



## DESCRIPTION

Otters are medium-large sized carnivores, with flattened heads and a broad muzzle. They have dark brown fur, slightly lighter than the American mink. When otters swim, they use all four legs underwater, leaving only their head visible on the surface. This creates a bow wave (large V-shaped wave).

## TYPICAL HABITATS

Riparian (often alongside rivers, streams, marshes and lakes). They are also found in coastal habitats.

## RANGE

Found throughout Scotland and Wales. Have spread southwards and eastwards through England, now found in nearly every county.

## FIELD SIGNS

### Footprints

Tracks can be found in sand and mud (and snow) alongside rivers and streams. They are five-toed, but often only four toes appear in the print. The large, round prints (5-7cm in width, 6-9cm in length) are often pushed deep into the clay providing clear ID field signs.

### Droppings

Otters leave spraints (droppings) on rocks or logs close to water. They contain mainly fish shells, bones, shells of crustaceans, feathers or fur. Highly variable in size.

Colour: greenish, black-grey.

Smell: Sweet smelling; jasmine tea or laurel flowers. Often found in small quantities.

