

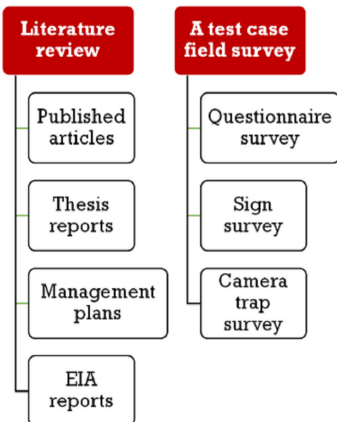
## Abstract

The Eurasian otter (*Lutra lutra*) has been reported to be widely distributed in mountain wetlands of Nepal, though recent records have been scarce. It is categorized as Near Threatened in the National Red List Assessment estimating its population as 1,000-4,000 individuals, not based on a comprehensive status survey. Here we review the past reports of its status and distribution in Nepal to provide an update on the basis of literature review and a limited test surveys.

## Introduction

- One of the widest distributions of all Palearctic mammals (Corbet, 1966).
- NT by the IUCN Red List and Appendix I of CITES.
- In Nepal, was predicted to be widely distributed in Mountain Rivers and wetlands (Yonzon, 1998).
- Near Threatened estimating its population as 1,000-4,000 (Jnawali et al., 2011).
- Is not included on the protected list of the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act (1973) (Acharya and Rajbhandari, 2011).
- But 2002 Amendment of the Aquatic Life Protection Act (1961) gives legal protection.
- Nepal is Signatory of CITES, which forbids its trade.

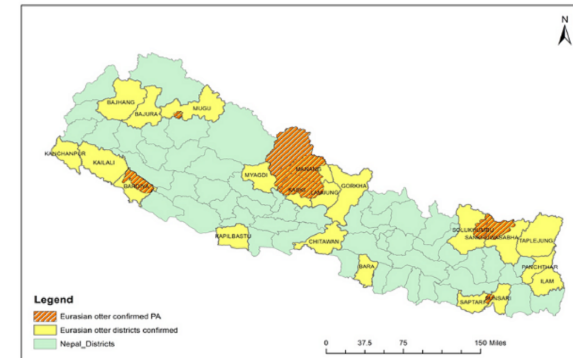
## Methodology



## Results

- Eurasian otters were confirmed from places: west Seti River Valley (Yonzon, 1998); Makalu Barun National Park (Kafle, 2007; Jnawali et al. 2011); Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve (Kafle, 2009) and Ghoda ghodi lake complex area (Kafle, 2009).
- Those studies used direct sightings or indirect signs (tracks, scats etc.) and community perception to document their presence.
- Yet there is no recent photographic evidence of from these areas.
- The otters were confirmed from Kaski district (Acharya and Gurung, 1991) but after more than a decade, survey by Bhandari and GC (2008) did not confirm Eurasian otter presence at the site (Bhandari and GC, 2008).

Confirmed distribution of Eurasian otter in Nepal



## A test case field survey

- Otter survey was conducted along the Budigandaki River in Bhimsen Rural Municipality and Sahid Lakhani Rural Municipality of Gorkha.
- Key informant survey and semi-structured questionnaire survey was conducted. Likert scale, chi-square test and likelihood ratio test were used to analyze people's perception. 7 transects of 1 km each was surveyed. Seven field cameras were also placed for a total of 140 camera working days and night.
- No sightings, signs and photos of otters were recorded. Local people were found confused otter with crab eating mongoose.

### Kapilvastu

- Study site was Jagadishpur lake and Banganga River.
- Focused group discussion
- surveyed 27 transects of 1 km each
- Camera trapping effort of 640 trap day and nights
- Several small carnivores was recorded but no otters

### Rupa lake and Begnas lake

- A preliminary survey along with sign survey following informal discussion with locals.
- The signs of otter was sought along the bank of lakes by continuous survey
- No evidence of Eurasian otter from the study sites.
- Older respondents reported otter presence before two decades.

A thorough review of the literature and limited field surveys suggest that there has not been a single verifiable record of the Eurasian otter in Nepal recently. We suggest that their populations have undergone nationwide decline. At present, the lack of data to assess their true status can only be remedied by scientific and genetic surveys.

## Acknowledgements

We are thankful to Melissa Savage, and Jyoti Bhandari for their guidance and grateful to the anonymous reviewers of IUCN Otter Spec. Bull. Our study was supported by Small Mammals Conservation and Research Foundation and Rufford Small Grants Foundation. We're indebted to IOF, Department of Forest and Claus Reuther Foundation for their support.



SCAN QR CODE FOR FULL PAPER  
 or email me for any queries:  
[aaratibasnet662@gmail.com](mailto:aaratibasnet662@gmail.com)