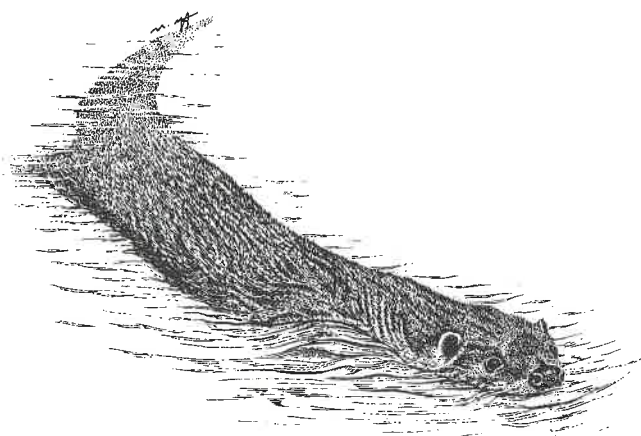


Lutra lutra (LINNAEUS, 1758)



U. Iff

Distribution

World: Palaearctic but reaching into the Oriental region. From western Europe to Indonesia; North Africa.

Europe: Formerly widespread throughout Europe, but has declined in central and northern Europe. Absent from all Mediterranean islands except Corfu, Lesbos, Chios and Euboea (Greece). Probably extinct in Liechtenstein, The Netherlands and Switzerland. Many reintroduction or restocking projects including Switzerland, Sweden, Great Britain and Spain.

Geographic variation

Ten subspecies are recognized, but not well investigated. Differences very small.

Habitat

Rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands and coasts. Water quality and productivity are important. The importance of bankside vegetation for cover may depend on the strength of the population.

Population status

Population crash in most of Europe in the 1960s and 1970s, probably because of toxic chemicals exacerbated by hunting and habitat loss. Good populations remain in Portugal, Ireland, Greece, Scotland and the northern Russian Taiga. Now some natural recovery in Finland and Great Britain. Population estimates: Finland 1000, western France 250–400, Italy 130, Germany 500–1000.

Otter

AL	Lunderza; Lutra	LT	Ūdra
BG	Видра	LJ	Fëschotter
CZ	Vydra říční	LV	Ūdrs
DE	Fischotter	MK	Видра
DK	Odder	MT	-
EE	Saarmas; Udras	NL	Otter
ES	Nutria	NO	Oter
FI	Saukko	PL	Wydra
FO	Otur	PT	Lontra
FR	Loutre d'Europe	RO	Vidră
GR	Βίδρα	RU	Видра
HR	Vidra	SE	Utter
HU	Közönséges vidra	SI	Vidra
IR	Dobharcú	SK	Vydra riečna
IS	Otur	TR	Su samuru
IT	Lontra	YU	Видра

International legal & conservation status

Bern Convention, Appendix II.

EU Habitats & Species Directive, Annex II & Annex IV.
CITES, Appendix I (Reservation by Russian Federation).
EC 338/97, Annex A.

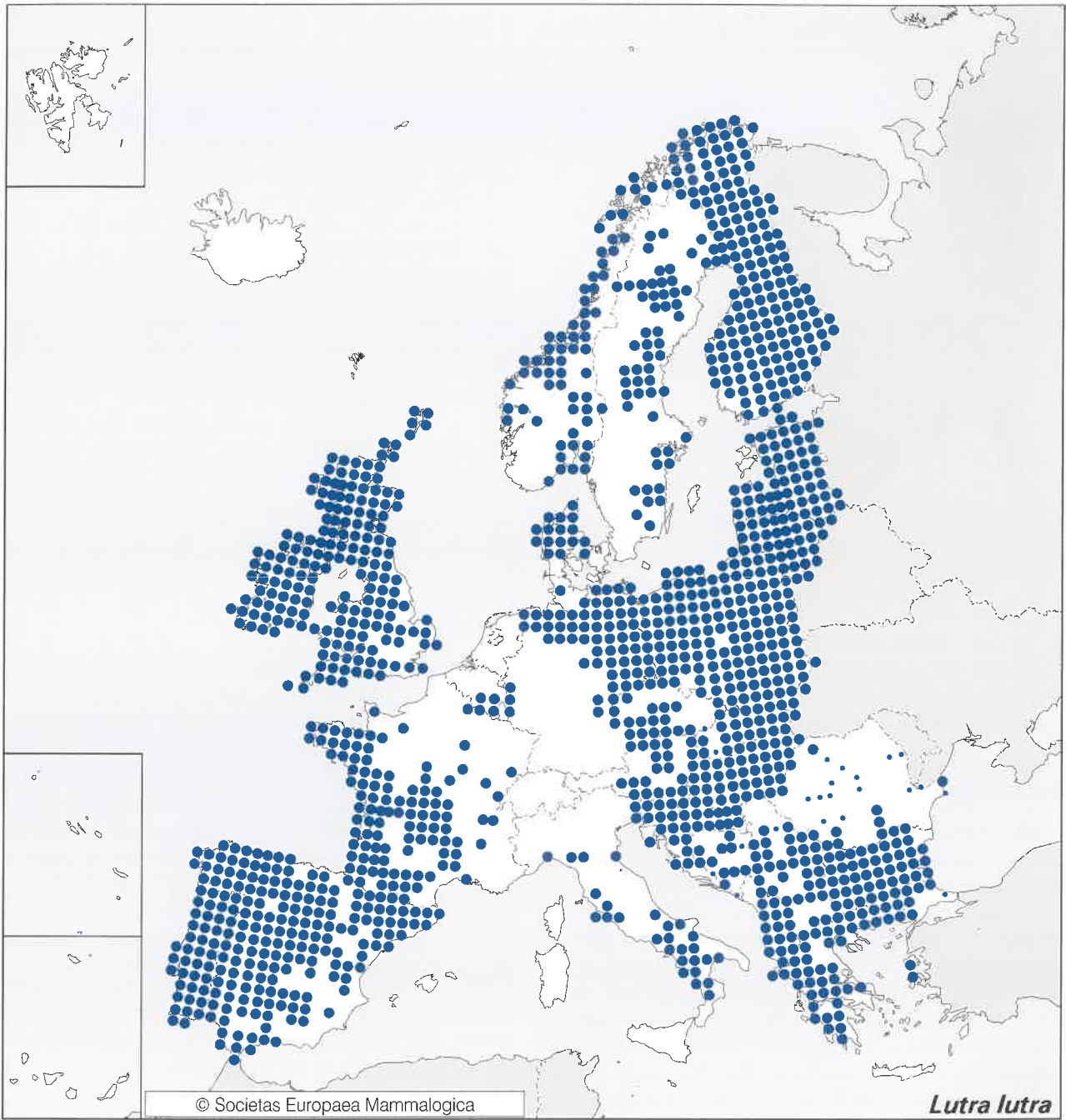
Other information

Formerly hunted for fur or sport, but now widely protected. Regarded as a pest by fish farmers in some areas. Road accidents and incidental capture in fish or crustacean traps are important mortality factors. The acidification of rivers and lakes and the consequent loss of productivity may be important. Contamination by PCBs may influence the recovery of populations. A European Breeding Programme (EEP) for self-sustaining captive populations was started in 1985. In 1993, 55 out of 60 otter-keepers were included in the studbook and had agreed to co-operate in the EEP. The total captive population is about 200 individuals. Monitoring programmes have been established.

Literature

Foster-Turley *et al.* (1990)
Mason & Macdonald (1986)
Masseti (1995)
Strachan *et al.* (1990)
Stubbe (1989d, 1993b)
Vogt (1994)

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Lutra lutra