



Eurasian Otter Radio-Tagged in Satpura Tiger Reserve

Why in News?

For the first time in India, a **Eurasian otter** was radio-tagged in the [Satpura Tiger Reserve \(STR\)](#) in **Narmadapuram district** in Madhya Pradesh.

Key Points

- There are three species of otters commonly found in India — **smooth-coated otter, Asian small-clawed otter, and Eurasian otter.**
- Apart from the smooth-coated otter, there had been no proof of the presence of the remaining two otter species in Central India until 2016 when the Eurasian otter was first captured on camera in STR, marking the expansion of the species' habitat to Central India.
- To fill this deficiency, a **project was launched in Satpura in 2019** by the Madhya Pradesh forest department in partnership with **Wildlife Conservation Trust (WCT)**.
 - The aim is to investigate the ecology of Eurasian otters and explore forest riverine ecosystems, with backing from the Astral Foundation and the Alkyl Amines Foundation.
 - Wildlife Conservation Trust is an Indian not-for-profit organisation based in Mumbai which was registered in 2002.

Smooth-Coated Otter



- It is a species of otter. Its scientific name is *Lutrogale perspicillata*.
- **Distribution:**
 - They are found throughout much of **southern Asia, from India eastward.**
 - There is also an **isolated population found in the marshes of Iraq.**

▪ **Habitat:**

- They are mostly found in lowlands, coastal mangrove forests, peat swamp forests, freshwater wetlands, large forested rivers, lakes, and rice paddies.
- Some build permanent burrows near water with an underwater entrance and a tunnel that leads to a chamber above the high-water line.
- Although adapted for water, smooth-coated otters are equally comfortable on land and can travel long distances overland in search of suitable habitat.

▪ **Conservation Status:**

- **IUCN Red List:** Vulnerable

Small-Clawed Otter



- Its scientific name is *Aonyx cinereus*.

▪ **Distribution:**

- It has a wide distribution range, extending through India in South Asia to eastwards in Southeast Asia and Southern China.
- In India it is found mostly in the protected areas of West Bengal, Assam, and Arunachal Pradesh and in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and some parts of Kerala in the Western Ghats region.

- They are primarily found in freshwater habitats such as rivers, streams, and wetlands.

- They feed on fish, crustaceans, and mollusks.

▪ **Conservation Status:**

- **Wildlife Protection Act 1972:** Schedule I
- **IUCN Status:** Vulnerable

Eurasian Otter



▪ **About:**

- It is a **semi-aquatic carnivorous mammal**.
- Its scientific name is *Lutra lutra*.

- **Distribution:**
 - It has one of the **widest distributions of all Palaearctic mammals.**
 - Its range covers parts of three continents: Europe, Asia, and Africa.
 - In India, it occurs in **northern, northeast, and southern India.**
- **Habitat:**
 - It lives in a wide variety of aquatic habitats, including highland and lowland lakes, rivers, streams, marshes, swamp forests, and coastal areas.
 - In the Indian subcontinent, Eurasian otters occur in cold hills and mountain streams.
- **Conservation Status:**
 - **IUCN:** Near threatened
 - **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Schedule II
 - **CITES:** Appendix I

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