



Core activities

Gweithgareddau Craidd

We collect over 200 otters found dead each year, from across England, Wales and Scotland. To do this, we rely on partnerships with an extensive network of environmental organisations and individuals, who report and send otters.

We carry out a detailed post mortem examination and collect a wide range of samples for our archive. This allows for retrospective analysis, as new questions are asked, methods developed or funds become available.

Samples and data are used in research, including monitoring of environmental pollutants, disease, & otter biology. Location and date are used to examine spatial variation and trends over time (e.g. in pollutants or disease), while basic biological information (e.g. sex and age) help us understand variation within populations. We also send regular reports to local environmental organisations.

The large sample size, geographic coverage, and run time makes the Otter Project an increasingly valuable resource for environmental monitoring.

Otters as sentinels

Dyfrgwn fel gwarchodwyr

Testing otter tissues can provide a warning of pollutants or disease in the environment.

Pollution Llygredd

By measuring pollutants in otter tissues, we can highlight potential risks to human and wildlife health, and identify where legislation / control has been successful, or is still needed.

We have identified toxic chemicals in UK freshwaters and have shown that legislation to ban or reduce pollutants can work - PCBs, some organochlorine pesticides, and lead (from leaded petrol) are commonly found, but concentrations are falling. We are now measuring a broad range of contaminants including PFASs and PBDEs, and contributing to the government's 25 Year Environment Plan for chemical monitoring.

Parasites Arfilod

Otters are opportunistic predators, and eat a diverse diet – which means they are exposed to a range of generalist parasites.

Worms in the gall bladder, a protozoan causing Toxoplasmosis, and the hedgehog tick, are common in/on otters. Understanding patterns in their distribution helps us understand potential health risks to other wild and domestic animals, as well as humans.

More detail on our research themes and publications available on our website.

Conservation Cadwraeth

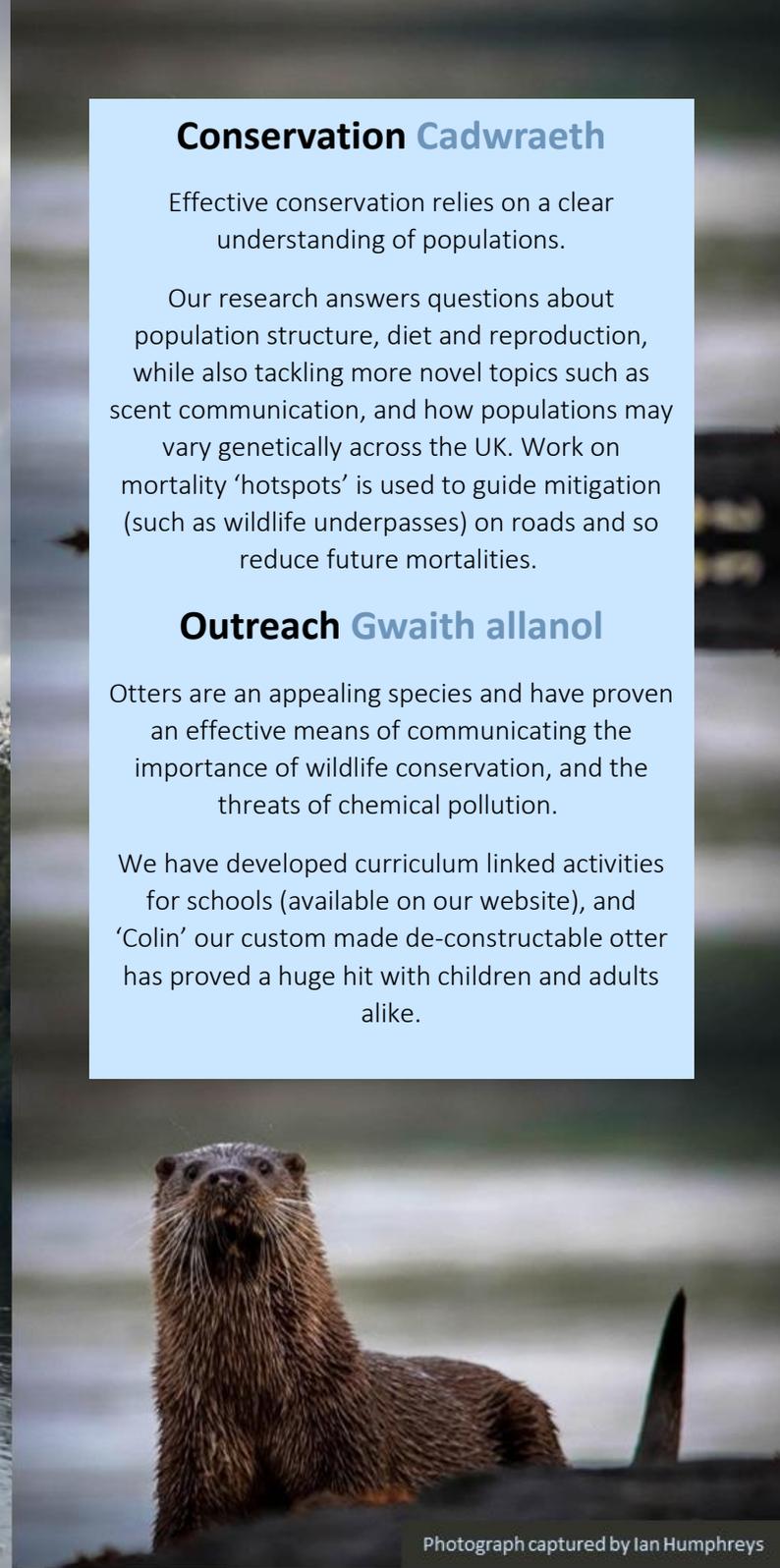
Effective conservation relies on a clear understanding of populations.

Our research answers questions about population structure, diet and reproduction, while also tackling more novel topics such as scent communication, and how populations may vary genetically across the UK. Work on mortality 'hotspots' is used to guide mitigation (such as wildlife underpasses) on roads and so reduce future mortalities.

Outreach Gwaith allanol

Otters are an appealing species and have proven an effective means of communicating the importance of wildlife conservation, and the threats of chemical pollution.

We have developed curriculum linked activities for schools (available on our website), and 'Colin' our custom made de-constructable otter has proved a huge hit with children and adults alike.



Why otters? Pam dyfrgwn?

- Otters are top of the freshwater food chain in the UK, and act as an environmental 'sentinel': otters are an indicator of threats (such as pollutants, disease and parasites) that may affect the health of wildlife, domestic animals, livestock, and humans.
- Otters are a good 'umbrella species': protecting otters and their habitat offers protection to a wide range of other species that might otherwise be overlooked.
- Otters are protected under UK & EU legislation and are currently recovering from near extinction across many parts of their range. They are still vulnerable to threats from emerging pollutants and disease, declining fish stocks, road traffic accidents and persecution.

Rhowch wybod am ddyfrgwn wedi marw!

Report dead otters!



Lloegr / England
03708 506 506

(Asiantaeth yr Amgylchedd /
Environment Agency)



Cymru / Wales
0300 065 3000

(Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru /
Natural Resources Wales)



Yr Alban / Scotland
01471 822 847

(Cronfa Ryngwladol ar gyfer
Goroesiad Dyfrgwn / International
Otter Survival Fund)



@otter_project



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Otter Project



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www.caerdydd.ac.uk/Otter-project

Cymerwch ran

www.cardiff.ac.uk/otter-project

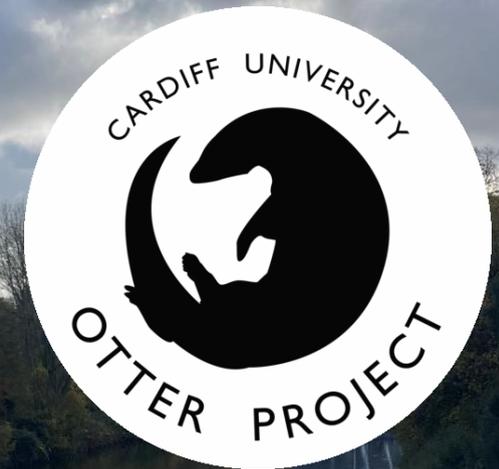
Get involved / donate!

*Mae cynlluniau eraill sy'n casglu data/samplau o anifeiliaid gwyllt wedi marw i'w gweld yn: wildcoms.org.uk & projectsplatter.co.uk

*Other schemes collecting data/samples from wild animals found dead can be found at wildcoms.org.uk & projectsplatter.co.uk

'DEFNYDDIO DYFRGWN FEL
GWARCHODWYR IECHYD YR
AMGYLCHEDD'

'USING OTTERS AS SENTINELS FOR
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH'



A NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL
MONITORING PROGRAMME,
SINCE 1994

RHAGLEN GENEDLAETHOL AR
GYFER MONITRO'R
AMGYLCHEDD, ERS 1994



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