

IUCN/SSC Otter Specialist Group
... leading global otter conservation since 1974



GIANT OTTER CONSERVATION MANIFESTO 2022

NOTING that the giant otter (*Pteronura brasiliensis*) is a unique carnivore that helps increase public attention on the importance of South American wetlands and freshwater ecosystems;

ALARMED that the majority of the endangered giant otter populations are declining due to environmental threats including pollution, deforestation, degradation of wetland habitats, gold mining, overfishing, human-wildlife conflicts and now climate change impacts;

UNDERLINING that giant otters are categorized as Endangered on the IUCN Red List and have lost almost 40% of their original distribution range;

ALSO NOTING that the giant otters are on Appendix I of the *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)*, where all international commercial trade is banned;

ACKNOWLEDGING the *Species Survival Commission (SSC) Otter Specialist Group's* leadership in otter conservation, including its 2019 *Global Otter Conservation Strategy*, that highlights the need for governments, policy makers, the private sector, conservation funders, scientists, and local and indigenous communities to work together to reduce threats and to increase their populations;

CONCERNED that giant otter's level of legal protection varies in the countries in its range and need to be better enforced to reverse their decline and habitat loss;

INSPIRED by the resiliency of giant otters which, when provided with protection from illegal and unsustainable persecution, and given effective conservation management, and suitable enforced legal protection, can repopulate and flourish in a wide range of natural, near-natural and human-altered habitats;

CONCERNED that giant otter populations under professional human care are experiencing declining genetic diversity by the lack of exchange between zoos, aquariums and rescue centers, due to the burden of international regulations for endangered species, such as CITES Appendix I animals;

WORRIED that local government actions can hinder giant otter conservation management by ill-conceived local regulations.

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The participants of the 2nd International Giant Otter Workshop 2022, at its sessions in Ituzaingó, Argentina recommend:

The *IUCN/SSC Giant Otter Specialist Group* members, giant otter range states and other stakeholders SUPPORT the goals and objectives listed in the *IUCN/SSC Global Otter Conservation Strategy*, the *International Giant Otter Alliance (IGOA)* and other efforts to address threats to the species by:

- a. ensuring that the ex-situ and in-situ organizations collaborate more closely with joint conservation efforts;
- b. promoting scientific research and giant otter population surveys, as well as educational and awareness activities;
- c. increasing societal support for giant otters and their environment and facilitating peaceful co-existence between otters and people everywhere;
- d. developing new outreach and education programs to change negative human perception and improve the engagement of the community in giant otter conservation activities;
- e. overcoming local and political boundaries and differences, to provide more active collaboration and conservation management throughout the giant otter's range;
- f. establishing new protected areas in current and former giant otter habitats.

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