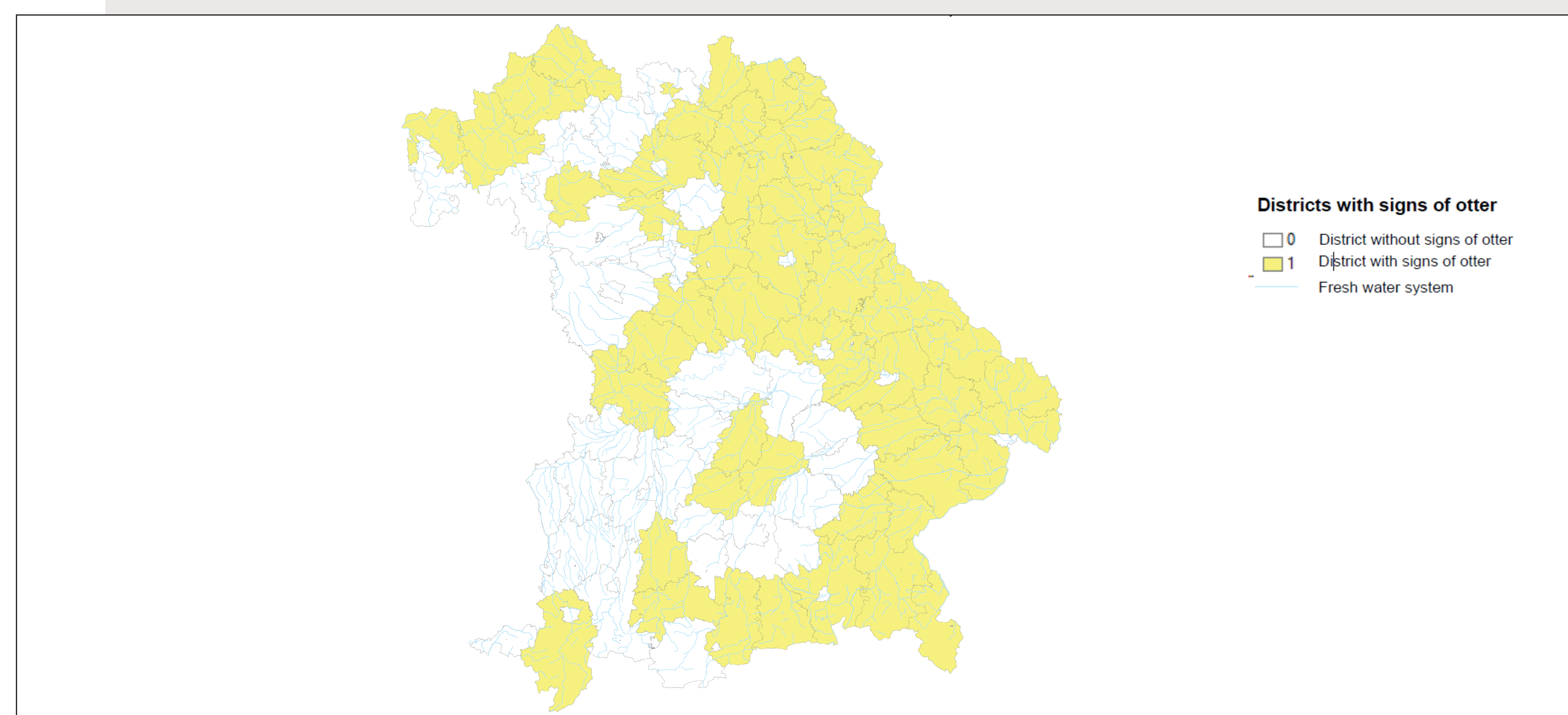


# OTTERS IN BAVARIA A FISHERIES POINT OF VIEW

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## OTTER DISTRIBUTION IN BAVARIA

A relict population of otters has survived in the Bavarian Forest. Since the 1990s, the population increases and disperses towards Western Germany. The size of the population is still unknown in Bavaria, but the number of carcasses found is continually increasing. In 2019, 55 otters were killed on Bavarian roads. The expanding population leads to conflicts, especially with aquaculture and fisheries. In Bavaria, at least 48 of 96 administrative districts have reported otter presence. Due to the limited available data, one can assume that even more districts are already repopulated.



OTTER POPULATION IN BAVARIA BASED ON DATA COLLECTED BY THE BAVARIAN ENVIRONMENT AGENCY, THE BAVARIAN STATE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY, AND THE BAVARIAN FISHERIES ASSOCIATION.

## OTTER MANAGEMENT

In Bavaria, the Eurasian Otter Management Plan is in place since 2016. It comprises three pillars, namely consulting, prevention, and compensation. In 2018, the Bavarian parliament decided to expand the plan: The „removal of otters“ should be examined as a fourth pillar. The exemptions under the species protection law were instituted in early 2020, but two organisations filed legal action against the removal of otters. Since then, the project is temporarily suspended and the efforts to develop a coordinated, rational and effective management are halted.

## CONFLICT OF CONSERVATION

On the one hand, the expansion of the otter population is contributing towards a greater biodiversity, but on the other hand conflicts can arise particularly with regard to its feeding habits. Increasing feeding damage in aquaculture and decline of endangered fish species in open streams are a likely possibility. Fish farmers abandon more and more fishponds and the extensive aquaculture is slowly going to disappear. We are consequently losing important habitat and biodiversity. Not only is aquaculture affected, but also the fresh water systems. In Bavaria, for example, carcasses found of the Danube salmon preyed by otters are increasing near traverse structures. A conflict between two Red List species arises. But, which species is more important?



OTTER WITH PREY: ON A DAILY BASIS, AN OTTER EATS AS MUCH FISH AS 1-2 PERCENT OF ITS OWN BODY WEIGHT .

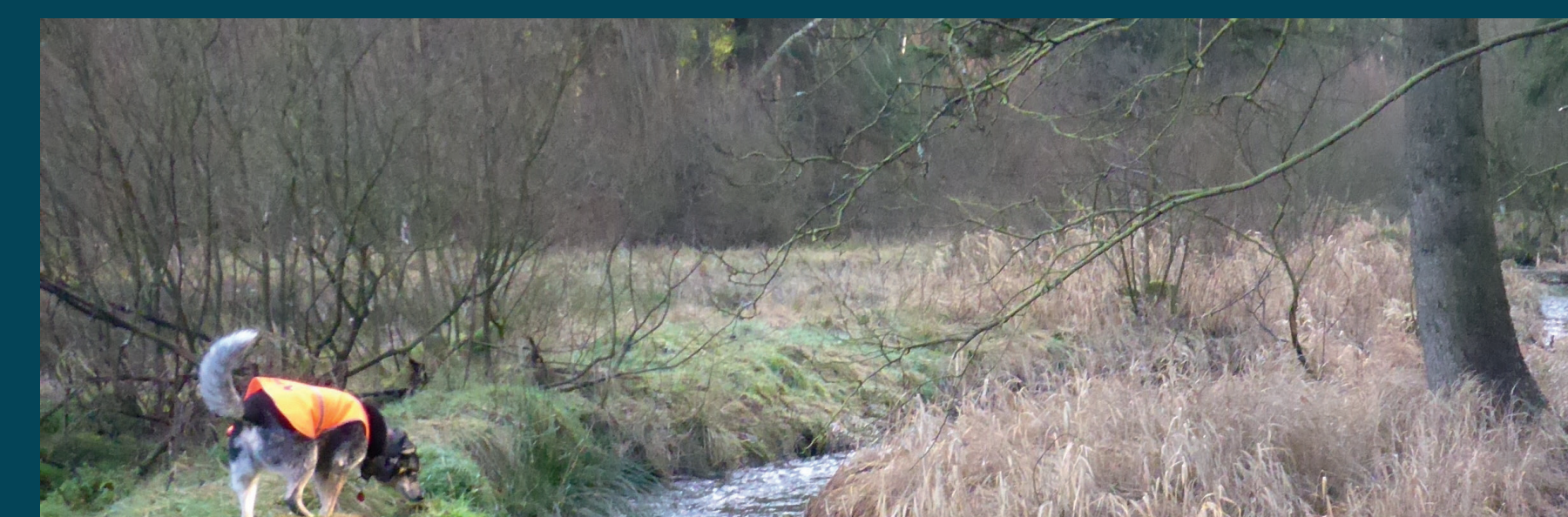
## PROJECT OF THE BAVARIAN FISHERIES ASSOCIATION

Since 2017, the Bavarian Fisheries Association is conducting distribution and habitat use studies of otters in fresh water systems in Bavaria. In one of our studies, 15 otter individuals belonging to different family groups could be determined within one year in a 31 km long river. Hence, this region is constantly occupied by otters.

Further information (in German language) can be found at [www.lfvbayern.de](http://www.lfvbayern.de)



**OUR PROJECT: CITIZEN SCIENCE**  
ANGLERS USE CAMERA TRAPS TO MONITOR OTTER POPULATIONS



**OUR PROJECT: OTTER MONITORING**  
SEARCH FOR OTTER SPRINTS FOR GENETIC ANALYSIS



**OUR PROJECT: FISH MONITORING**  
RESEARCH ON THE IMPACT OF OTTER PRESENCE ON NATIVE FISH POPULATION



**OUR PROJECT: DAMAGE TO FISH POPULATION**  
RESEARCH ON PREY SELECTION OF OTTERS AND INJURIES OF FISH

## SHORT FACTS BAVARIA

- 57 % of native fish species are on the Red List of Endangered Species
- Requests for compensation in pond fishery reached 1 Million Euro in 2020
- Current population size of otters still unknown in Bavaria
- A coordinated management is necessary to maintain aquaculture, freshwater systems, and the otter

„The return of the otter is a success story of species and habitat protection. However, protecting one species must not happen at the expense of other endangered species.“