

Otter Survey Report

Trevor Basin.

Report prepared for Canal and River Trust

Report dated 17.09.2021

Otter Survey Report for Land at Trevor Basin, Llangollen

Background

Following Local Planning Authority consultations made on the 19th August 2021 and the recommendations made in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal it has become apparent that the need for the site to be assessed for otter is required to support the planning application to redevelop the site.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide a series of otter surveys to inform the planning application of this aspect of the sites potential use by this European Protected Species.

Legislation

The Eurasian otter (*lutra lutra*) is listed as globally threatened on the IUCN Red data list and is protected by national and international legislation such as:

Otters are a European Protected Species under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended), known as the 'Habitats Regulations', making it an offence to:

- ☐ deliberately capture, injure or kill an otter;
- ☐ deliberately disturb an otter; and
- ☐ damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of an otter.

Disturbance is defined as that which is likely to impair their ability:

- ☐ to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or
- ☐ in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or
- ☐ to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981(as amended) it is illegal to:

- ☐ intentionally or recklessly disturb any otter while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection;
- ☐ intentionally or recklessly obstructs access to any structure or place used by an otter for shelter or protection; and,
- ☐ sell, offer or expose for sale any otter.

A Natural Resources Wales licence would be required for any works likely to constitute an offence in respect to otters.

Survey methods

The surveys were carried out by following guidance provided in monitoring the otter *Lutra lutra* (Chanin and Smith, 2003) by walking and wading along the water's edge in order to closely examine both banksides searching for signs such as spraints (droppings), footprints, anal jelly, trails, slides and resting places which can be identified where otters have been present at stream / drain intersections, mud areas and shallow points in the stream all of which are recorded. Field signs of Otter are divided into possible, probable, and definite. No field signs found on survey will not always mean the animal/s are absent from site as territories are very large (>35km).

The surveys were undertaken by Simon Brain (Managing Director) whom has been a practising ecologist for ten years and has undertaken relevant FSC courses for land mammals covering otter survey techniques and undertaken otter species' surveys previously.

Existing field survey data

The desk study aspect of the preliminary ecological appraisal collated information on designated species, habitats and sites within 1km search radii around the proposed development site using a COFNOD data search inform the planning application. In summary 1091 records have been identified within the 1km and 29 EPS records are present in the dataset. AONB is within 50m. Otter was identified 198m, 566m and 750m from site (3 records within 1km).

Site Inspection Results

The site was visited on the following occasions:

24th August 2021

12th September 2021

A single positive (diagnostic) field sign (spraint) of Otter was found and marked on the plan in appendix 1. These consisted of spraint under the bridge near the side canal at the head of the aqueduct approximately 270m SSW of the site centroid. No other positive field signs were found such as burrows, holts or laying up areas. A possible glide / mammal run was found that could be used by Otter in the water overflow chute from the lower basin to the River Dee as shown on plan.

Conclusion and Recommendations

There is no evidence of Otter on this site but there is historic and recent (diagnostic) evidence of Otter <300m from site. The watercourses on site are suitable for otter use and the Rover Dee / overflow chute / side canals are all suitable for otter use and have presented positive field signs in the COFNOD data set.

It is recommended that a pre-construction survey for otters is undertaken within the study boundary used for this survey covering all watercourses to check for activity or any newly created holts or couches, or burrows. The survey will focus on watercourses and water bodies likely to be impacted by the proposed works, directly or indirectly.

An exclusion area of 100m is to be established around newly identified otter holts and resting places prior to works commencing (identified during the pre-start survey) and further advice will be sought from Natural Resources Wales.

Access to open-water habitats must be safeguarded at all times and any adverse effects should be minimised. This can be achieved by site monitoring during development.

Habitat loss should be compensated, particularly key habitat types for the species within biodiversity planning for the planning application. Additional shelter for wildlife could be introduced by transplanting localised clumps of Yellow iris into the stream margins and by introducing localised patches of native wetland plants for example a seed mix and / or plugs containing species such as Meadowsweet (*Fillipendula ulmaria*), Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) and Water forget-me-not (*Myosotis scorpioides*).

A buffer (pollution control measures) should be in place during construction to prevent pollution and/or run off into the watercourses/water bodies and as part of development measures will be required to manage pollution entering the water during construction.

Please do not hesitate to contact me in the case of query.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'S' followed by a horizontal line and a small flourish.

Simon Brain

Managing Director

Appendix 1 – Riparian Mammal Survey Plan



KEY

COFNOD Otter record

Survey record (positive diagnostic)

Survey record (potential field sign)

A.1.1.1 Woodland (to be retained)

A.3.1 Scattered trees

C.3.1. Tall ruderal

G1 Standing water

A

J1.2 Amenity Grassland

Approx areas accessed for survey

Client:		
CRT		
Project:		
Trevor Basin		
Detail:		
Riparian Mammal Survey Plan		
Drawn By:	Date:	Scale:
SB	17.09.2021	NTS
Drg No:	Revision:	
TR-01	V1	

Appendix 2 Site images

Looking towards aqueduct



Side canal extending west



Bridge over side canal at head of aqueduct



Spraint found under bridge



Main boat basin below site, often heavily used by Mallard



Bridge at southern boundary of site



Repair bay south of site at head of aqueduct looking to bridge where spraint found



Overflow chute connecting to River Dee from upper boat basin



Possible glide found half way down chute



Chute exit into River Dee



River Dee foreshore under aqueduct



Site – looking toward central island from southern bridge



Site – northern sections looking toward woodland



Site – looking to bridge from central island areas

