

## INTERNATIONAL OTTER SURVIVAL FUND

7 Black Park  
Broadford  
Isle of Skye IV49 9DE  
Tel/FAX: ++1471 822 487  
[www.otter.org](http://www.otter.org)



10<sup>th</sup> February 2021

### **Team Otter Update**

Firstly, we hope that you are safe and well at this time. We would also like to express once again our gratitude to you for supporting IOSF's environmental education Team Otter programme.

We wanted to take this opportunity to offer you an update on our Team Otter programme.

It is worth noting that all clubs have had reduced meeting times due to Covid-19 restrictions in their respective countries. Please see the brief updates on some of the clubs we have around the world:

#### **United Kingdom**

Broadford Team Otter is very active and is doing a significant amount to help their natural environment on the Isle of Skye. During the more restricted times we met online to take part in wildlife and natural world quizzes. The children continued growing their knowledge of both local, and global wildlife and natural world issues.

Now that we are allowed to meet outdoors, we are back to working on our task of cleaning up the area and ensuring that less litter is entering our environment. This means that less litter is entering our seas and so this is becoming less of an issue for various marine creatures, including otters.

The club is also looking at reducing the amount of litter and have created signs to encourage the local community to reduce waste. We are also now a part of the Kids Against Plastic movement and in the process of creating a video to encourage more people to make a difference. We will also be working on another video to deter people from producing litter and reuse/recycle as much waste as possible. So where the club is active in reducing litter it also wants to be proactive and reduce the litter before it enters the environments.

During some meetings we take the opportunity to visit various habitats and learning more about the flora and fauna of the area, and the large biodiversity we have.

#### **Laos**

IOSF's Team Otter programme in Laos is led by workshop attendee Kiengkai Khoonsrivong. In summer 2020, Kiengkai visited the Bolikhamxay province visiting schools to talk about otters. A children's artwork competition was held with the teachers picking the eventual winner. The children had fun and learned about the importance of otters and wetland habitats.

At the end of 2020, Kiengkai continued his outreach programme visiting the Luangprabang and Oudomxay provinces.

During his outreach programme Kiengkai managed to visit over 200 children and teach them about the importance of otters and wetland habitats in their respective areas. He also talked to local communities about presence, perceptions and other factors relating to otters.

We are delighted to support this project and help to grow awareness for otters in Laos. We look forward to seeing more from Kiengkai and his team moving forward.

### **Uganda**

The Mutanda Community Conservation Organization (MUCCO) have started a club in the Kisoro District, near Lake Mutanda, an area where otters are known to exist.

MUCCO and the club have visited local habitats, have reduced otter trade and are working on ways to improve farming methods to maintain this important habitat.

They also have plans to hold a World Otter Day 2021 event.

### **Malaysia**

In Malaysia, the Malaysia Nature Society's sub-group Malaysian Otter Network have plans to start a Team Otter club. To date, restrictions have meant that this has not been possible but the club will start when allowed to do so.

### **Nepal**

IOSF was delighted to be able to support Aarati Basnet and her community outreach programme in Shuklaphanta National Park, Nepal, focusing on the indigenous "Rana Tharu" community.

The objectives of the programme were to increase awareness of otters including threats, facts and importance to local communities and children of the area – one of the last strongholds for smooth-coated otters in Nepal. The aspect of the project that focused on children used fun and engaging games and talks with the view to starting a Team Otter club for children with a real passion to help.

During the programme students were invited from six different schools to learn more about otters from the following:

- Presentation on otters
- Educational video on smooth-coated otters
- Presentation on wetland conservation
- Games
- Formation of Team Otter: A group of ten interested children formed a Team Otter club, known as 'Oat ko toli' in the local language. They are fascinated with the idea of conservation of otters locally and teaching what they have learnt to their friends and other members of society. They also have plans to conduct conservation awareness programmes across their area. The formation of the club will increase awareness about otters and a desire to help solve conservation issues.

Creating awareness about otters and their habitat aroused the curiosity of both students and local people. By the end of the programme the team found increased knowledge and a changed perspective of local children regarding otters and their conservation. Having achieved the objectives of this event, they will continue to work with students and the local community to instil a sense of otter conservation and environmental responsibility.

Furthermore, in Nepal, we are in the process of starting 12 more clubs near to Chitwan National Park.

### **South Africa**

Our Team Otter programme was also delighted to be able to link with the Hoerikwaggo Kids Club and they are now affiliated to our programme of raising awareness to children and the natural world.

## Montenegro

NGO Living Green have seven Team Otter clubs and they are now planning a World Otter Day 2021 event for the end of May. They work predominantly on a major otter habitat called Lake Skadar, which is the largest lake in southern Europe and spans across Montenegro and Albania.

## Guyana

Prior to the global pandemic, the wildlife club in Yupukari was meeting twice a week. One session focussed on teaching the children about otters in a classroom capacity, and the other session gave them an opportunity to go “into the field” and see otters, birds, flora and other natural aspects local to them. As a result, the children were growing more of an interest in protecting their natural world.

Since the pandemic situation has increased, and given Yupukari’s close proximity to Brazil, which was a particularly problem area, face to face meetings have been heavily restricted to ensure everyone’s safety. There have been considerable efforts to offer the children continued access to learning materials so that they can continue to learn from home with materials being dispersed “door-to-door”.

When the situation improves, face to face wildlife club meetings will begin once again.

We would like to take this opportunity to once again thank you for your support of Team Otter.

Yours sincerely,



Ben Yoxon  
Education Officer  
International Otter Survival Fund



Wildlife Conservation Award Winner,  
British Animal Honours 2013



IFAW Animal Action Award Winner 2012

---

Patron: Julian Pettifer. Joint Presidents: Laurence Broderick, Dennis Furnell. Head of Operations: Dr Paul Yoxon  
IOSF is an international fund set up to conserve otters worldwide and is organised by SEC Ltd solely for this purpose.  
Reg No 109031. Charity No SC003875

