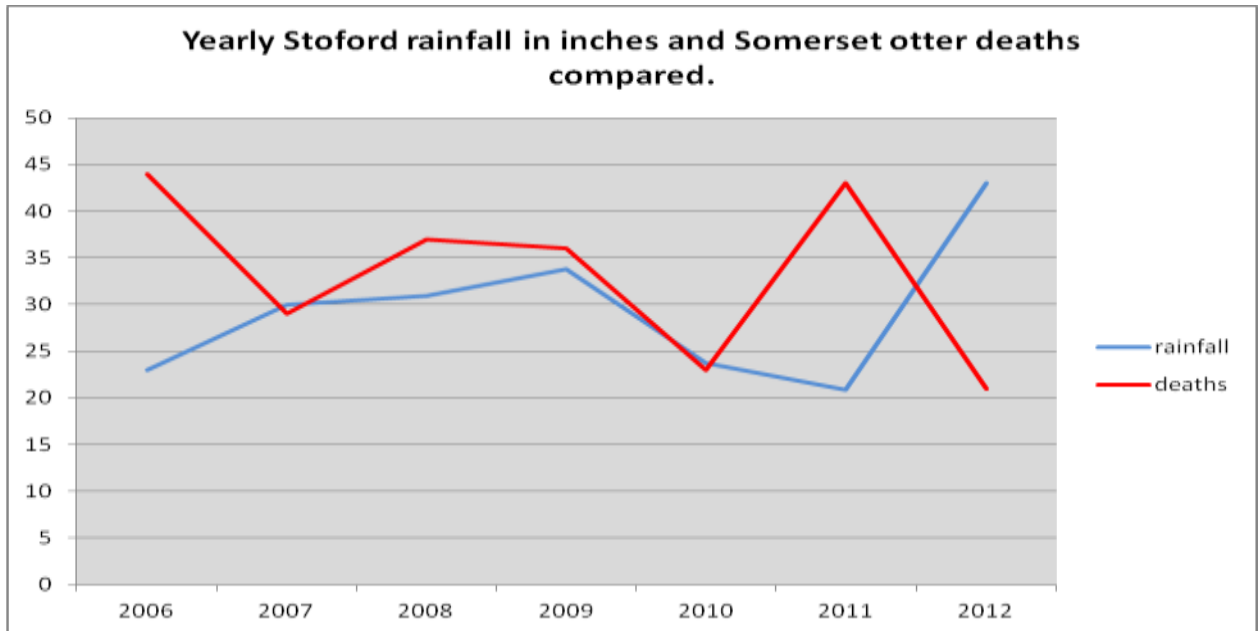


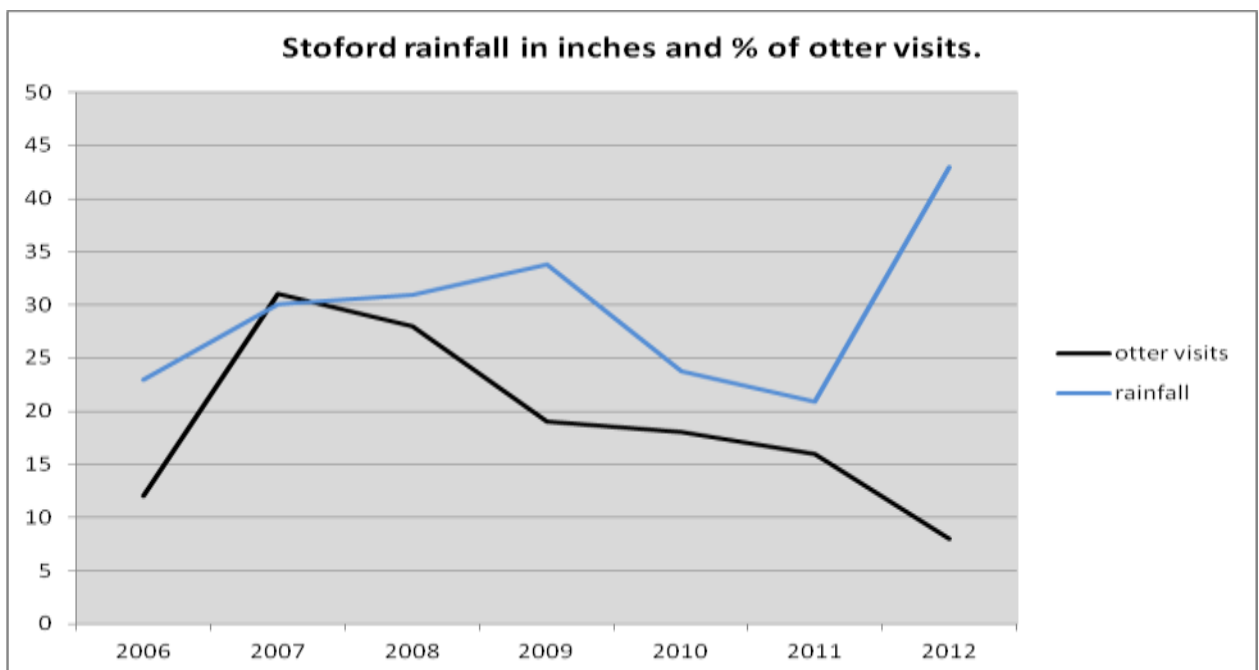
**Current News December 2013.**

Lucy and James have been compiling some statistics to see if the appalling rainfall of last year affects the otters.

Here are two graphs which seem interesting and we would like your comments if possible. The way the deaths go up in dry years and down in wet years is worth taking back further in time we think, have other daily recorders found anything like this?



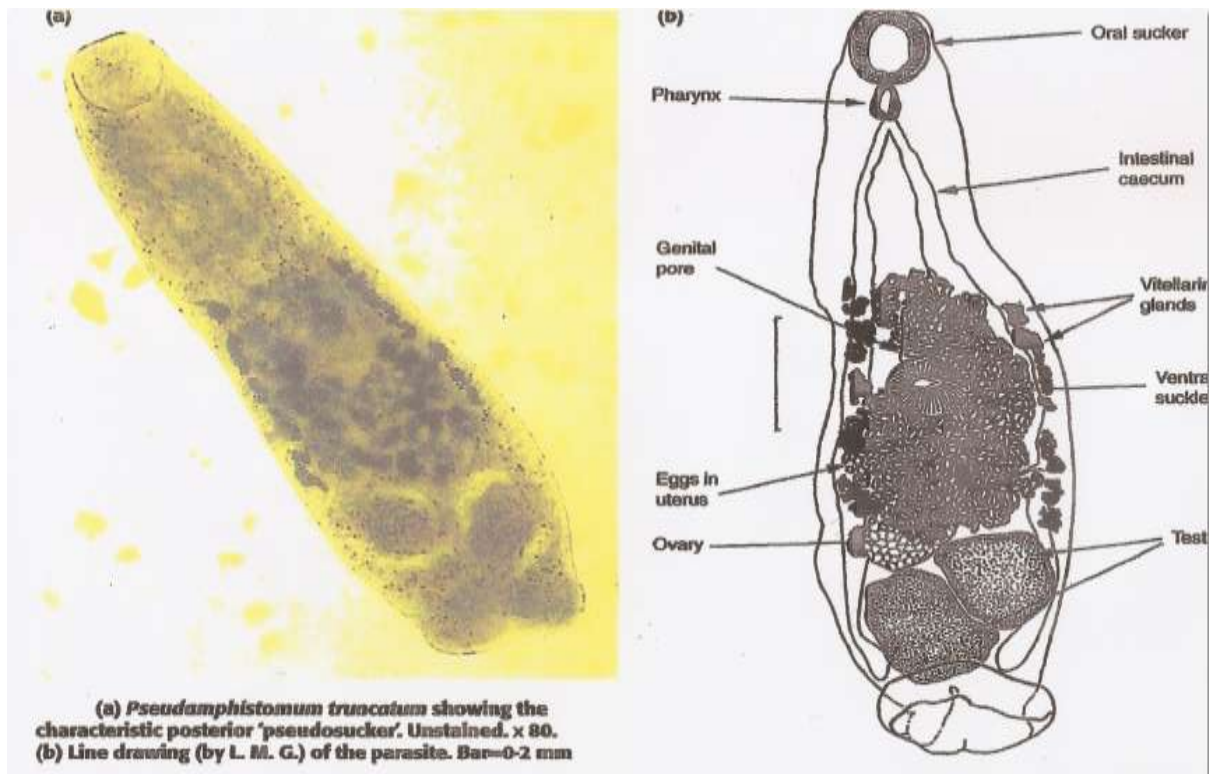
Secondly, how alarming should James consider the steady decline in the % of otter visits over the last 6 years? He has had only one visit in the last 5 weeks but likes to think that this is because his bitch otter is busy with a nest of cubs on another stream.



## Anniversary Celebrations.

You will be aware that 2014 is significant as the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the paper by Vic Simpson et. al. Reporting the discovery of this new parasite in a Somerset otter.

**Cholecystitis in otters & mink caused by the fluke. *Pseudamphistomum truncatum*. V.R. Simpson, L.M. Gibbons, L.F.Khalil, J.L.R Williams.**

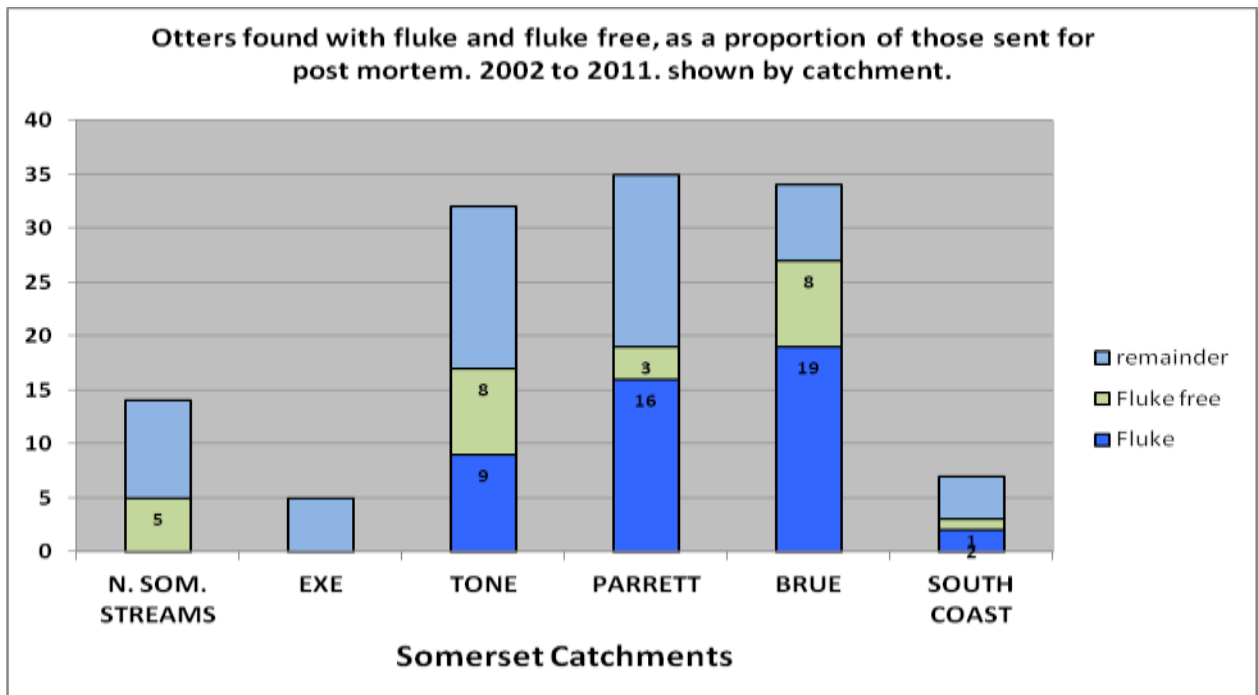


The Somerset Otter Group was responsible for the capture of this sick otter at Stoke St Gregory and has been greatly involved in all aspects of research into the fluke since.

We feel we ought to 'celebrate' this anniversary by publishing another booklet of research papers, giving an outline of everything that has been happening and bringing up to date all other aspects of our research. Contributions from all of you on your particular patches or interests would be welcome.

We will be getting to grips with this after the New Year with a view to having the texts ready by the end of March.

But to start with here is a graph which seems to show a very uneven distribution of the fluke.



Especially interesting is the map with no flukes West of Taunton. It appears that some part of its complicated life cycle, (possibly the snail species), does not like fast flowing water. But how then to account for the fluke free animals out on the levels?. Most of them proved to be immature or cubs so it may be that they had not yet eaten any infected fish hosts. Another interesting area we need to look at more.



## Meetings

Two meetings are prepared for this Spring.

We are very fortunate that Dr Mark Everard, a director of Bristol and Avon River Trust and associate professor of the University of the West of England, but probably better known as an authoritative author of British Freshwater Fish, has agreed to speak to us on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2014. Place and time together with numbers wishing to attend will be confirmed later.

This will be a fascinating insight into a neglected area of Natural History, an area very relevant to our studies as well.

At the end of March we will hold a members meeting with refreshments and short presentations of all kinds.

You should all now know that the two day event is on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> April 2014.

There will again be a training day for the Exmoor National Park at Simonsbath on 22<sup>nd</sup> March.