European Community Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (92/43/EEC)

Fourth Report by the United Kingdom under Article 17

on the implementation of the Directive
from January 2013 to December 2018

Conservation status assessment for the species:

S1355 - Otter (*Lutra lutra*)

UNITED KINGDOM

IMPORTANT NOTE - PLEASE READ

- The information in this document represents the UK Report on the conservation status of this species, submitted to the European Commission as part of the 2019 UK Reporting under Article 17 of the EU Habitats Directive.
- It is based on supporting information provided by the geographically-relevant Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies, which is documented separately.
- The 2019 Article 17 UK Approach document provides details on how this supporting information contributed to the UK Report and the fields that were completed for each parameter.
- The reporting fields and options used are aligned to those set out in the European Commission guidance.
- Maps showing the distribution and range of the species are included (where available).
- Explanatory notes (where provided) are included at the end. These provide additional audit trail information to that included within the UK assessments. Further underpinning explanatory notes are available in the related country-level reports.
- Some of the reporting fields have been left blank because either: (i) there was insufficient information to complete the field; (ii) completion of the field was not obligatory; and/or (iii) the field was not relevant to this species (section 12 Natura 2000 coverage for Annex II species).
- The UK-level reporting information for all habitats and species is also available in spreadsheet format.

Visit the JNCC website, https://jncc.gov.uk/article17, for further information on UK Article 17 reporting.

Report on the main results of the surveillance under Article 11 for Annex II, IV and V species (Annex B)

NATIONAL LEVEL

1. General information

1.1 Member State	**UK**
1.2 Species code	**1355**
1.3 Species scientific name	**Lutra lutra**
1.4 Alternative species scientific name	
1.5 Common name (in national language)	Otter

2. Maps

2.1 Sensitive species	No
2.2 Year or period	1994-2018
2.3 Distribution map	Yes
2.4 Distribution map Method used	Based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data
2.5 Additional maps	No

3. Information related to Annex V Species (Art. 14)

3.1 Is the species taken in the wild/exploited?	No	
3.2 Which of the measures in Art. 14 have been taken?	a) regulations regarding access to property	No
	b) temporary or local prohibition of the taking of specimens in the wild and exploitation	No
	c) regulation of the periods and/or methods of taking specimens	No
	d) application of hunting and fishing rules which take account of the conservation of such populations	No
	e) establishment of a system of licences for taking specimens or of quotas	No
	f) regulation of the purchase, sale, offering for sale, keeping for sale or transport for sale of specimens	No
	g) breeding in captivity of animal species as well as artificial propagation of plant species	No
	h) other measures	No

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3.3 Hunting bag or quantity taken in the wild for Mammals and Acipenseridae (Fish)

a) Unit

b) Statistics/ quantity taken	Provide statistics/quantity per hunting season or per year (where season is not used) over the reporting period					
	Season/ year 1	Season/ year 2	Season/ year 3	Season/ year 4	Season/ year 5	Season/ year 6
Min. (raw, ie. not rounded)						
Max. (raw, ie. not rounded)						
Unknown	No	No	No	No	No	No

3.4. Hunting bag or quantity taken in the wild Method used

3.5. Additional information

BIOGEOGRAPHICAL LEVEL

4. Biogeographical and marine regions

4.1 Biogeographical or marine region where the species occurs

Atlantic (ATL)

4.2 Sources of information

England

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Scotland

Chanin, P. 2003. Ecology of the European otter. Conserving Natura 2000 rivers ecology series No. 10. Peterborough: English Nature.
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Wales
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Findlay M, Alexander L, Macleod C. 2015. Site condition monitoring for otters (Lutra lutra) in 2011-12. Scottish Natural Heritage Commissioned Report No. 521.
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5. Range

5.1 Surface area (km²)	239701	
5.2 Short-term trend Period	2013-2018	
5.3 Short-term trend Direction	Stable (0)	
5.4 Short-term trend Magnitude	a) Minimum	b) Maximum
5.5 Short-term trend Method used	Based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data	
5.6 Long-term trend Period		
5.7 Long-term trend Direction		

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5.8 Long-term trend Magnitude	a) Minimum	b) Maximum
5.9 Long-term trend Method used		
5.10 Favourable reference range	a) Area (km²)	239701
	b) Operator	
	c) Unknown	
	d) Method	The FRR has changed since 2013. The new value is considered to be large enough to support a viable population and no lower than the range estimate when the Habitats Directive came into force in the UK. For further information see the 2019 Article 17 UK Approach document. The 2013 FRR value has been revised and is equal to the current range. The current range surface area has been calculated using the method outlined in Mathews et al. (2018) and is based on presence data collected between 1995-2016. Areas that contain very isolated records may not have been included in the area of distribution. The new, more robust method of calculating range has reduced estimated range size for this species since 2013. This does not represent a real reduction in range.
5.11 Change and reason for change in surface area of range	Genuine change Use of different method	
	The change is mainly due to:	Use of different method
5.12 Additional information	Trend in range has been assessed by using the 2019 distribution data and the 2013 method for calculating range and comparingthe result with range surface area in 2013. For further information see the 2019 Article 17 UK Approach document and country assessments.	

6. Population

6.1 Year or period	1994-2018	
6.2 Population size (in reporting unit)	a) Unit	number of map 1x1 km grid cells (grids1x1)
	b) Minimum	
	c) Maximum	
	d) Best single value	21441
6.3 Type of estimate	Minimum	
6.4 Additional population size (using population unit other than reporting unit)	a) Unit	number of individuals (i)
	b) Minimum	
	c) Maximum	
	d) Best single value	12600
6.5 Type of estimate	Best estimate	
6.6 Population size Method used	Based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data	

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6.7 Short-term trend Period	2001-2018
6.8 Short-term trend Direction	Stable (0)
6.9 Short-term trend Magnitude	a) Minimum b) Maximum c) Confidence interval
6.10 Short-term trend Method used	Based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data
6.11 Long-term trend Period	
6.12 Long-term trend Direction	
6.13 Long-term trend Magnitude	a) Minimum b) Maximum c) Confidence interval
6.14 Long-term trend Method used	Based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data
6.15 Favourable reference population (using the unit in 6.2 or 6.4)	a) Population size: 11995 with unit number of individuals (i) b) Operator c) Unknown d) Method: The FRP is the same as in 2013 i.e. 11,995 individuals. The value is considered to be large enough to support a viable population and no less than when the Habitats Directive came into force in the UK. For further information see the 2019 Article 17 UK Approach document.
6.16 Change and reason for change in population size	Genuine change Improved knowledge/more accurate data Use of different method No information on nature of change The change is mainly due to: Use of different method
6.17 Additional information	The new population estimate for this species in the UK is lower than the previous estimate in 2013. This is not a real decrease, but due to a change in method for estimating populations. Estimates of population size for GB have been taken from Mathews et al. (2018) and are considered to be more robust than previous estimates. Northern Ireland data have been added to the GB estimate to obtain a UK population estimate. The current population is considered to be above the FRP, is stable and is sufficient to maintain a viable population.

7. Habitat for the species

7.1 Sufficiency of area and quality of occupied habitat	a) Are area and quality of occupied habitat sufficient (for long-term survival)?	Yes
	b) Is there a sufficiently large area of unoccupied habitat of suitable quality (for long-term survival)?	

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7.2 Sufficiency of area and quality of occupied habitat Method used	Based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data
7.3 Short-term trend Period	1995-2018
7.4 Short-term trend Direction	Stable (0)
7.5 Short-term trend Method used	Based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data
7.6 Long-term trend Period	
7.7 Long-term trend Direction	
7.8 Long-term trend Method used	
7.9 Additional information	There is no reliable measure of the quality of the occupied habitat, but the population and range trends for the species are considered relatively stable. Therefore, the area and quality of occupied habitat are likely to be sufficient to maintain the species at FCS.

8. Main pressures and threats

8.1 Characterisation of pressures/threats

Pressure	Ranking
Modification of hydrological flow or physical alteration of water bodies for agriculture (excluding development and operation of dams) (A33)	M
Roads, paths, railroads and related infrastructure (e.g. bridges, viaducts, tunnels) (E01)	H
Illegal shooting/killing (G10)	M
Bycatch and incidental killing (due to fishing and hunting activities) (G12)	H
Mixed source pollution to surface and ground waters (limnic and terrestrial) (J01)	M
Mixed source marine water pollution (marine and coastal) (J02)	M

Threat	Ranking
Use of plant protection chemicals in agriculture (A21)	M
Modification of hydrological flow or physical alteration of water bodies for agriculture (excluding development and operation of dams) (A33)	H
Roads, paths, railroads and related infrastructure (e.g. bridges, viaducts, tunnels) (E01)	H
Illegal shooting/killing (G10)	M
Bycatch and incidental killing (due to fishing and hunting activities) (G12)	H
Mixed source pollution to surface and ground waters (limnic and terrestrial) (J01)	M
Mixed source marine water pollution (marine and coastal) (J02)	H
Abstraction from groundwater, surface water or mixed water (K01)	M

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8.2 Sources of information

8.3 Additional information

9. Conservation measures

9.1 Status of measures	a) Are measures needed?	Yes
	b) Indicate the status of measures	Measures identified and taken
9.2 Main purpose of the measures taken		Maintain the current range, population and/or habitat for the species
9.3 Location of the measures taken		Both inside and outside Natura 2000
9.4 Response to the measures		Medium-term results (within the next two reporting periods, 2019-2030)

9.5 List of main conservation measures

Other measures related to agricultural practices (CA16)
Reduce impact of transport operation and infrastructure (CE01)
Manage water abstraction for public supply and for industrial and commercial use (CF11)
Management of professional/commercial fishing (including shellfish and seaweed harvesting) (CG01)
Control/eradication of illegal killing, fishing and harvesting (CG04)
Reduce bycatch and incidental killing of non-target species (CG05)
Reduce impact of mixed source pollution (CJ01)
Reduce impact of multi-purpose hydrological changes (CJ02)
Improvement of habitat of species from the directives (CS03)

9.6 Additional information

10. Future prospects

10.1 Future prospects of parameters	a) Range	Good
	b) Population	Good
	c) Habitat of the species	Good
10.2 Additional information		Future trend in Range is Overall stable; Future trend in Population is Overall stable; and Future trend in Habitat for the species is Overall stable. For further information on how future trends inform the Future Prospects conclusion see the 2019 Article 17 UK Approach document.

11. Conclusions

11.1. Range	Favourable (FV)
11.2. Population	Favourable (FV)
11.3. Habitat for the species	Favourable (FV)
11.4. Future prospects	Favourable (FV)
11.5 Overall assessment of Conservation Status	Favourable (FV)

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11.6 Overall trend in Conservation Status	Stable (=)
11.7 Change and reasons for change in conservation status and conservation status trend	a) Overall assessment of conservation status No change The change is mainly due to: b) Overall trend in conservation status Genuine change Improved knowledge/more accurate data Use of different method The change is mainly due to: Genuine change
11.8 Additional information	Conclusion on Range reached because: (i) the short-term trend direction in Range surface area is stable; and (ii) the current Range surface area is approximately equal to the Favourable Reference Range. Conclusion on Population reached because: (i) the short-term trend direction in Population size is stable; and (ii) the current Population size is greater than the Favourable Reference Population. Conclusion on Habitat for the species reached because: (i) the area of occupied habitat is sufficiently large and (ii) the habitat quality is suitable for the long-term survival of the species; and (iii) the short-term trend in area and quality of habitat is stable. Conclusion on Future prospects reached because: (i) the Future prospects for Range are good; (ii) the Future prospects for Population are good; and (iii) the Future prospects for Habitat for the species are good. Overall assessment of Conservation Status is Favourable because all of the conclusions are Favourable. Overall trend in Conservation Status is based on the combination of the short-term trends for Range – stable, Population – stable, and Habitat for the species – stable. Overall assessment of conservation status is the same as in 2013. Overall trend in conservation status has changed since 2013 because trend in range has changed from increasing to stable, trend in population has changed from increasing to stable and trend in habitat for the species has changed from increasing to stable.

12. Natura 2000 (pSCIs, SCIs and SACs) coverage for Annex II species

12.1 Population size inside the pSCIs, SCIs and SACs network (on the biogeographical/marine level including all sites where the species is present)	a) Unit b) Minimum c) Maximum d) Best single value
12.2 Type of estimate	

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12.3 Population size inside the network Method used	Insufficient or no data available
12.4 Short-term trend of population size within the network Direction	Uncertain (u)
12.5 Short-term trend of population size within the network Method used	Based mainly on extrapolation from a limited amount of data
12.6 Additional information	It has not been possible to monitor numbers on all SACs in the UK and there is currently no available robust data on otter populations in UK SACs.

13. Complementary information

13.1 Justification of % thresholds for trends	
13.2 Trans-boundary assessment	
13.3 Other relevant Information	

Distribution Map

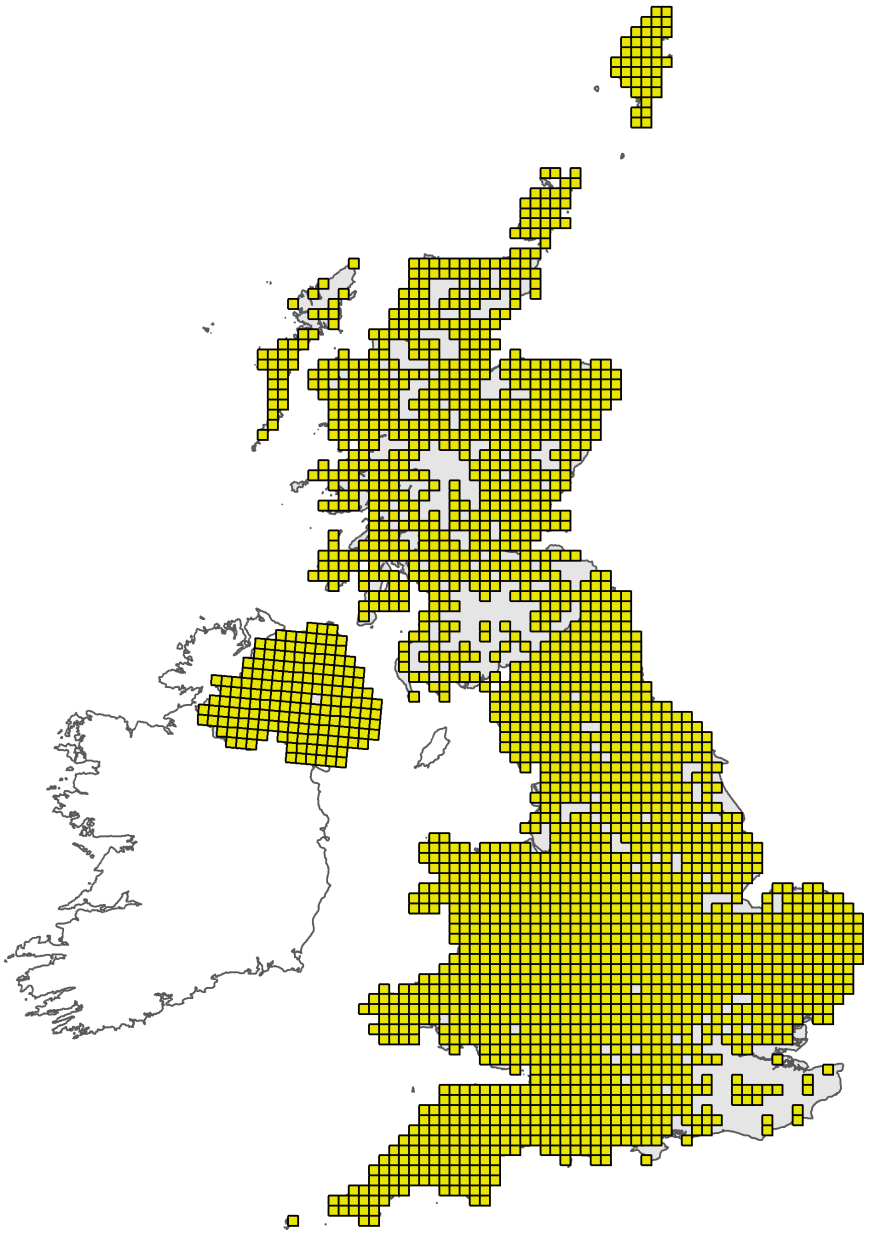

Figure 1: UK distribution map for S1355 - Otter (*Lutra lutra*). Coastline boundary derived from the Oil and Gas Authority's OGA and Lloyd's Register SNS Regional Geological Maps (Open Source). Open Government Licence v3 (OGL). Contains data © 2017 Oil and Gas Authority.

The 10km grid square distribution map is based on available species records within the current reporting period. For further details see the 2019 Article 17 UK Approach document.

Range Map

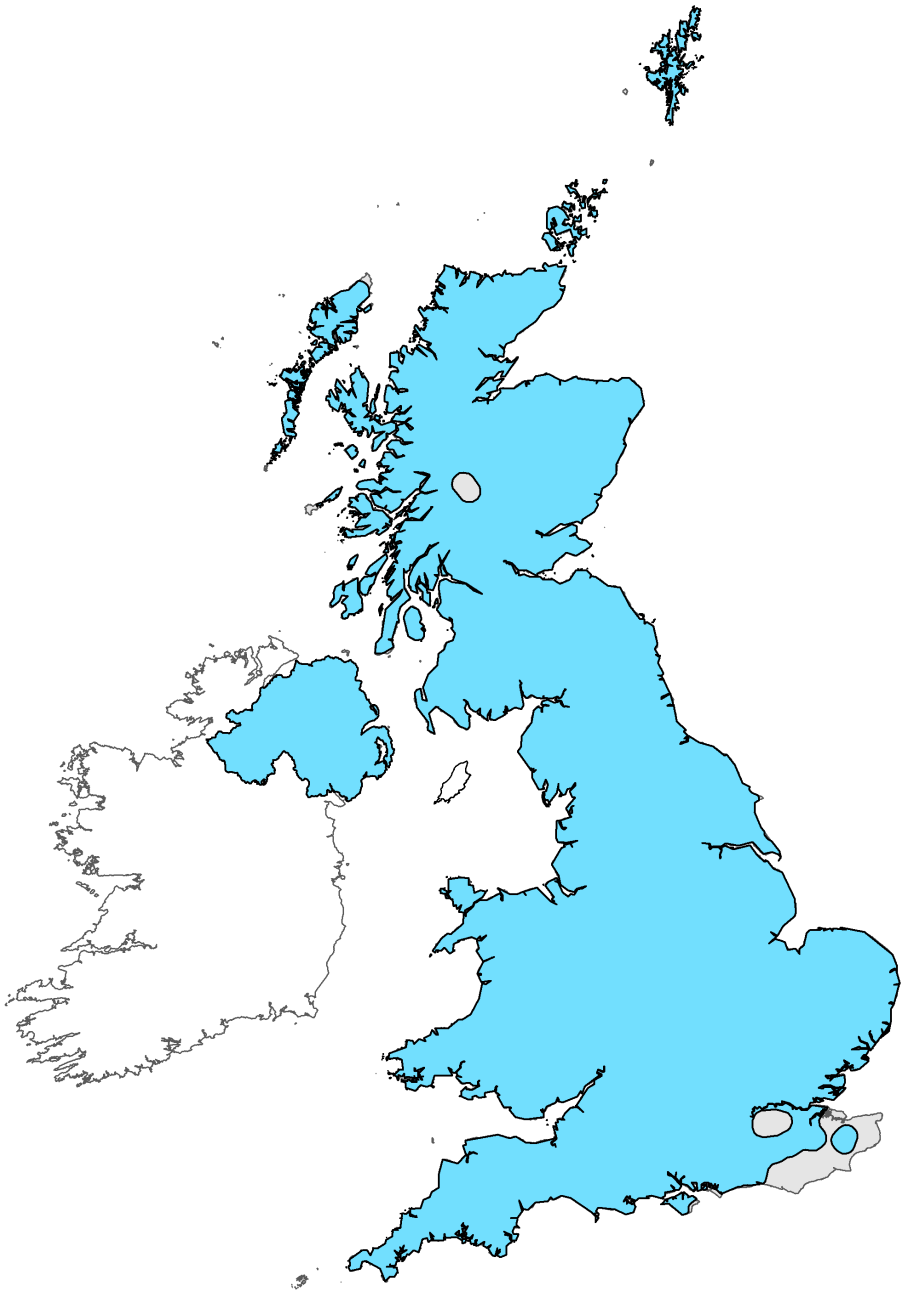

Figure 2: UK range map for S1355 - Otter (*Lutra lutra*).Coastline boundary derived from the Oil and Gas Authority's OGA and Lloyd's Register SNS Regional Geological Maps (Open Source). Open Government Licence v3 (OGL). Contains data © 2017 Oil and Gas Authority.

The range map has been produced by The Mammal Society applying a range mapping tool as outlined in Matthews et al. (2018), to the 10km grid square distribution map presented in Figure 1. The alpha value for this species was 20km. For further details see the 2019 Article 17 UK Approach document.

Explanatory Notes

Species name: Lutra lutra (1355) Region code: ATL

Field label	Note
6.2d Population size - Best single value	Calculated from the UK count of 1km squares where the species has been recorded. See 2019 Article 17 UK Approach document for further detail.
6.3 Type of estimate	This is a minimum count because it only includes number of recorded occupied 1km squares.