

Short report about visiting Smooth-coated otter habitat in Singapore

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Singapore located in South East Asia is one of the most famous places for the success in otter conservation under metropolitan environment. Small-clawed otters (*Aonyx cinereus*) and Smooth-coated otters (*Lutrogale perspicillata*) are distributed in Singapore. This time, I have contacted with IUCN-SSC OSG (Otter specialist group) members in Singapore and gathered at Jiak Kim Bridge (Fig.1) at 8:00 am. As mentioned above, Singapore is the habitat for two species of otters, but only Smooth-coated otters were observed on that day (Fig.2). Jiak Kim Bridge is a bridge over the river surrounded by houses and all river banks are covered with artificial revetments. However, otters smartly used artificial stairs to go around between river and banks. Also, the garbage ship kept collecting trash and water quality was not bad. Surprisingly, these otters got used to the presence of people! On that Sunday morning, there were so many local people walking around and it was kind of noisy, but it looked like otters didn't care at all and they just kept swimming or eating fish (Fig. 3 and 4).



Fig.1 Local people watching otters



Fig. 2 Smooth-coated otter observed near Jiak Kim Bridge

Hence, Singapore has successfully established the ideal symbiotic relationship between human and otters in the developed city, but it seems that otter population has been reaching the saturation. Researchers also said some local people can complain about the smell of otter feces, which means not-all people show understanding. Even though there are still some challenges in conservation, I felt Singapore is one of the most important places to show us how people and otters can live together under the global urbanization situation.



Fig. 3 Otters didn't care the audience



Fig.4 About 4-month old otter pup