

UK WILD OTTER TRUST



2025: IN REVIEW

AS 2025 COMES TO A CLOSE, WE
WANTED TO LOOK BACK ON OUR
EXTRAORDINARY YEAR.

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LETTER FROM UKWOT FOUNDER DAVE WEBB

2025 has consisted mainly of highs. The early part of the year was good, we were seeing less numbers of cubs coming in which of course is the perfect scenario, but also indicates that there could be more not making it. From the start of January 2025 until December 17th we have taken in/helped 21 otters, which is still a considerable amount. These individuals were a mixture of cubs, adults and juveniles.

We have seen an increased uptake in our other services, including being asked for advice from various veterinary practices and wildlife centres, unfortunately many of these ended in euthanasia due to the condition of the individuals. However, these calls have helped build more solid relationships along the way, which is a positive for the species as the organisations now have a point of contact. Collaborations both business and personal are extremely important for otter conservation.

We run our rehabilitated otter release programme from March to September, during this time we successfully released 19 rehabilitated, grumpy and snarling otters back into the wild (the behaviours we want to see!). For myself and other volunteers this is the ultimate end to their rehabilitation journey, the highlight of the releases this year was Karma and Kismet. These two straggly cubs were found in a box, dumped on the side of a road next to an airport in Shropshire. They were lucky to survive but were clearly fighters. The year we released them both back into the wild and they even starred in an episode of Countryfile where Samantha Kinghorn presented. I always say that you never forget the first otter and these two were certainly not my first otter but wow, were they memorable simply for the fact of how they were found! Both these girls have been seen post release on camera traps and we have great footage from this.

After every release we post monitor and support feed for as long as needed to ensure they have the absolute best chance once back where they belong – we would never simply release and leave to their own devices, we prefer to wean them back into the wild which is extremely successful and is backed up with video footage and personal sightings.

At the beginning of this year we had virtually got our purpose-built Specialist Otter Rehabilitation Centre to the stage we had envisaged it would be when we embarked on this 4-year journey to build the facility. Sadly on September 18th we were shocked by a section 21 eviction notice to leave our home with 4 months' notice, as some supporters know, my wife and I live on the same estate as the rescue centre. While that is inconvenient, it's not insurmountable. The worst news was about the land our rehabilitation centre sits on – we were given 6 months' notice to remove and dismantle the otter centre that our volunteers have poured life into over the last four years.

Four years of hard work from all our volunteers, hard graft and huge expense has to be removed by the end of April 2026. Four years of work, to be removed in 6 months, in the height of winter does not equate very well but we have started which is the main thing. We have been and will be hampered by the weather, but we are still smiling!

Luckily, in December of 2024 one of our very good friends and Trustees purchased a 4-acre meadow not far from the original site, as part of a 3 to 5 year rolling project to raise funds and do work partially at the meadow to double the size of our facilities. I am so glad now that we made that decision about the new land when we did, as without it we would have been closed down with nowhere to go!

The multi-year plan turned into an urgent need overnight - we were facing an impossible task. We launched an appeal for £15,000 which on the face of it would not have scratched the surface, we shockingly hit the target in less than two days. We then upped the target to £25,000 and within 3 days we hit that too. Today as I write this, the Crowdfunder is currently on just over £34,000... staggering! In addition to this we had grants awarded to us thanks to our amazing volunteers and many private individual donations of some considerable sums.

I can now share that we have hit close to £150,000 including gift aid, ten times our initial goal. Looking back now the £15,000 wouldn't have covered what we needed at the new centre and your kind donations have exceeded our wildest dreams.

The new centre has been built at a cost of £134,000 total with a few more bits to do but overall, we are there. We will share the breakdown of costs further on in this report.

Myself and our volunteers have built and developed our forever home in roughly 10 weeks. From start in a blank meadow field to an amazing facility which will be in use by April 2026. It's been an emotional rollercoaster for myself, my family and my UKWOT family who have all stood by me no matter what and for that I will be always thankful and grateful to be associated with so many kind, generous and lovely people!

The generosity of everyone that donated to us has saved the most respected specialist Eurasian Otter Cub Rehabilitation Centre in the world and left us speechless.

The kindness shown has had many of our team in tears literally and many pinching themselves at the love and help given to us when we were in a very dark area for a few weeks.

Morale was low, we were to put it bluntly “bloody heartbroken” to think that we had to leave our old home but it is what it is and the new project has kept us focussed for sure and we are immensely proud of what we have achieved in such a short period.

I really can not find words to quantify how we feel towards those that donated, thank you just simply does not cut it and I know is not enough but THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH - YOU ARE ALL SIMPLY AMAZING HUMAN BEINGS AND WE WILL ALWAYS BE SO GRATEFUL TO EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU!

I must thank Colin Anderson for the purchase of the land as without this we would be gone. I must thank Henry Godfrey for the groundworks, building construction and everything else he has done, postponing work to get us out of a hole, he is a very special person. The volunteers everyone, they are all special people for sure.

Now whilst all this was going on we remained focused on the cubs. We kept doing what we do with valour, we continued to always prioritise the cubs at all stages and we have always made clear that the cubs come first and that will always be the case no matter what - its all about the otters and why we do what we do!

It's having this resilience, this determination and this love displayed by so many that gets us through things like this.

Collaborations, no matter what differences people have, friendships and great people surrounding you is the absolute key. Get all that right and you have created something very very special and as I always say it IS about the otters only and not egos.

UKWOT has grown so large in a relatively short space of time to become the largest specialist rehabilitation centre in the world for Eurasian otter cubs.

UKWOT have data and pre/post release video clips in excess of 600,000 clips and countless files on each and every otter that we have helped in this time. UKWOT has without doubt secured itself as the leading specialist otter centre that everyone wants to be associated with!

Merry Christmas & a happy new year for us all at UKWOT.

Here are a few of our success stories below!

With huge love & best wishes,

Respect, Dave



2025 IN NUMBERS

Smallest Cub

290G

The smallest cub
we've ever received



Largest Cub

1KG



29

Otters rescued

19

Rehabilitated otters
released back into the wild

21

Otters currently at our
rehabilitation centre going
through rehabilitation

1

Permanent resident otter at
our rehabilitation centre



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23

Calls from fisheries for
advice and help

9

University Student and
Rummers Placement
participants

VOLUNTEERS

In-Person Volunteers:
(Rehab Centre Maintenance, cub
rehabilitation) **8**

Remote volunteers:
(Including Fundraising &
Communications) **14**

5

Trustees

27

Patrons/Ambassadors

Long standing volunteers:

Nigel Childs (Rehab centre volunteer Manager) - 7 years

Roger Hulks (Rehab centre maintenance) - 7 years

Phil Hamberger (Rehab centre maintenance) - 6 years

Summer Hales (Fundraising & Communications Officer) - 4 years

Abbie Montgomery (Fundraising Officer) - 4 years

AWARDS

We have been awarded quite a few awards this year, which we are very proud to have been even considered for yet alone win them!

Leading Pioneer in Wildlife Conservation 2025 –
Visionary Leadership Awards

Leading Global Otter Cub Rehabilitation Centre
2025 – Visionary Leadership Awards

Otter Conservation Charity of the Year –
Corporate Live Global Awards

Best Wildlife Conservation Initiative 2025 –
Southern Enterprise Awards

Leading Experts Otter Education and
Rehabilitation 2025 – Southern Enterprise Awards

JANUARY

Launched our plan to re-wild our new land:

- Planting a woodland copse of over 500 native trees
- Wildflower meadow
- Lake

In just 6 weeks you raised £16,000 for the rewilding project.



FEBRUARY

Work was under way on the rewilding of our new land - volunteers were working hard planting around 700 tree saplings.

Little cubs Hughie and Otis were rescued - they were found individually, alone in gardens and were successfully introduced to each other.



MARCH

After an adventurous rescue that involved a paddle board, we decided to add a boat to our rescue fleet.

2025 releases started with Ebbw & Taw, Gara, Solva & Tas and Maya.



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APRIL

Our volunteers worked hard to design, create and launch our brand new otter adoption packages.

Little Diesel was rescued from the side of a busy motorway.



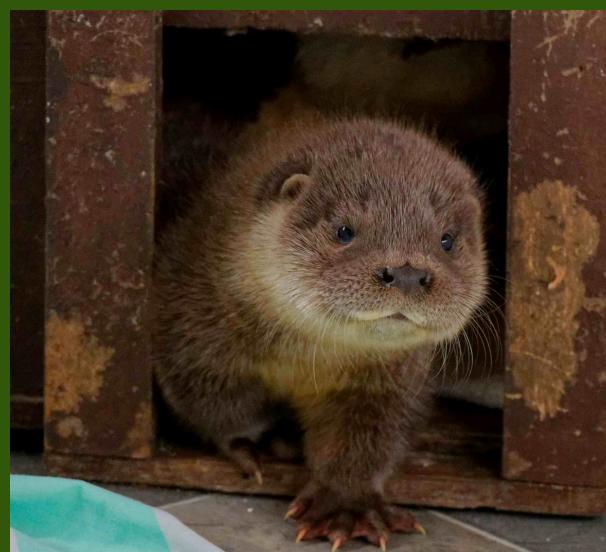
MAY

We got some amazing post release footage from Maya after she was released in March. We have a 100% success rate of releases and seeing camera trap footage is heartwarming for us.



JUNE

Scratch was rescued. He was found alone at around 8 weeks old. He is a resilient little otter. Scratch is the most popular adopted otter of 2025!



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JULY

You helped us raise money to build our Lea Meadow Climate Change Community Gardens.



AUGUST

August marked our first Great Otter Trot. Many of our lovely supporters and volunteers explored nature to raise awareness about and money for otter conservation!



SEPTEMBER

Our final releases of the year, Karma & Kismet, Olive & Weetabix and Menai & Rocket.

Karma and Kismet were even featured on Countryfile!



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OCTOBER

We shared the news of the eviction from our land and we launched our Save Our Charity campaign – you have absolutely blown us away.

You named a brand new otter rehabilitation enclosure – The Otterman Empire!



NOVEMBER

We had a little cameo on
Married at first sight!

Triplets Snap, Crackle and Pop
were rescued – Pop was the
smallest cub we've ever
rescued!



DECEMBER

We put the finishing touches to our
brand new Specialist Otter
Rehabilitation Centre.



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COSTS BREAKDOWN

Our brand new Specialist Otter Rehabilitation Centre is nearly completed. With your generous help we have been able to fully fund our new home and create high standard hospital sheds, indoor cub rooms and outside rehabilitation enclosures. We want to be transparent about how your hard earned money has been spent. The money raised also includes the kind people who have sponsored the buildings and otter rehabilitation enclosures.

£60,000 - Groundworks

Demolishing our old centre and returning the land to its original state (bare land) is a huge job and costs a lot of money. This also includes costs of preparing the land at our new centre, creating the driveways, and erection of all buildings (including installing the bases).

£32,000 - Buildings

We have built 6 brand new buildings - 1 hospital, 1 storage barn, 1 solar and freezer building, 1 training room, 1 isolation unit and otter food prep and 1 storage building.

£13,000 - Solar Panels

We have installed solar panels, so that we are completely self sustaining and environmentally friendly.

£12,000 Materials

For building otter rehabilitation enclosures, walkways and other essentials.

£4,000 Fencing

For building otter rehabilitation enclosures.

£6,000 Waste water treatment

£6,500 Storage containers

Total - £133,500

You have raised a staggering £150,000 including gift aid, the majority of these funds have been used to build our new centre. The remaining funds will be used to put the finishing touches to our centre and for our core work of rescuing, rehabilitating and releasing otters.

LOOKING TO 2026

2026 is going to be a big year for our charity, it will mark 10 years since we started rescuing otters, registered as a charity and gained our 'class licence' to humanely trap Eurasian otters.

It will be a year for celebration for what we have achieved as a charity, but also for all the support you have given us over the years.

See you in 2026...