



Sighting of Eurasian Otter in Kashmir

[Source: IE](#)

Eurasian Otter or **Common Otter** (locally known as **Vuder in Kashmir**) has been sighted in Kashmir after 25-30 years. It has been historically found in **Dachigam, Dal Lake** tributaries, **Rambiara stream**, and **Lidder river** (in **Pahalgam**).

Eurasian Otter (*Lutra lutra*)

- **About:** It is a **semi-aquatic carnivorous mammal** native to **Eurasia**.
 - It is a **keystone species** in river ecosystems as its presence is an indicator of **clean water** and **healthy aquatic biodiversity**.
 - Other species in India include **smooth-coated Otter (throughout India)**, and **Small-clawed Otter (Himalayas and southern India)**.
- **Taxonomy:** It belongs to the genus *Lutra*, family *Lutrinae*, order *Carnivora*.
- **Diet:** Mainly **feeds on fish, crustaceans**, and **amphibians** and occasionally eats **reptiles, birds, eggs, insects, and worms**.
- **Habitat & Behaviour:**
 - Found in the **Himalayas, northeast India**, and [Western Ghats](#).
 - It prefers **clean freshwater ecosystems** such as **rivers, lakes, streams, and wetland** and is also found in **coastal areas**.
 - It is **mostly active at night, builds dens (holts) near water**, and **lives mostly solitary**, though **mothers** are sometimes seen with their cubs.
- **Conservation Status:**
 - [IUCN](#): Near threatened
 - [Wildlife Protection Act, 1972](#): Schedule II
 - [CITES](#): Appendix I

Eurasian otter (*Lutra lutra*)

Shy, nocturnal and most widely distributed of 13 otter species worldwide

Population:
57,880 - 361,140

Lifespan:
17 years (captivity);
5-7 years (wild)

Weight:
7-12 kg

Length:
102 - 138 cm

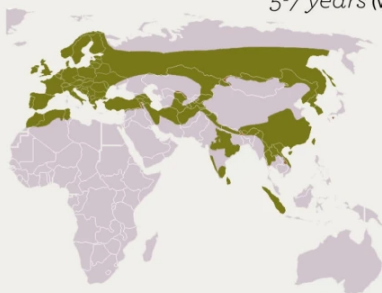
Conservation status:
Near Threatened
on the IUCN Red List



HOME BASE
Build dens called holts on dry ground — usually riverbanks with vegetation

COMMUNICATION
• Have a mix of whistles, yelps, and high-pitched calls
• Scent from musk glands present at the base of the tail is an important form of communication
• Can be quite vocal, especially with pups

THREATS
• Hunting
• Habitat loss (loss of wetlands, fragmentation of rivers by dams, agriculture projects etc.)
• Roads
• Conflict with fish pond owners



GEOGRAPHIC RANGE
In India — confirmed in Himalayas, Central India, Western Ghats, Odisha; also, Europe, Asia, North Africa

HABITAT
Very diverse habitats from frigid rivers in the Trans-Himalayas, to forested regions of Central India and the Western Ghats and the coastal lagoons of Chilika; both freshwater and brackish water habitats

SOCIAL SCENE
Largely solitary and elusive wherever it occurs

EAT
Primarily fish, crustaceans, amphibians, reptiles, birds

TERRITORY
• Highly territorial
• Males have larger territories than females
• Males can have overlapping territories with multiple females

Sensitive whiskers help detect/locate prey in low-light conditions

Fully webbed feet help in swimming

• Layer of dense, sleek brown fur
• Short fur traps a layer of air which helps in insulation in cold water
• High metabolic rate

Use their thick, muscular tail to propel their streamlined bodies in the water



AKA
Common otter

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TEXT: NISARG PRAKASH, DESIGN: DIVYA MEHRA

roundglass
sustain

Read More: [Eurasian Otter Radio-Tagged in Satpura Tiger Reserve](#)

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