

Neotropical Otter

Lontra longicaudis

RED LIST STATUS

**NEAR
THREATENED**

In 2024, a paper came out proposing a new species: *Lontra annectens*, present from Mexico to western Colombia and Peru.

ALIAS: water dog, taira, water cat, long-tailed otter, little water wolf

PREDATORS: caimans, anacondas, jaguars, dogs

THREATS: habitat loss, pollution, mining, poaching

SIZE: 90-136 cm (body 50-79 cm tail 37-57 cm); 10-14 kg

A large otter with a very long (Longi) tail (caudis), the Neotropical river otter seems to have a large distribution but an unknown population size. It is a versatile otter that can be found in a variety of habitats, ranging from tropical to evergreen forests, creeks to rivers. One sighting in Peru was even made close to Machu Picchu! Sympatric with the giant otter, it has different habits and preferences – they may use the same rivers but they ignore each other. The Neotropical river otter may be diurnal or nocturnal and hunts fish, crustaceans, sometimes small mammals, birds, reptiles and insects. Between the 1950s and the 1970s, an extremely high hunting rate nearly drove this little mustelid nearly into extinction when over 30,000 otters were killed every year for their pelts. Now, they are protected in every country in which they occur.