

Otters in Llanelli?

Tuesday, 05 March 2013 13:57 - Last Updated Tuesday, 05 March 2013 14:29



As you can clearly see from the picture, yes we do! It's not an April Fools day prank but we were surprised to find out that there are Otters in Llanelli!

We were contacted by one of our readers, Darren Harries who had been out Friday morning looking for them. Darren, who is a keen wildlife enthusiast told us:

"I went to this spot I know this morning, I knew they were about as I photographed one last year in the same place about 7 feet away from me."

"They are around the coastline an on the rivers and streams around Llanelli."

Darren has allowed us to use this exclusive footage that he took of a Llanelli Otter, [click here to view](#)

We're unable to report on the location of the Otters in case people go and disturb them. As we were surprised to hear about Otters in Llanelli, we spoke to Neil Matthew of the Countryside Council for Wales who said:

"This kind of sighting is becoming more and more frequent these days - with otters being seen on rivers (and less often on streets!) in a number of town centres, including Carmarthen and

Haverfordwest.

"This is a tribute to the full recovery made by otter populations as a whole over the UK, with only a few small areas left to be recolonised. Otters crashed in numbers in the 1960s and 1970s primarily because of the effects of the use of dieldrin which is now banned."

"Numbers started to come back in the 1980s and accelerated in the 1990s. The ban on otter hunting has also helped in their recovery and the animals often appear quite bold and unconcerned by the presence of humans nearby. Once considered strictly nocturnal, they are encountered quite commonly now during daylight hours."

"Apart from establishing themselves on most of the major rivers in Wales, they are now also quite widespread along Welsh coasts. They could be expected to be seen along the Burry Inlet and are likely to enter some of the smaller rivers in Llanelli from that direction."

"Otters prefer to move around following watercourses, but if they encounter a blockage or a culvert or flooded bridge will come out on the land to take a bypass: it is then that they are liable to be run over and unfortunately there is a high number of road deaths."

"Corpses are collected and a lot of useful information about otters has been provided in this way - although of course it would be much better if these accidents could be avoided!"

"For this reason and others, such as the drastic decline of eels, one of the otter's favourite food items, one should not become too complacent about otters - they are still vulnerable."

We were concerned that the Otters could die as a result of eating any of the fish that have died as a result of the removal of Invasive Fish in Llanelli Lakes and contacted the Environment Agency who assured us that the poison used does not affect mammals.