

**Research and Conservation
SSC Species Survival Commission
Otter Specialist Group**

IUCN/OSG

Terms of Reference

Listed below are Terms of Reference regarding the Otter Specialist Group Vision, Mission, Objectives, and Targets

IUCN Otter Specialist Group Terms of Reference

The following was agreed by the membership of the OSG at the VIII International Otter Colloquium, held in 2001 in Valdivia, Chile

Vision

- The conservation of the world's otter species will make a fundamental contribution to the preservation of earth's biodiversity and the conservation of vital wetland networks.

Goals

- Securing the survival of all otter species world-wide in their natural habitats.
- Securing the natural genetic diversity within the world's otter species as a contribution to the conservation of biodiversity.
- Promoting the wise and sustainable use of wetland habitats for both otters and Man.

Objectives

- Surveys of the status and distribution of all otter species using standardised and reliable methods.
- Studies on the biology and ecology of otter species, focusing on their role in wetland ecosystems.
- Research on the impact of human activities on otters and their habitats.
- Development and testing of conservation and management techniques to ensure coexistence of otters and Man.
- Development of public awareness activities utilising otters as ambassadors or indicator species for habitat and biodiversity conservation.

Targets

- Development and evaluation of standardised survey methods for all otter species.
- Training of surveyors and development of a network of surveyors covering all countries.
- Clarifying the current species range (area of distribution) for all 13 otter species.
- Surveys of the status and distribution of otters in all countries.
- Development of (standardised) data-banks for the documentation of survey results.
- Development of a library for microsatellite DNA and mitochondrial DNA primers for all 13 otter species.
- Development of models using existing software on populations dynamics (e.g., VORTEX, RAMAS, ALEX, etc.) that will assist in identification of population trends that may be indicative of potential threats, directions for future research and Red List updatings.
- Identification of 'hot spot' or critical areas for otter conservation.
- Basic research according to a 'List of basic biological data' to be prepared by OSG.
- Development of (standardised) data-banks for the documentation of basic biological data for all otter species.
- Research and definition of the habitat requirements for all otter species in relation to different biotope types.
- Development of standards for habitat assessments for all otter species.
- Development and evaluation of conservation and management techniques for the conservation and restoration of otter habitats and for solutions of conflict situations (collection of 'best practice examples').
- Development of a data-bank documenting all ongoing research and monitoring projects on otters as a basis for communication between projects and to support identification of common goals that may be accomplished more economically through collaboration.
- Development of a data-bank containing scientific publications about otters which can be shared via Internet and other information technology media.
- Development and evaluation of basic/standard preconditions/requirements for projects aiming at the reintroduction, translocation or supplementation of otters.
- Development and evaluation of standards for each otter species for keeping otters in captivity.
- Development of studbooks and of guidelines for the management of captive populations for all otter species.
- Development of cost effective survey protocols that can be rapidly obtained for evaluating human attitudes toward otters.
- Preparation of a collection of 'best-practice examples' for public awareness activities.
- Establishment of a collection of material usable free of charge for public awareness and education activities (slides, digitized photographs, movies, videos, etc.).
- Preparation and maintenance of an Internet website (offering access to databanks, public awareness material collections, etc.).
- Preparation of a databank for fundraising resources.