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Project Otter

Project Otter aims to establish the state of otter populations in the Vale of Glamorgan with a vision to inform future habitat management and ensure existing habitats are well connected.



About Otters

The European otter (*Lutra lutra*) is widely recognised as an emblem for nature conservation in the UK because it is a top predator and an important biological indicator of the health of our rivers and wetlands. Monitoring the status of the otter therefore gives us a valuable measure of the state of our water and wetland ecosystems.

In Wales as in much of the UK, it is a largely nocturnal animal and is rarely observed in the wild. It is however possible to detect its presence by searching for its distinctive droppings (spraints) and footprints.

Otters have been recorded on all rivers in the Vale – most records through the NRW surveys above but these surveys tend to be a snapshot, very limited survey period and do not capture lots of known records.

The Council and Cardiff University Otter Project have received lots of otter sightings through anecdotal records from members of the public, wildlife cameras and on social media sites – e.g. several recent records from Porthkerry Country Park, Fonmon Estate, Rhoose Point, Cosmeston, Lavernock and Llantwit beach area. We would like to build a better picture of otter populations throughout the Vale.

Take Part in Project Otter

We are looking for volunteers to help record Otter sightings throughout the Vale of Glamorgan.

Training will be provided for all participants on otters, life cycle and habits, and also on survey techniques – to be undertaken spring 2021. Training will be given by Dr Eleanor Kean, Research Associate, Cardiff University Otter Project and will be a mixture theory/classroom and field training.

Once volunteers have recorded their interest, you will be sent a pack with further information and maps of survey routes.

If you would like to take part in the project, please contact:

mjstewart@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

or

eshaw@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Project Updates

06/05/2021

Over 50 volunteers have now signed up to take part in Project Otter and taken part in two zoom training sessions.

20 volunteers have also had their first on-site training session at the Lodge in Porthkerry. It was a great chance to exchange information, smell otter spraint, stroke an otter and see the contents of an otter's stomach.

Project Otter partners:



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