



# "The Secret Life of *Lontra felina*": Nocturnal records and use of an artificial breakwater by the marine otter at Playa Valdivia in the district of Asia, Lima-Peru.



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## INTRODUCTION

The marine otter, or "**chungungo**" (*Lontra felina*), is a coastal predator belonging to the Mustelidae family. This species is commonly described as **diurnal** and has the ability to use **anthropogenic infrastructures**.



Figure 1. *Lontra felina* (Photo: Mara Llontop)

## RESEARCH PROBLEM

There are studies with **limitations** as activity can only be recorded **during the day** (Badilla & Nascimento, 2009). The preferred areas of otters are usually **rocky zones**, which pose **risks** for **researchers** due to their **difficult access**. The **elusive** nature of the species also complicates data collection during **nighttime hours**. These difficulties limit the understanding of their **ecology** and **adaptive behavior**.

## OBJETIVES

### General Objective:

**Document** the **nocturnal behavior** of the **marine otter** and its **various uses** of an **artificial breakwater** to contribute to the understanding of its spatial and temporal ecology.

### Specific Objectives:

- Document the **nocturnal activity** of *Lontra felina* using camera traps.
- Identify **biological traces** such as feces and food remains to understand how the species utilizes the artificial breakwater.
- **Analyze** the activity periods of the otter at the breakwater, distinguishing between dawn, day, dusk, and night.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the present study, a **camera trap** was used along with **periodic inspections** from October 1st to December 30th during battery changes in the district of **Asia**, Lima-Perú, during which **biological traces** such as feces, food remains, or anal secretions were searched for.

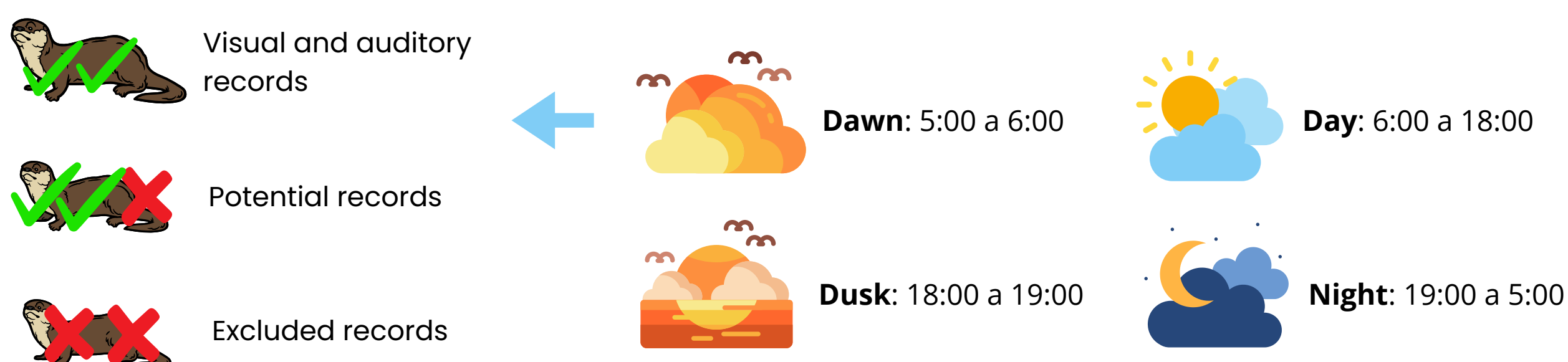
### Materials



### Procedure



### 5 Event classification



## RESULTS

With an effort of 13 trap nights, a total of 106 events were recorded: **42 visual and auditory records** of the otter, and 29 potential records.

**40.48%** of the records were **diurnal**, **33.3%** **nocturnal**, 14.29% during dawn, and 11.9% during dusk. A significant number of biological traces were found.

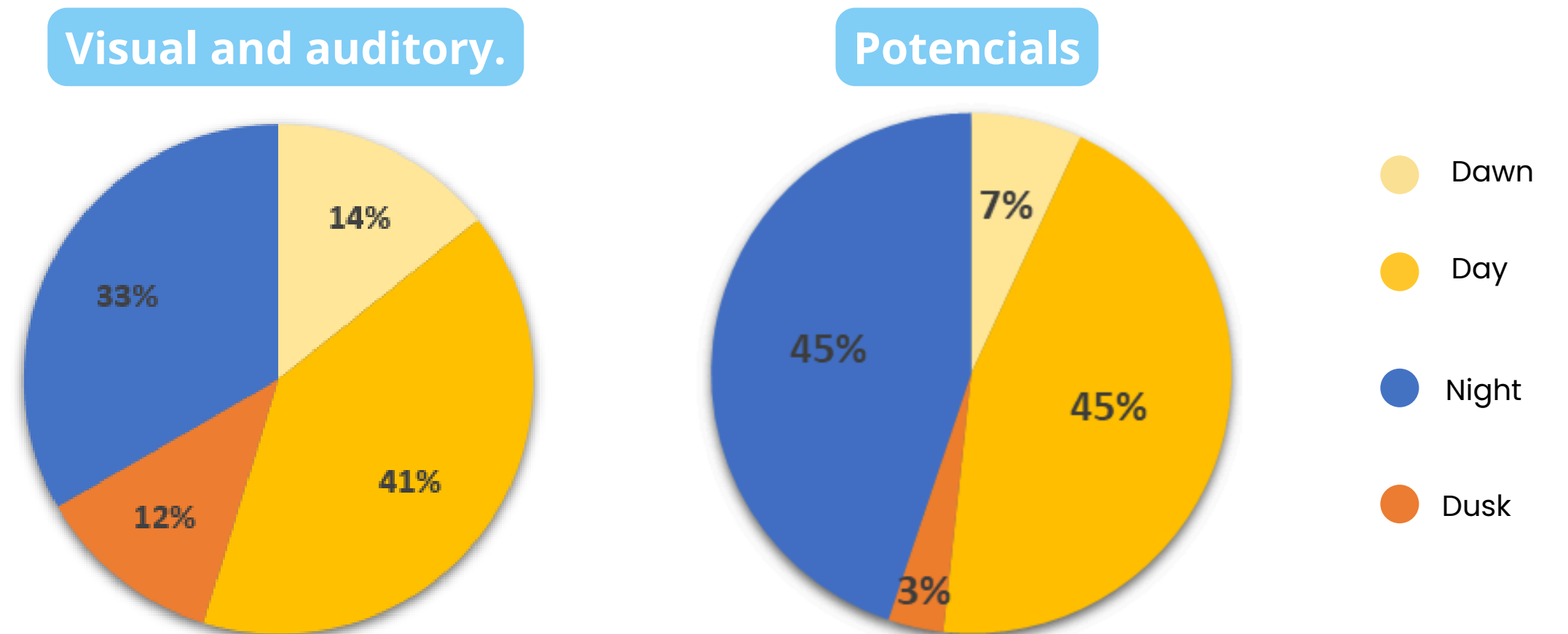


Gráfico 1. Percentages of visual, auditory, and potential observation records.

### Diurnal records



Figure 5. 17 diurnal events were recorded with the camera trap.

### Nocturnal records



Figure 6. 14 nocturnal events were recorded with the camera trap.

### Biological traces



Figure 7. **Anal mucous**, an indicator of territoriality.

Figure 8. **21 marine otter feces** were recorded.

Figure 9. Approximately **50 purple crab** remains.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

- These results highlight the importance of **continuing to investigate** the circadian activity patterns of *Lontra felina*, as there is only a **minimal** difference between the numbers of **diurnal** and **nocturnal** events (Medina-Vogel et al., 2007).
- Furthermore, the traces found indicate a **differentiated use** of the breakwater, suggesting that its **different areas** serve **specific** functions, possibly related to **feeding** and **territorial marking** activities.

## References

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## Presented for the event

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Some records and our contact in the qr!

