

# South Wales Otter Trust

Sight / Survey / Educate / Learn



**UK WILD OTTER TRUST**

Reg Charity No: 1167746

## Our guide to responsible otter-watching

- 1: Do your research.** It's important to know your target species' habitat, behaviour and feeding patterns before setting out. Do your homework to ensure that you're fully educated before venturing out to otter spot.
- 2: Prioritise species safety.** Never put a photograph, film clip, or personal experience before the welfare of the otter.
- 3: Know your companions.** If you're going out with another photographer, ensure that you know them and their behaviour, and that you're both on the same page.
- 4: Wear waterproof, but silent, clothing.** Otters have acute hearing and will hear you from a long way off.
- 5: Always stay downwind.** Otters also have an acute sense of smell!
- 6: NEVER BAIT AREAS OR OTTERS.** Doing so may change otter behaviour patterns and will be VERY detrimental to the species.
- 7: Never remove spraints (dung).** These are very important, as they are used to communicate with other otters.
- 8: Stay aware.** Please remain aware of how the otter is behaving. If it changes its behaviour, then there's a good chance you have disturbed it and should leave quietly.
- 9: Never disclose** exact locations on public or social media sites. This information may get into the wrong hands.
- 10: Always keep dogs on leads** – no matter how well behaved they may be –and under control near watercourses and rivers, especially if you know that otters may be nearby.
- 11: Seek advice.** If you're unsure about anything at all, there are many good otter conservation and education groups that are willing to help you

and answer any questions. Please feel free to contact us directly if we can help!

**12: Keep track.** Once you locate otters, take note of behaviour, weather and river conditions, numbers, and other general details of what you saw, along with times and dates. Please pass this on to an otter group in that area, so they can add the information to their database for monitoring and survey purposes.

This list is not exhaustive, but it gives you the basic rules of professional otter watching.