

## OTTER SURVEY - SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

Otters and their holts are protected under Schedules 5, 6 & 7 of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 (the Order). It is an offence to disturb these animals or obstruct access to their place of refuge, or destroy or damage anything which conceals or protects their place of refuge.

To ensure your development proposals comply with the Order, Environment and Heritage Service (EHS) has asked you to carry out an appropriate Otter survey. Surveys can generally be done at any time of year. Where a survey method is invasive, a survey licence must be obtained from EHS.

- The surveyor contracted to undertake this work must have relevant experience which is deemed acceptable to the Department, for example an ecological consultant with experience of, and/or qualifications in, mammal surveying.
- The date and time of the survey and the qualifications of the surveyor should be included in the survey report.
- Surveys should be carried out well in advance of any planned construction works.
- The survey should establish whether Otters have established holts, (active or inactive) or use the area for foraging. All evidence of use by Otters found, for example, spraints, footprints, should be included.
- The information should be presented in a written report and must include large scale maps, at 1:500 scale. The exact location of holts and holt entrances should be identified.
- If necessary, the report should recommend the most appropriate ways in which Otters can be protected during the proposed construction works, and suggest appropriate mitigation methods.
- If Otter holts are found to be present, surveys to assess whether they are being used for breeding will be needed.
- In the event that the planning application goes to appeal or public inquiry, the person contracted may be required to appear at, or give evidence to, the inquiry.
- For more information on Otters and development, contact EHS.