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Otters in Nepal: Urgent Need for Action !

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Five species of otters are found in Asia. Nepal is home to three of them: Eurasian Otter (*Lutra lutra*), Smooth-coated Otter (*Lutra perspicillata*) and Asian Small-clawed Otter (*Aonyx cinerea*). There is lack of information on status and ecology of otters in Nepal, and only few preliminary studies have been conducted. Wetlands are under threat due to adverse natural and biotic factors, and such threats directly affect the survival of otter species in wetland areas. Habitat destruction, human disturbance, conflict with fishpond owners, water pollution, intentional killing and lack of awareness are the major threats to otters in Nepal. Fishpond owners see otters as their enemy as otters eat fish in their ponds at night. It is high time now to initiate research, awareness and conservation intervention for survival and conservation of otters in Nepal. If timely intervention is not carried out, it is likely that otters will be in verge of extinction from Nepal.