

VKM assessment:

Non- detriment finding for European otter (*Lutra lutra*)

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Scientific name: *Lutra lutra*

Common name (s): European otter/Eurasian otter

Norwegian name: Oter

Type of permit: Import

Purpose and source: The proposal concerns the import of 1 live female individual to Kristiansand Dyrepark AS from GaiaZoo B.V. in the Netherlands, purpose code Z. The animal and both parents are bred in captivity, source code C.

Lutra lutra is listed on CITES Appendix I (Norwegian Cites Regulation Annex 1, list A), however, Appendix I species bred in captivity are traded as if they were Appendix II species (Norwegian Cites Regulation Annex 1, list B) with the requirement to establish that exports are not detrimental to the survival of wild populations, in compliance with CITES Article IV.

VKM has adopted the definition of detriment, jf. Conf. 16.7 (Rev. CoP17) suggested by the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Scientific Authority (<https://www.fws.gov/international/pdf/archive/workshop-american-ginseng-cites-non-detriment-findings.pdf>), which defines it as:

1. Harvest that is not sustainable.
2. Harvest that harm the status of the species in the wild.
3. Removal from the wild that results in habitat loss or destruction, or that interferes with recovery efforts for a species.

Conclusion:

VKM concludes that the import of one live Eurasian otter (*Lutra lutra*) bred in captivity, is not detrimental to the survival of the species.

The conclusion is based on the following factors:

- The individual and both parents are bred in captivity and the import will not have any harmful effect on the conservation status of the species.
- A CITES export permit has been issued by the Management Authority in the exporting country.

1. Biological Information

Distribution: The Eurasian otter has a very wide range covering parts of Europe, Asia and Africa (Roos et al, 2015). In Europe otters have been found in brackish waters below sea level in the Netherlands, and up to 2,400 m in the Pyrenees (Conroy et al, 2015).

Life history: The Eurasian otter attains sexual maturity at around 18 months in males and 24 months in the case of females and are non-seasonally polyoestrous, mating in captivity has been observed at all times of the year. The litter size varies from 1 to 5, and the life expectancy is around 17 years (Roos et al, 2015).

Role in the ecosystem: The Eurasian otter lives in a wide variety of aquatic habitats including saltwater as well as freshwater habitats. The species, however, depends on dry nests on land in order to breed and rest. Foraging takes place in water and fish is the main prey. The diet may also include aquatic insects, reptiles, amphibians, birds, small mammals, and crustaceans (Heggeberget and Moseid, 1994).

2. Population status and trend

Global: Decreasing. The number of individuals is unknown. The status of its population is not known from many parts of its range, particularly from North Africa and Asia. Recovery has been observed in western Europe and Central Asia (Roos et al, 2015).

Local (Europe): Unknown. For European subpopulations many of the estimates have not been updated for the last 20 years (Roos et al. 2015).

3. Conservation status

Global IUCN status: Near Threatened (Roos et al. 2015).

Local IUCN status (Europe): Near Threatened (Conroy et al. 2007), needs updating.

4. Threats

The Eurasian otter is threatened by habitat loss in parts of its range, as an aquatic species it is vulnerable to dams and water management. Pollution of water (both acidification and fertilization) reduces the viability of fish and thereby the food resources of otters.

Fishing gear aimed at other species may also be harmful to otters. The Asian population is believed to be under great pressure because of poaching (Roos et al, 2015).

5. Conservation and management measures

International legislation

The Eurasian otter has been listed on CITES Appendix I since 1977 and under the EU Wildlife Trade Regulations Annex A since 1997.

6. Trade/use

Otters have been hunted for their pelts and for use as food (locally). In recent years a rise in illegal trade has been caused by a growing market for pet otters in Japan (Kitade and Naruse, 2018).

References

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- Roos, A., Loy, A., de Silva, P., Hajkova, P., Zemanová, B. 2015. *Lutra lutra*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2015: e.T12419A21935287. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2015-2.RLTS.T12419A21935287.en>. Downloaded on 20 October 2021.