



Otter News No. 102, June 2019

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IOSF World Otter Day 2019 events map



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Once again IOSF World Otter Day was a massive success and we had events in **over 30 countries** globally. At this point we would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who was involved in the event this year. If it was as simple as using the **#WorldOtterDay** to holding a big event, it all makes a massive difference to otter conservation through IOSF!

Social Media

The use of social media is so powerful these days to spread a message and **#WorldOtterDay** once again went worldwide. At one point during the day it was trending 7th in the world!

Unfortunately, we can't tell you about every single event but here is a large selection from across the world.

 **Australia** 

IOSF's long-supporting Bud Lambeth raised awareness and support for otter conservation at his college.

 **Brazil** 

Winner of an IOSF World Otter Day grant

This **World Otter Day** event happened thanks to a **World Otter Day** grant. Ana Maria Montes Ferro, of Otters Up, who ran the event, wrote the following report:

"In the community of Paumarí, within the Jauvary River, Brazilian Amazon, we celebrated biodiversity through the eyes of two emblematic species, the Giant Otter and the Neotropical Otter. Since the conservation project Otters-Up begun, both, humans and otters prevailed as top predators of riparian ecosystems and a conflict arose. In time, otters became a window to a complex environmental and social problem and soon inspired a joined dialogue between Nature Reserve Palmarí, communities and the Otters-Up team.



*The **World Otter Day** was an opportunity to invite the whole community and during a joyful celebration address the challenges nature and humans need to face. One of the main motivations for this celebration was the fish scarcity we had not documented before, even piranhas were hard to catch, and as families need to eat, every night I would hear a worrisome and growing number of gunshots. Along with Nature Reserve Palmarí, volunteers and leaders of the community, we put together games and a menu to ensure everyone's participation, and most importantly, to create a trusting space where we could reflect about the use of ecosystemic resources and aspire for a symbiosis between environmental, social and economic value.*

The first guests to arrive were the children and the professor. We created different materials to complete a Giant Otter's mask. Each step of the process was dedicated to one of the otter's senses and how it influences their diet, behaviour and ecology. Their curiosity and the dedication they put on decorating their mask was truly inspiring. Once "transformed" into Giant Otters, we asked them to act as otters, as you may appreciate in the photographs.



After the children, women weren't long to arrive. Their presence was one of the most exiting outcomes of the day since our investigation of otters has led us to interact mainly with fishermen and woodcutters, a predominantly male role. With a Chambira (rope) made by the elders, we created two spiders'

webs, one to portray the ecosystem's unity and fragility and one to discover the abilities and dreams of each woman. We began to knit the first web by calling out the otters, and the rope was passed down from one another as they called an organism that was either prey or predator of the previous one. The game went on until humans were called. A great variety of organisms entered the web, sustaining once again how exceptional observers and naturalist people form communities are. The interconnectivity of all living organisms, including humans, became evident. We asked some of the participants to pull the rope, it led others to drop it and as it went by the spider web started to fall apart. It represented their home, plants and animals they grew up with, whose secrets and uses they were familiar with; they shared with us a sense of belonging and at least for the day, they acknowledged Nature's fragility and the possibility of extinction.



On the second round, we wanted to have a glance at their dreams and what they loved most. Everyone had to say something they loved, something they were good at and something they wished and finally they would pass the rope to another person sharing one of her qualities. They valued most being hardworking, loving and caring. We discovered some really interesting talents, a great start to sustainability thinking.

Meanwhile the boys had built a chicken barbecue. We followed a green philosophy; every plate was made of banana leaves and every one had to bring their own cutlery. We ended the meal by singing a Portuguese happy birthday to the otters and eating cake.



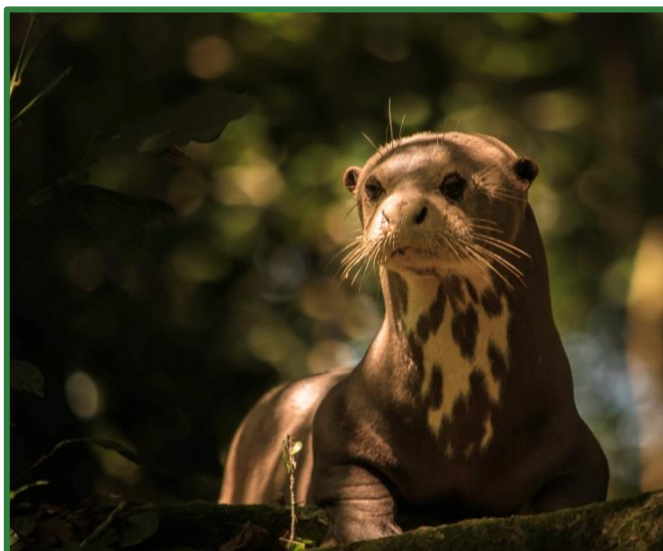
To involve the men, we gambled! Teams of 6 were made and 200 Reals were put on the game. Each round they had to fish from an imaginary lake, and the winner was the group



who at the end of 10 rounds had collected the most fish. However, if the fishing resource ended before those 10 rounds were completed, everyone lost. Nobody won. Every time they ended the fishing resource before the 10th round was done. It's a game that requires a lot of time for the solution to be found and it was already late. Yet, as the community was actually facing a severe scarcity of fish, they quickly related with the game. They told me they now had to travel two days upstream of the

river to fish and that people had begun hunting the otters that live there because they were attacking and destroying the nets. They told me the Nature Reserve's main dish used to be Pirarucú and now chicken was the most frequently served dish. They told me much about how they remembered the jungle, about before and about now. They acknowledge that wildlife is becoming more and more scarce, that every flooded season fishing was becoming more challenging, that they were worried for their families and what had to be done had to be done. I was not there to judge, forbid or condemn. I was there because I needed the truth. Only when you deeply understand what's happening can you begin to create change.

I told them we are lucky that our continent came to be discovered so late by "civilization". That we still have astonishing biodiversity and that the world's eyes were all looking at the Amazon, one of the truly pristine forest that remains. I reminded them that the land wasn't inherited from our parents but borrowed from our children and that the greatest value the forest could provide was hidden in its biodiversity. Together we began thinking about how to create a symbiosis between environmental, social and economic value and with that last thought, we played football until it was dark."



Otters Up **World Otter Day** event really emphasises the crucial balance we as a species have to create between habitats, wildlife and ourselves. As has been well documented, at this moment in time we are stepping way beyond the boundary of balance and only when we change will we see a positive impact on our natural world.

Cambodia

Kouprey Express and Wildlife Alliance delivered an otter education and environmental programme to school children in Cambodia. They conducted classroom lessons on otters and wildlife with over 1,000 high school students from Oudong High School on 27 and 28 May.

Furthermore, on Monday 3 June, they held a field trip for 260 students and teachers from the same school to visit Phnom Tamao Rescue Centre. These kids had the chance to see a number of rescued otters at the centre. This programme has reached out to lots of children and will help raise awareness for the otter species, other wildlife and the environment. Kouprey Express will continue to work closely with IOSF to educate children in Cambodia on otters and their conservation.





Chile

Chinchimen's **World Otter Day** event called on all nature lovers to get involved with their Marine Otter survey along the coast of Chile, encouraging everyone to get out over the two days and record any otter sightings.



Costa Rica

The Toucan Rescue Ranch in Costa Rica had an otter 'takeover' for **World Otter Day**. This included special otter talks, including raising awareness for IOSF, using their rescued Neotropical Otter, Emma.



Denmark

AQUA Aquarium and Wildlife Park raised awareness for otters and their conservation with field trips and special talks for the day.



Finland

Ähtäri Zoo raised awareness for otters through fun children's activities.



Germany

Both Dortmund Zoo and Tierpark Sababurg put an emphasis on otters with talks, quizzes and fun activities for children.



France

The otter keepers at Oceanopolis in Brest gave talks about otters throughout the day.



Guatemala

Aurora Zoo, Guatemala City, once again joined IOSF **World Otter Day** by having special talks to raise awareness for the Neotropical Otter.



Iraq

The Jaljamos for Antiquities and Marshlands established an awareness campaign for the local community in Hawr al-Hammar to introduce the importance of forests to the environment and ways to protect them and the damage of electric fishing to biodiversity, such as otters.



يحدث العار! كما يطلق عليه أبناء الأهوار ما هو إلا الأوتور! ، و الذي يمثل بظرفه الناعم وبراعته في الصيد ليلًا. ملغما بعض الشباب الأكليري (كائن مائي) من قبل و قد تشبه عموم وحش من مئتي عام، السدر من أعماق الأهوار العمارة في شباط من عام 1956 حتى البصرة ليحيا بين يدي أكفن ماكسويل) رضيع كليب، ماء ليزيد عمرة عن ستة أسابيع فقط. وقد طار مع ماكسويل الى لندن في اليوم التالي بعد أن ساء (أهليلج)وسرعان ما اكتسب شهرة عالمية بفضل كتاب ماكسويل الذي تسمير مبيعات العام والمتميزون بخلفه سياه رائدًا ولكن وبها للحرسة فقد مات جبيل على يد عامل طرق استكندي.

وحيث هذا من صف لم يعرفه العلم من قبل وأسماء علماء الحيوان في لندن أطلقوا عليه أسما علميا جديدا هو:

LUTHOGALE PERSPICILLATA MAXWELLI

كليب الماء حيوان لثوي جبيل بظرف بني كالك تائم وأقدام عريضة تشبه القدم الأوز، ونذير جبيل مستقيم بجيد السياحة وتو حاسة شم قوية وهو مسالم ما لم يشهر بالخطر. تلد الأنثى صغارها لا (جبلية) من قبل القصب يصنعها الأوتور على مسافة لا تتعدى عشرة سنتيمترات من سطح الماء ضمن منطقة مغطاة بالنبات وقريبة من العسبجات والديبول المائي، ويكون الكليل في شهرين شباط وأذار تتشبه العنقا على جلب أم شهر ثم تقفاد على الأسماك الصغيرة التي يصيدها الأوتور. أنه شعار الأهوار العراقية، حيوان فريد يمكن تربيته مثلما فعل المرحوم (داخل كالم الاسدي) في عام 1972.الصيد الجذوي الاسمر جاء به رضعا على

ويته القصب في أعماق أهوار الجياش. وظل يطعمه الحليب والسماك حتى شب، وأستأنس المكان وحي مع العائلة ستة كاملة جدا من نسجها الاجتماعي، ينزل الى الماء للنبذة والسيد ومجرد الى البيت القصب حيث الأبخار والجاموس والواجن والاطفال لكن نهاره الموت قتلا برصاصة طلقة. في عام 2008 اكتشف المختصون في منظمة طبيعة العراق هذا الحيوان في هور الحوزرة ونهر الزاب وأرسلوا عينات من فروه الى مختبرات دولية لتحديد جيلاته ومعرفة نوعه على وجه الدقة وكانت النتائج مذهلة إنه :

smooth-coated otter (Lutrogale perspicillata maxwelli; Mustelidae, Carnivora)

وقد نشرت دراسة علمية في مجلة متخصصة بعد ذلك في عام 2012 تضمنت نتائج التحليل واستعراض الأماكن التي يوجد فيها.

إن حيوانات كلاب الماء المسالمة عرضة للخطر والنقص أعدادها في حدود متدنية و نتيجة تجفيف الأهوار العراقية ما بين أعوام 2003-1991 من جهة وتعرضها للصيد من قبل عرب الأهوار جعلها أمكن لبيع جودها في العدن من جهة أخرى. حتى أصبح هذا الحيوان مهدد بالانقراض - الخطأ دعوة لكل الوزارات المعنية والشركات العمالية والمواطنين والمثابرين في مجال البيئة لاتخاذ خطوات مناسبة وإقرار تشريعات وقوانين تضمن الحفاظ على هذا الحيوان قبل فوات الأوان .

Those involved in the awareness programme included fishermen and community members.

Republic of Ireland

Dingle Oceanworld made their kidzone 'otter'-ly fantastic with an otter theme for the weekend. There was face-painting/otter masks/posters/colouring of the otters on display. The staff gave talks throughout the day to emphasise the importance of otters.

India

Suthar Akshit ran an awareness program on Smooth-coated Otters at Kotna village near the banks of the Mahi River, in Gujarat, working with local fisherman, communities, families and farmers that rely on the Mahi River. This involved local village leaders and decision makers to ensure the long-term conservation of the otters in the river and active involvement of local youth for sustainable conservation program in the area.



Italy

Faunistic Park La Torbiera raised awareness through talks at their otter enclosure and selling posters and pictures of otters to fund-raise for otter conservation through IOSF.

Japan

Both Osaka Aquarium Kaiyukan and Morioka Zoological Park celebrated the day with otter talks and tours.

Laos

Winner of an extra IOSF World Otter Day grant thanks to anonymous donor

The **World Otter Day** event in Laos was held due to IOSF being able to offer a fourth

World Otter Day grant. This was thanks to an anonymous donation.



Kiengkai Khoonsrivong, an attendee at IOSF's 2018 otter conservation workshop in Laos, delivered education meetings to raise awareness and reduce the illegal trade of otters in Bolikhamxay Province, Lao PDR. Kiengkai invited representatives from Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office (PAFO) of Bolikhamxay Province, Lao PDR to join in the event. During the presentation Kiengkai spoke

to the attendees about the otters of Laos, reducing illegal trade and techniques for otter identification. Furthermore, a strategy for the long-term conservation of otters within the country was discussed.

Kiengkai also took the time to join the national tree planting event to further protect habitats across the country.

 **Malaysia** 

Winner of an IOSF World Otter Day grant

Leona Wai delivered a human-otter conflict workshop at Batu Puteh, Kinabatangan, Sabah.

The workshop focused on the fishermen of Batu Puteh village with the objectives to enhance knowledge and awareness of otters in Sabah, to plan solutions for human-otter conflict and also to inspire fishermen to participate in community-based conservation. Leona Wai, Danau Girang Field Centre's Otter

Conservation Officer, was the event coordinator for this workshop and she gave a talk on otters in Sabah to the participants. They were then divided into groups and asked to discuss solutions about various human-otter conflict scenarios. There was also a sharing session at the end of the workshop to hear their side of the story regarding otters in the area. It was a success and otter conservation workshops will be organised in the future in other riverine villages.



 **Montenegro** 

In Montenegro, the seven IOSF Team Otter clubs joined with NGO Living Green and the Environmental Protection Agency to raise awareness for otters around the Skadar Lake National Park. Children have shown great creativity and great interest and now they are the true protectors of the otter.

Visit <http://living-green.me/svjetski-dan-vidre-3/> to see all the amazing creations made by the Team Otter children to raise awareness for otters.



 **Nepal** 

Aarati Basnet conducted a workshop and art competition in Shree Kanak Muni Higher Secondary School, located in the vicinity of Jadagispur Reservoir, Kapilvastu, an area known to have otter populations.



The wetland has been facing several threats such as over-exploitation of products and resources, encroachment, habitat destruction, improper harvesting of resources etc. Draining of the reservoir for irrigation and construction purposes has been a major threat as illegal poaching has increased with a decline of wetland species, including otters. By raising

awareness on otters and its associated habitat we can aid in long term conservation. Moreover, awareness of the otter as a flagship species will help in conservation of the entire wetland ecosystem.

The students were treated to presentations from various experts on wetlands and their current issues, otters and their status, and local youth club leaders were dedicated to furthering this message. Mr Shiva Wagle, the special guest, continued by expressing his dedication to wetland preservation and otter conservation.



At the end of the day, the students had an opportunity to take part in an otter artwork competition where the top 4 drawings won a prize.

Pakistan

Pakistan Wildlife Foundation, in collaboration with Farozaan TV, celebrated **World Otter Day** in a local school in Islamabad.

Pakistan Wildlife Foundation's junior ambassador Miss Minahil Safwan delivered a comprehensive lecture on the ecological role of otters, being at the top of the food chain, and how their presence is very important for the balance of the ecosystem as a whole.



Peru

Zoo Huachipa raised awareness for otters with fun, children's games and opportunities for visitors to learn about otters.

Poland

Bydgoszcz Zoological Garden and Poznan Zoo raised the profile of otters through games, stalls, talks and much more.



Russia

For the second year Zoo Novosibirsk joined IOSF **World Otter Day** with an event at their zoo. There were games, quizzes and IOSF's education pack available for children, and adults had the opportunity to learn more about the species by visiting stalls at the zoo.



Singapore

Singapore Zoo held an event for visitors to learn more about their resident otters and their wild counterparts.



Sri Lanka

Chaminda Jayasekara visited children of Sri Lanka and taught them all about otters in a fun, engaging education workshop. The children learned all about otters and had the opportunity to draw their own otters.

IOSF and AOCN's Padma de Silva worked behind the scenes with the arrangements for the otter day event, but was unable to attend the workshops.

Thanks to Chaminda for his efforts for otters in Sri Lanka.



Sweden

Hans C. Ring gave a talk at Tystberga Hembygdsförening, about the history of otters in Sweden over the last 100 years, including the reintroduction of 44 otters during 1982-1986 following their extinction in Sweden.

Nordens Ark raised awareness through social media and by offering discounts on all ottery products.



Taiwan

Taipei Zoo held a series of **World Otter Day** events to raise awareness for the species and their conservation.



Tanzania

Martin Bayo celebrated **World Otter Day** with Head of the Wildlife Management Department at Sokoine University of Agriculture in Tanzania. They organized a two-hour presentation on two important aspects: introducing student and university staff to basic research techniques used to study otters; and presenting the progress of his project in Mtera Dam, *funded by a Rufford Conservation grant*.



Many local conservationists are unaware of the existence, ecology and potential threats



facing otters in Tanzania. Raising awareness and conservation education is the best way to build a staircase to fill the above gap. There were 50 attendees and 70% had not attended the previous year, so it is their hope that the message will be carried to their conservation arena.

Elsewhere, William Mgomo visited Ndela Secondary School, Mbinga for his **World Otter Day** event this year, reaching out

to 288 students and five teachers. He taught them all about otters and their conservation within their area. At the end, the children took part in an artwork competition where winners received books and pens.

William has always been a great supporter of **World Otter Day** through his school visits which he carries out with great enthusiasm.

The Gambia

Winner of an IOSF World Otter Day grant

Karanta Camara visited the Jimmansar village and surrounding areas to carry out meetings with the local fishermen. It was an interactive session which encouraged them to take a lead in preserving their otter populations and wetland habitats. A committee has been tasked to continue the work from this workshop and monitor and document otters within the area.

Some local fishermen admitted that in the past otters were hunted for traditional Juju but this practice no longer takes place.

The fishermen in this community are keen to embrace best practice otter conservation and understand the benefits of localised populations of the species. Karanta will return to the area in the future and survey the area for otters whilst continuing to raise awareness of the species in the area.



United Arab Emirates

Dubai Aquarium and Underwater Zoo held a week-long **World Otter Day** event to raise awareness and support for otter conservation, partnering with the Dubai Mall and Emma Skinner Art.

They held an awareness event in Dubai Mall where passers-by had the opportunity to learn more about what is threatening their long-term survival and see some of Emma Skinner's fine work.

In the Aquarium and underwater zoo they held an 'otter week', raising awareness for otters and support for their conservation through IOSF.

United Kingdom

Across the UK there was a variety of events – too many to mention them all.

On the Isle of Muck, their primary school joined forces with the primary school on the neighbouring island of Eigg for a fun day learning more about otters and their habitats. After watching a couple of otter videos, the children worked in pairs/3s and read a couple of IOSF's fact sheets. They then had to present three interesting otter facts to the rest of the group.



This was a follow on from IOSF's visit to the islands for **World Otter Day 2018** and it is great to see that the schools are still learning about otters.

We would also like to thank the following for their events:

- Mull Otter Group
- Power Community Centre & Annie's Café
- Auchingarrich
- Lush Sauchiehall Street
- Sharon Lashley, Climate Action and Enviro UK.
- Scottish Deer Centre
- Blue Otter Narrowboat
- Safari Zoo
- Shepreth Wildlife Park
- Old MacDonald's Farm
- Grace Onions for her sponsored walk
- Paradise Wildlife Park
- Waterlooville, Petersfield, Emsworth and Leigh Park Libraries
- And everyone else who took part.

United States of America

Riverbank Elementary School's first grade students learned all about the different species of otters by watching videos, reading stories and exploring websites.

Students wore otter masks to go out and clean up the school grounds and make a safer environment for themselves and local wildlife. They made posters to educate other students of the importance of keeping their school clean in order to protect the river habitat next to the school and took time to try quizzes, games and much more on the Team Otter website.



We would also like to thank the following for their events:

- Alaska Zoo
- Zoo New England
- NEW Zoo and Adventure Park
- Zoo New England
- Smithsonian National Zoological Park
- Trailside Nature Museum
- River Otter Ecology Project
- Potawatomi Zoo
- Akron Zoo
- Detroit Zoo
- Philadelphia Zoo
- Seneca Park Zoo
- Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo
- And the many more who joined in.



Vietnam

Save Vietnam's Wildlife completed its new rescue enclosure facility just in time for **World Otter Day**. Furthermore, they created a short video to raise people's awareness on the biggest current threat to the species, namely the pet trade, and called for actions not to support this trade by having an otter pet.

Donate to IOSF

<https://www.ottershop.co.uk/donate-to-iosf-c2x11601155>



You can still donate to support the IOSF **World Otter Day** and help to ensure that important conservation and awareness work continues.

UK taxpayers:

*Increase the value
of your gift to IOSF:
giftaid it*



Thank You...

Our thanks this month go to **The Beryl Evetts & Robert Luff Animal Welfare Trust**, **The William Haddon Charitable Trust**, Nurtured by Nature and Daphne Neville, as well as to all of you who have so kindly donated to IOSF over the past month.

Events

Visit our website to find out what might be happening in the otter world near you.

Don't forget, if you are aware of any otter-related events taking place, send us the details (Title, time, date, place and cost (if applicable), and we will post it on our Events page.

<http://otter.org/Public/Events.aspx>

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All other countries: Adult: £30.00 per year
 Child: £15.00 per year
 Family: £40.00 per year

Life Membership (all countries): £350.00

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Discover Ways You Can Help

There are many ways in which you can raise money and awareness to help the otters in our **Fundraising Pack** or find out what some of our supporters have done over the years in the online **newsletters**.

International Otter Survival Fund
7 Black Park
Broadford
Isle of Skye IV49 9DE
Scotland

Email: enquiries@otter.org
Tel/Fax: ++(0)1471 822487



Charity Number SC003875

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