



Friendly admirer

© I Sanchez

COMMUNICATION

Otters are their own best ambassadors. It is easy to love otters when you watch one up close gliding through the water or juggling a stone with one paw. Zoos play an important role in giving people their first unforgettable otter experience.

ZOO CONSERVATION

The Otter Specialist Group works closely with zoos, collaborating with their scientists to provide the best care for otters in captivity. Zoos fund otter research to help biologists learn more about otters in the field.

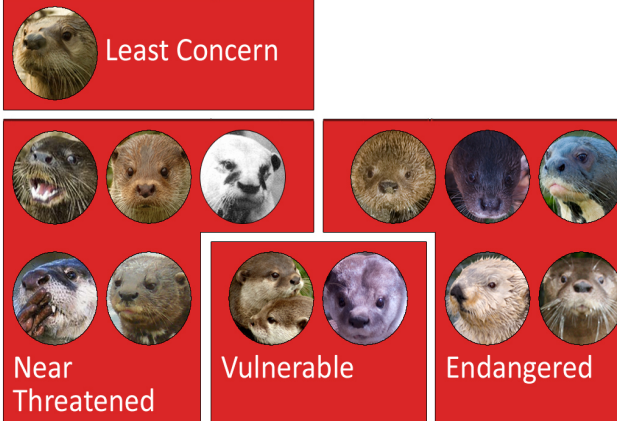
YOUR DONATION PAYS FOR OTTER RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

These students in Cambodia know all about otters © N Duplaix



HOW MANY OTTER SPECIES ARE THERE?

- 13** otter species but only the North American river otter is out of danger.
- 5** are **ENDANGERED**: Marine otter, Hairy-nosed otter, Giant otter, Sea otter, Southern river otter
- 2** are **VULNERABLE**: Asian short-clawed otter, Smooth-coated otter
- 5** are **NEAR THREATENED**: Neotropical otter, Eurasian otter, Congo clawless otter, Cape clawless otter, Spot-necked otter



SINCE 1974 the 270

members of the Otter Specialist Group have launched conservation programs for all 13 species of otters worldwide. We still need to expand our efforts further if we are to overcome the increasing threats facing otters in many countries today.

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OTTERS ARE IN TROUBLE ...and you can help!



© Ikeda Zoo



OTTER SPECIALIST GROUP



Hairy-nosed otter

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SPECTACULAR RECOVERY?

Forty years ago, the global animal trade was curtailed through international conventions and better law enforcement. Otters were listed as endangered species and protected in many countries. Some, on the brink of extinction, made a comeback like the Eurasian otter in Britain, the Sea otter, and the Giant otter in South America. The future looked bright.

OTTERS ARE IN TROUBLE

Threats to otters take many forms. Otters live in rivers, lakes, and coastal areas which may be polluted and overfished. Wetlands are the most threatened habitat in many parts of the world, disappearing to make room for development. Otter numbers are plummeting in Southeast Asia where they are heavily poached and traded for their pelts, destined for newly prosperous Asian markets.

Yet in some regions, otters made spectacular comebacks after receiving protection and where anti-pollution measures were enforced. Recovery is possible but we need your help to broaden our efforts and make this happen.

OTTERS ARE THE WORLD'S WETLAND AMBASSADORS

Asian short-clawed otter

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CATASTROPHIC DECLINE?

With the new century came new threats and a sudden reversal in otter numbers, particularly in Southeast Asia. The otter pet trade, illegal in most countries, returned again. Otter cubs are too cute to resist. A widespread trade in otter skins in Asia, numbering in the thousands, cleared otters from many rivers and wetlands. And this trade is flourishing, fueled by the skin trade and traditional medicine markets. We are working in 13 Asian countries to assess the damage and create conservation programs tailored to local needs.

ASIAN OTTERS NEED OUR HELP TO SURVIVE

Otter skins for sale in Cambodia

© Sokrith Heng



Otter researchers in the field

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SAVING OTTERS WORLDWIDE

The Otter Specialist Group has focused on global otter conservation since 1974, with great success. Now all 13 otter species face new threats and challenges that we must overcome. More research is needed to evaluate how best to reverse the downward spiral. New conservation programs must be adapted to local conditions and regional conservation priorities. This requires trained otter biologists, time and money.

WHAT WE DO

RESEARCH: The Otter Specialist Group has the leadership and expertise to address and solve otter problems worldwide. Our 270 members have studied otters for decades and can determine the status of otters to develop conservation measures.

EDUCATION: We train biologists to be otter researchers in many Asian and South American countries where otters are at risk. We develop local school programs to spread the otter conservation message. We collaborate with local communities to protect their otters.

CONSERVATION: Our goal is to make sure that otters will be around for decades to come.

Smooth-coated otter

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