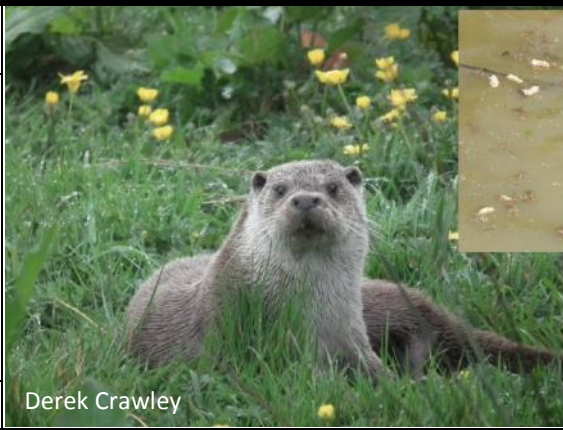





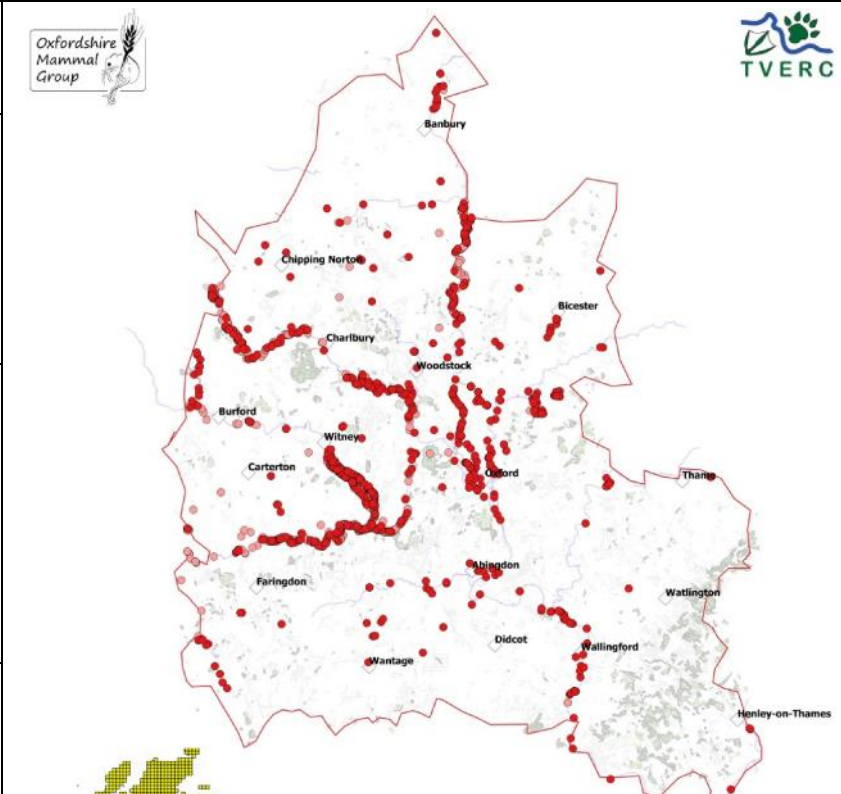
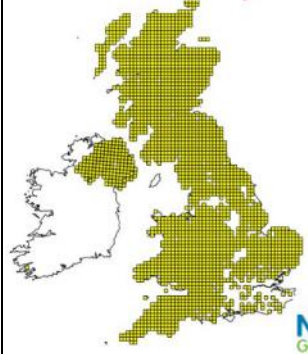


<b>European Otter</b>	<i>Lutra lutra</i>	  <p>Derek Crawley</p>	
<b>Description:</b> Brown fur, often pale on underside; long slender body; small ears on a broad head; long thick tail; webbed feet; swims very low in the water, head and back barely showing. About 60-80cm; tail about 32-56cm. Average weight 8.2kg for males; 6.0kg for females.		<b>Field Signs</b>	
<b>Holts:</b> Often in natural crevices in tree roots or boulders, but can be dug into soft soils.	<b>Slides:</b> Muddy slides running into watercourse.	<b>Droppings (spraints):</b> Sweet smelling, slightly oily. Often in very small quantities. Greenish, black-grey. Contains fish scales and occasionally small bones, shell fragments, feathers or fur. Smearred onto rocks or logs close to water. Highly variable in size.	<b>Footprints:</b> Normally only 4 toes show (except on very soft ground). Forefoot 60x65mm. Hindfoot 60x90mm. Look for tail drag. Toes are more oval although claws can make tear shape.
			
<b>Diet:</b> Fish, especially eels and salmonids. Crayfish eaten at certain times of the year. Coastal otters in Shetland eat bottom-living species such as eelpout, rockling and butterfish. Occasionally take water birds such as coots, moorhens and ducks. In the spring, frogs are an important food item.		<b>Habitat:</b> Rivers, lakes, and ditches although the female otter will range up to 1km from the river for maternity holts.	
<b>Lifespan:</b> Less than 5 years but can live up to 10 years in captivity.		  <p><b>KNOWN RECORDS</b></p> <p><b>Oxfordshire:</b></p> <p>1995-2005 Present = pink</p> <p>2005-2015 Present = red</p> <p><b>Great Britain and Northern Ireland:</b></p> <p>1995-2015 Present = yellow</p>	
<b>UK Conservation Status:</b> Native. Increasing range and population. <b>Oxfordshire:</b> Increasing range and population. <b>Legislation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Habitat regulations 2010 Schedule 2</li> <li>◆ Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Schedule 5</li> <li>◆ Section 41 NERC Act 2006</li> </ul>		<b>Don't confuse with:</b> <p><b>Mink:</b> Much smaller and darker furred, they have fluffier tails that aren't broad and wedge shaped. Mink also have a white spot on the underside of their chin.</p>	