

Environmental Impact Assessment & Otter Workshop held in Cottbus Germany , 7th to 9th May 2009

Organisers: ALKA WILDLIFE o.p.s., Landesumweltamt Brandenburg , University of Cottbus

Organising Committee: Andreas Kranz , Jens Teubner, Gerhard Wiegler

Patronage: IUCN Otter Specialist Group

Output

The main outputs of this workshop will be the production of a series of standards that are considered necessary to be able to determine the impacts of developments on otter populations and the success of mitigation/compensation measures deriving from those. Once formulated, these will become the official Otter Specialist Group guidelines, and will be distributed to relevant authorities and project planners in all EU member states and other countries in Europe .

Mission

The workshop will focus on a single important aspect of otter conservation - the impact of developments on otter populations and how these can best be assessed.

All developments encroaching on habitat occupied by otters have the potential to impact on the species – in many instances this impact is likely to be negative. Dependant on the scale of the development, as well as on planning and conservation regulations/legislation, an environmental impact assessment of the development will be required, included in this being the effect on otters. The scale of the development will determine whether one or more otter ranges are likely to be affected. Small proposals, e.g. the construction of one or a few houses near a river will probably impact on parts of one or two ranges, while large scale developments, such as hydro electric dams can affect extensive areas of otter habitats, not only along river corridors.

Because otters are largely nocturnal, solitary and in many areas considered rare, the assessment of population numbers will, if practical, prove to be very expensive. In most cases, therefore, assessments tend to be based on indirect methods. While many of these methods have been well tested, the interpretation of the data is dependant on an understanding of the ecology of the species and on the methods bias. Because of this it can be difficult to determine proper mitigation and, where necessary, adequate compensation.

To be able to undertake a sound environmental impact assessment for otters, the work should only be undertaken by individuals with an understanding of the ecology of otters as well as knowledge of the methodologies used – including assumptions and limitations that have to be made. Across Europe , this is and has not always been the case.

With the increasing demands for developments within habitats used by otters, e.g. hydro-electric dams, road construction, pipelines, fish farms etc., there is the challenge to ensure such assessments are based on a sound scientific basis.

The workshop will bring together speakers who have experience of environmental impact assessments of otters in a number of varied projects and in different otter habitats. In addition to the oral presentations, poster sessions will be a further means of showing examples of work.

Posters will be restricted to the following themes:

- a) assessment of the status and the number of individuals in small areas;
- b) experiences with compensation measures;
- c) examples of monitoring schedules (the status/numbers of otter population before, during and after construction to determine the impacts of the development and the effectiveness of mitigation measures).

The workshop will be held in Cottbus (a town southeast of Berlin), an area where open brown coal mining has, in the past, led to a significant deterioration in the quality of otter habitat. Currently measures are in place to mitigate these detrimental effects. During the workshop there will be an opportunity to visit this area and see the results of these measures.

Tentative programme:

Wednesday:	18:00	registration open, ice breaker
Thursday:	8:30	official opening
	9:00 – 11:00	oral presentations
	11:30 – 13:00	poster presentation and discussion
	14:00 – 16:00	oral presentations
	16:15 – 17:00	introduction to the case study Lakoma
	17:15 – 20:00	field trip to otter passages
Friday:	8:30 – 10:30	oral presentations
	11:00 – 13:00	poster presentation and discussion
	14:00 – 16:00	oral presentations
	16:15 – 20:00	field trip to revitalisation of the River Spree and new fish farm
Saturday:	8:30 – 10:30	oral presentations
	11:00 – 13:00	working groups
	14:00 – 17:00	plenary discussion and formulation of minimum standard recommendation
	17:00 / 17:30	official closing of the workshop
	Social evening downtown Cottbus / departure	
Sunday:	departure	

Registration:

Registration is at

http://www.alkawildlife.eu/page.php?mx=29_eia-&-otter-workshop-2009&ax=31_registrace&lx=en&ft=&us=

Contact: eia.otter@alkawildlife.eu

Conference fee before 30th January 2009:

Speakers: free of charge

Potential speakers may contact the organisers. The organisers will decide upon acceptance in order to guarantee a wide range of case studies and geographical contrasting areas and habitats.

People with posters: 60 Euro

People without poster / speech: 180 Euro

Conference fee after 30th January 2009:

People with posters: 100 Euro

People without poster / speech: 200 Euro

Abstract:

Posters: 0.5 - 1 page A4 (point 10, Arial)

Speakers provide 1 - 3 pages A4 (point 10, Arial). In addition they are asked to give a brief introduction to the legal framework where the study was carried out. In order to be selected as a speaker, it is inevitable to fill the table below:

Will you provide information on:	yes	no
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• monitoring schedules carried out before the project was carried out		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the status of otters before the project was implemented		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• how many otters were expected to be affected by the project		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• assessment of the expected impact		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• mitigation/compensation measures required to make the project acceptable from a conservation point of view		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• monitoring schedules carried out during the construction phase		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• how the compensation was implemented		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• monitoring schedules carried out after the project was carried out		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• reasons for the success or failure of the mitigation/compensation measures		