

Spotted-necked Otter

Hydrictis maculicollis

RED LIST STATUS

**NEAR
THREATENED**

The introduction of fish species, such as the Nile perch, poses a grave threat to the spotted-necked otter. These larger and swifter fish prove challenging for otters to catch, and their aggressive nature is displacing smaller, indigenous species, possibly resulting in a reduction of the the otters' preferred food supply.

ALIAS: speckle-throated otter, spot-necked otter

PREDATORS: crocodiles, leopards, other large carnivores

THREATS: habitat loss, hunting, fishing conflicts, invasive species

SIZE: 95-115 cm (body 65-75 cm, tail 33-44 cm); 5-7 kg

The spotted-necked otter is a species of otter found primarily in sub-Saharan Africa. It is easily recognisable by the noticeable white patches found on its upper lips and/or neck. However, it's worth noting that not every otter showcases lip markings or a spotted neck; some may exhibit only a few specks on their neck or none at all. Distinct from the two other sympatric African species, the spotted-necked otter is slim and has partially webbed paws, aiding in swimming and navigating aquatic environments. Mostly diurnal species, the spotted-necked otter specialises in hunting fish by sight in clear, deeper and flowing waters. This otter also prey on frogs, crabs and small water birds, showcasing a greater affinity for aquatic habitats compared to other African species. In the presence of ample prey, it may congregate in large social groups comprising solely males or juveniles; alternatively, loose packs consisting of two females with cubs have been observed concurrently using the same core territory. The spotted-necked otter is frequently seen indulging in play and the cubs, heavily dependent on their mother's care, may remain with her for up to two years.