

IUCN/SSC Otter Specialist Group

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Otter Specialist Group

October 13, 2018

The IUCN/SSC Otter Specialist Group congratulates TRAFFIC Japan on the publication of its report on the booming international illegal trade in threatened Short-clawed otters (*Aonyx cinereus*). The growth of otters kept as pets or displayed in otter cafes has shown a marked increase since 2012 and particularly in the last two years. Otters are small carnivores that do not make suitable pets under any circumstance.

The findings of this report clearly document the new skyrocketing trade in otters sold as pets to private individuals, promoted by popular television shows. The unknown point of origin of these pet otters, sold via animal dealers or on the internet, points to the absence of regulation and law enforcement measures. Further, there are conservation concerns for this species, classified as Vulnerable in the IUCN Red List, in their countries of origin in Southeast Asia.

The IUCN/SSC Otter Specialist Group endorses the findings of this excellent report and urges all due haste to eliminate the trade in otters kept as pets in Japan.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Nicole Duplaix'.

Dr Nicole Duplaix
Co-Chair, IUCN/SSC Otter Specialist Group