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OTTERS ON MULL

The coastlines of Mull and Iona are a great place for watching otters. We have one of the highest densities of these creatures in Britain. Unfortunately, Mull otters have recently suffered disturbance and injury from a variety of factors, including over-enthusiastic and insensitive wildlife watchers and photographers, so we ask that these activities are carried out sensibly and with respect for wildlife and people.



We would also urge you to drive carefully on the island and watch out for wildlife on the roads as on average there are 13 otter deaths each year on Mull's roads.

OTTER WATCHING ADVICE

Best views are obtained along the coast by walking or sitting in one place. On Mull, nearly every stretch of coastline has otters, as here they are mainly coastal hunters that can be active at all times of day.

Be patient, quiet and still as otters have acute hearing and readily spot movement. If an otter hears or sees you it will usually dive, not to be seen again. If you move, do so slowly and quietly while the creature is underwater (an average dive lasts 20 seconds). Don't approach directly and never try to get too close: try to anticipate which way the animal is moving and position yourself in a camouflaged location e.g. among rocks, and wait for the otter to come to you. Move away quietly when the animal has gone on its way.



If you see an otter while you are driving, park safely and watch from the vehicle (do not obstruct passing places, gates, driveways, etc.). Don't slam car doors, and make as little noise as possible.

The noise of a camera beep or shutter can be enough to scare an otter away. Don't spoil the enjoyment of people who may already be watching the creature. Otters lie up in all sorts of cover, such as rocks or long vegetation, and regularly doze on seaweed-covered rocks. Holts used by females for rearing cubs can be long distances inland. Do not linger if your presence is causing disturbance to an otter: an anxious female may have young cubs in the vicinity that are waiting to be fed. Mull also has many shore-nesting birds, so tread carefully and leave if parent birds are agitated and alarm-calling.

Please always remember:

- the well-being of the wildlife is of paramount importance
- avoid damage and disturbance to all animals, birds and plants
- keep dogs under control at all times
- take your litter with you.

The Mull Otter Group (MOG) is building up a more detailed picture of otter activity on Mull for vital research and we need reports of sightings. You can report sightings on our website under /otter-watching/otter-sighting-report.



If you see a dead, sick, injured or distressed otter, please phone us straight away. This helps us to provide help to any orphaned cubs, or injured otters. Otter carcasses are collected for analysis as part of our mortality study, and the location of road fatalities tells us where the danger areas are.



Please consider helping us with our otter conservation work on Mull. Visit our website to find out more and to send a donation.

Otters are protected under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations 1994. It is an offence to kill, injure or disturb them or to destroy, damage or obstruct access to their breeding site or resting place.

📞 North Mull - 07710 408814 📞 South Mull - 07900 918857

📞 SSPCA - 03000 999 999

 @MullsOtterGroup

www.MullOtterGroup.co.uk

