

Eurasian Otter

Lutra lutra

RED LIST STATUS

**NEAR
THREATENED**

In some areas, such as the Scottish Isles, the Eurasian otter has diurnal habits and forages in the sea, later seeking out freshwater pools to wash the salt out of its pelt.

ALIAS: old world otter, water dog

PREDATORS: birds of prey, crocodiles, dogs

THREATS: habitat loss, poaching, accidental trapping, pollution

SIZE: 102-138 cm (body 57-70 cm tail 35-40 cm); 4-11 kg

The Eurasian otter is an elusive, solitary otter that has one of the widest distributions of all palearctic mammals, from Ireland to Japan and from Russia down to Southeast Asia. Notwithstanding its large range, it is classified as Near Threatened in the IUCN Red List due to many areas that have declining populations and others from which it has disappeared completely. It is threatened by water pollution, prey depletion and habitat degradation, especially the destruction of riparian vegetation belts. This species has made a spectacular comeback in many European countries since the 1990s when pollution levels decreased and it became protected. This playful otter has a varied diet which includes mainly fish, followed by crustaceans and amphibians, and to a lesser extent reptiles, birds, eggs and insects. It is usually nocturnal and can be found in most freshwater environments. Eurasian otters breed all year round and are considered a solitary species, although sometimes a mother and her offspring will live together for several months after weaning.