, Tehran, Kordestan, Kermanshah, Markazi, Isfahan, Khorasan, Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, Fars, Khozestan, and Lorestan provinces (Etemad, 1978).

They mostly feed on aquatic animals and fishes (Macdonald, 2006). In recent years, their population has been declining. Drought and loss of water sources, starvation and the contamination of their life environment such as entrance of agricultural residues in rivers and lakes are the major reasons of their population decrease. Also farmers hunt them while they enter their gardens and fish farms (Macdonald and Mason, 1983; Mason and Madsen, 1993). Therefore, *Lutra lutra* is an endangered mammal in Iran. Previously distribution of otters in Iran has been studied in some areas (Karami et al., 2006; Ziaie and Gutleb, 1997) but, the presence of otters in many areas of Iran is still unknown.

#### REPORT

Taleqan is a rural area located in mountains of Alborz province at the height of 1820 meters above sea level with a cold climate. Some areas have been remained wild and unaffected from human alterations. Some rare and endangered mammals like the

Persian leopard (*Panthera pardus saxicolor*), brown bear (*Urus arctos*) and Eurasian otter (*Lutra lutra*) have been observed recently.

An adult *Lutra lutra* was observed in the Kulej River of Taleqan (36°11'12"N 50°45'40"E) in autumn 2015 (Fig. 1). At this location they feed on fishes, crustaceans and rodents. *Cyprinidae* fishes like *Capoeta gracilis* and *Barbus cyri* are the most common fishes in the river. It seems that the major part of their diet is depending on this family of fishes (Fig. 2).



**Figure 1.** Kulej River, habitat of *Lutra lutra* in Taleqan



**Figure 2.** Cyprinidae fish of Kulej River captured by local fishers

On January 2014, two corpses of *Lutra lutra* were found in a fish farm pond in Hasan Jun village 36°13'00"N 50°45'00"E and confirmed as being *Lutra lutra* by the environmental officers in Taleqan. The reason of death was hypothermia (Fig. 3).



**Figure 3.** Corpses of *Lutra lutra* in Hasan Jun village adapted from [www.iew.ir](http://www.iew.ir)

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## RÉSUMÉ

### PREUVE DE LA PRÉSENCE DE *Lutra lutra* À TALEQAN, PROVINCE D'ALBORZ, IRAN

Peu d'informations sont disponibles sur la loutre eurasiennne (*Lutra lutra*) en Iran. Selon ces données venant de l'organisation environnementale nationale d'Iran, elles sont localisées près des rivières et ressources en eau des provinces du nord, du nord-est et par endroits dans les provinces du sud. Leur population est en décroissance en raison de risques environnementaux.

## RESUMEN

### EVIDENCIAS DE LA PRESENCIA DE *Lutra lutra* EN TALEQAN, PROVINCIA DE ALBORZ, IRÁN

Hay disponible poca información sobre la nutria euroasiática (*Lutra lutra*) en Irán. De acuerdo a datos previos de la organización nacional ambiental de Irán, están distribuidas cerca de los ríos y fuentes de agua de las provincias del norte y noreste y algunas áreas de las provincias del sur. Su población está disminuyendo debido a amenazas ambientales.