

Hairy-Nosed Otter

Lutra sumatrana

RED LIST STATUS

ENDANGERED

Hairy-nosed otter cubs do not have hairy noses!

ALIAS: Sumatran otter

PREDATORS: unknown

THREATS: habitat loss, poaching, overfishing, pollution, accidental trapping, roadkill

SIZE: 105-113 cm (body 50-82 cm tail 35-50 cm); 5-8 kg

The hairy-nosed otter is easily recognisable by its hairy nose pad and white upper lip. It is considered a miracle otter: having been declared extinct in 1998, this small, elusive otter was recently and with great excitement rediscovered in Myanmar, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Borneo and Cambodia, mostly thanks to camera trap evidence. Individuals killed on roads and sold to the pet trade are popping up in seemingly disconnected locations in southeast Asia, evidence that the hairy-nosed otter is still, albeit precariously, present and largely unknown. Based on the contents of recovered scat, its diet seems composed predominantly of fish, but it also eats snakes, frogs, lizards, terrapins, crustaceans and insects that live in swamps and shallow coastal waters. It is so rare and the risks to its survival so elevated that ex-situ conservation methods are being considered – mainly maintaining individuals for reproduction in captivity and the chance of a future restocking of nature reserves.