

**European Community Directive  
on the Conservation of Natural Habitats  
and of Wild Fauna and Flora  
(92/43/EEC)**


**Second Report by the United Kingdom under  
Article 17  
on the implementation of the Directive  
from January 2001 to December 2006**

**Conservation status assessment for  
Species:  
S1355 - *Lutra lutra* - Otter**

The information in this assessment corresponds to the "species fact sheet" submitted by the UK to the European Union in February 2008 (second and final submission). Please note that this is a section of the UK's report. For the complete report visit <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/article17>

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**Species Name: *Lutra lutra***

<b>1. National level</b>	
Species Code	S1355
Member State	United Kingdom
Biogeographic regions concerned within the Member state	ATL
1.1 Range map	 A map of the United Kingdom showing the distribution of the species <i>Lutra lutra</i> . The landmasses of Great Britain, Ireland, and the Scottish Highlands are shaded in grey, indicating the range of the species. The map includes the main islands and numerous smaller islands and archipelagos.

## 1.2 Distribution map



## 2. Biogeographic level

### 2.1 Biogeographic region

ATL

### 2.2 Published sources and/or websites

ANDREWS, E. & CRAWFORD, A.K. 1986. Otter Survey of Wales 1984–85. Vincent Wildlife Trust, London.

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CONROY, J.W.H. & KRUK, H. 1995. Changes in otter numbers in Shetland. Unpublished report to Shetland Oil Terminal Advisory Group. ITE project 815, Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, Banchory.

CRAWFORD, A. 2003. Fourth Otter Survey of England 2000–2002.

Environment Agency, Bristol. Available to download from the Environment Agency website ([www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/conservation/483249/?version=1&lang=\\_e](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/conservation/483249/?version=1&lang=_e))

CRAWFORD, A., EVANS, D., JONES, A. & McNULTY, J. 1979. Otter Survey of Wales 1977–78. Society for the Promotion of Nature Conservation, Lincoln.

GREEN, J. & GREEN, R. 1980. Otter Survey of Scotland 1977–79. Vincent Wildlife Trust, London.

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HARRIS, S., MORRIS, P., WRAY, S. & YALDEN, D. 1995. A review of British Mammals: population estimates and conservation status of British mammals other than cetaceans. JNCC, Peterborough.

JEFFERIES, D.J. 1989. The changing otter population of Britain 1700–1989. *Biological Journal of the Linnean Society* 38, 61–69.

JEFFERIES, D.J., STRACHAN, C. & STRACHAN, R. 2003. Estimating numbers of the three interacting riparian mammals in Britain using survey data. In: JEFFERIES, D.J. (Ed) *The water vole and mink survey of 1996–1998 with a history of the long-term changes in the status of both species and their causes*. pp188–197. Vincent Wildlife Trust, Ledbury.

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KRUUK, H. 1995. *Wild otters: Predation and populations*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

LILES, G. 2003. *Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers Conservation Techniques Series No. 5: Otter Breeding Sites - Conservation and Management*. English Nature, Peterborough.

PRESTON, J., PRODHOL, P., PORTIG, A. & MONTGOMERY, I. 2004. Reassessing otter *Lutra lutra* distribution in Northern Ireland. Available to download from the Environment and Heritage Service website ([www.ehsni.gov.uk/pubs/publications/otterreportNov2004.pdf](http://www.ehsni.gov.uk/pubs/publications/otterreportNov2004.pdf)).

STRACHAN, R. 2007 National survey of otter *Lutra lutra* distribution in Scotland 2003–04. Scottish Natural Heritage Commissioned Report No. 211 (ROAME No. F02AC309).

STRACHAN, R. & JEFFERIES, D.J. 1996. Otter Survey of England 1991–1994. A report on the decline and recovery of the otter in England and on its

	distribution, status and conservation in 1991–1994. Vincent Wildlife Trust, London			
	Map Data Sources			
	Biological Records Centre - Mammals Database; Devon incidental species records 1950-2002; Dorset SW Pilot species dataset; Highland Biological Recording Groups - Mammals dataset; Irish otter dataset; BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Birds Survey mammal data (1995-2005); Marine Nature Conservation Review; National Trust Selected BAP Species; Otters: Pembrokeshire Marine Species Atlas; Staffordshire Wildlife Trust Nature Reserves Inventory; SWT Scottish Borders Local Wildlife Site Survey data 1996-2000 - species information; Wiltshire BAP Priority Species Distribution Records; England Otter Survey Database; Northern Ireland Otter Survey Database; Scotland Otter Survey Database; Wales Otter Survey Database (via the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Gateway).			
<b>2.3 Range of species in the biogeographic region or marine region</b>				
2.3.1 Surface range of the species (sq km)	242676			
2.3.2 Date of range determination	1990-2006			
2.3.3 Quality of data concerning range	Moderate			
2.3.4 Range trend	Increasing (+)			
2.3.5 Range trend magnitude (%)	70			
2.3.6 Range trend period	1980-2004			
2.3.7 Reasons for reported trend	3 - Direct human influence; 4 - Indirect anthropo or zoogenic influence;			
<b>2.4 Population</b>				
2.4.1 Population size estimation	Minimum	10395	Maximum	Unknown
	Units	Individuals		
2.4.2 Date of population estimation	2004			
2.4.3 Method used for population estimation	2 - Extrapolation from surveys of part of the population			
2.4.4 Quality of population data	Poor			
2.4.5 Population trend	Increasing (+)			
2.4.6 Population trend magnitude (%)	51			
2.4.7 Population trend period	1980-2004			
2.4.8 Reasons for reported trend	3 - Direct human influence; 4 - Indirect anthropo or zoogenic influence;			
2.4.9 Justification of % thresholds for trends (optional)	Not applicable			
2.4.10 Main pressures	110 - Use of pesticides; 212 - trawling; 290 - Hunting, fishing or collecting activities not referred to above; 700 - Pollution;			

2.4.11 Threats	110 - Use of pesticides; 211 - fixed location fishing; 502 - routes, autoroutes; 700 - Pollution; 701 - water pollution; 803 - infilling of ditches, dykes, ponds, pools, marshes or pits; 810 - Drainage; 811 - management of aquatic and bank vegetation for drainage purposes; 830 - Canalisation; 840 - Flooding; 850 - Modification of hydrographic functioning, general; 852 - modifying structures of inland water courses; 853 - management of water levels;
<b>2.5 Habitat for the species in the biogeographic region or marine region</b>	
2.5 Habitats for the species	<p><i>L. lutra</i> have been recorded using all types of waterways. However, in England and Wales, they are mainly confined to freshwater. In Scotland, it is estimated that around half the <i>L. lutra</i> population occurs in predominantly coastal habitats. Home range can be up to 40km along river stretches and as small as 4-5km in coastal situations. However, surveys indicate that natal dens and intensive <i>L. lutra</i> activity (sprainting, pathways through vegetation) are generally confined to the 4 ha block (Liles 2003).</p> <p>Breeding sites are generally accepted as being located within the home range. They may comprise land, or open water and land, but be large enough to provide security from disturbance; one or more potential natal den sites; play areas for cubs; no risk of flooding and access to a good food supply. It seems that these can be located anywhere within river systems. The major habitat types associated with breeding sites are extensive reed beds; ponds and lakes; deciduous woodlands ranging in size from a 20 m wide strip to several hectares; young conifer plantations; and large areas of scrub (Liles 2003). In coastal areas, such as Shetland and the outer Hebrides otter dens frequently consist of burrows in peat (Kruuk 1995). Coastal holts are mostly within 100m of the shore and may be very frequent with densities up to three or four per kilometre in some areas (Conroy &amp; Kruuk 1995).</p>
2.5.2 Area estimation (sq km)	Unknown
2.5.3 Date of estimation	05/2007
2.5.4 Quality of data	Poor
2.5.5 Trend of the habitat	Stable (=)
2.5.6 Trend period	1990-1998
2.5.7 Reasons for reported trend	3 - Direct human influence; 4 - Indirect anthropo or zoogenic influence;
<b>2.6 Future prospects</b>	
2.6 Future prospects for the species	Good prospects_Species expected to survive and prosper
<b>2.7 Complementary information</b>	
2.7.1 Favourable reference range (sq km)	242676
2.7.2 Favourable reference population	9465
2.7.3 Suitable Habitat for the species	Unknown
2.7.4 Other relevant information	
<b>2.8 Conclusions</b> (assessment of conservation status at end of reporting period)	
(2.3) Range	(FV) - Favourable

(2.4) Population	(FV) - Favourable
(2.5) Habitat for the species	(XX) - Unknown
(2.6) Future prospects	(FV) - Favourable
Overall assessment	(FV) - Favourable