

# Windows on Wildlife

## Otters



### Otters Love Water

Otters are found swimming in lochs, rivers or along the coast. The best time for you to watch them is around dawn or late evening and they are best seen from a hide.

### Did you Know?

In the past otters were hunted for fur and for sport. In the 50s, because of pollution from agricultural pesticides, the numbers of otters declined. Otters are now classed as a European Protected Species.



### Is it an Otter?

Otters are brown in colour with a cream throat, whereas American mink are much smaller with black fur and a white chin (left).

### 'Poo' Survey!

A University of Glasgow student has collected and studied otter spraints (poo) to see what our local otters are eating. Our otters are mainly eating eel and perch.



## Be an Otter Spotter



### Otters are Tricky to Track!

Otters have very specialised feet for swimming. The toes are webbed and help in pushing them through the water. Their tail helps them to twist and turn after their prey.



### Deadly Predator

Otters are streamlined for speed in hunting underwater and their teeth are razor sharp. They like to eat fish and will also eat amphibians, small mammals, small birds and on the coast, crabs and shellfish.



### Local Otter Success

Two orphaned cubs called Bubble and Squeak, were reared at Hessilhead Wildlife Rescue Centre after their mother was killed on the road and released back into Lochwinnoch. With the addition of one other rescued otter they have helped to maintain the local population.

