

# SURVEY RESULTS 2022

Somerset Otter Group, summary of the James Williams Survey, 2 day Event.

## Two-Day Survey 2023

Next years two-day event will take place on:

**1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2023**

The Two Day Survey has always taken place at the end of April for consistency of comparison and to avoid spring bankside growth.

However, mild winter have meant some sites, particularly low lying ones, have an early surge of lush vegetation, making access difficult and covering the usual spring sprouting spots.

Through discussion with some surveyors, it has been decided to conduct next years survey earlier in April in the hope that all sites can be accessed.



The Two Day Survey took place on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> April 2022. Surveyor numbers were very much down with 91 patches covered, 74% of last years 122 patches.

The reduced coverage has skewed the data somewhat making clear analysis difficult. The results should be looked at in general terms only.

39 ranges were identified across the county. With some large areas across the counties uncovered, this should not be considered necessarily a drop from last years 56 ranges identified; it is possible that if fuller coverage was achieved, the number could be greater.

A more reliable figure may be the percentage of sites showing recent activity, 42% compares with last year's 52% - a clear drop.

Of those positive sites, 31% fresh activity (hits) was found on the second day (Sunday), an increase of the previous year's 25%. Again, difficult to interpret due to the lower number of sites covered.

Of the 39 Otter ranges detected:

8 on the River Exe, 3 on the coastal streams, 5 on the River Tone, 8 on the River Parrett, 3 on the River Brue (plus one adjudicated), 1 on the River Axe (N), 1 on the Cale, 3 on the South Coast (Yarty, Culm and Otter), 6 on the River Frome.

## Surveyor numbers

New surveyors are needed across all catchments. Please contact Jo Pearse on [sogjopearse@gmail.com](mailto:sogjopearse@gmail.com) if you are or know of anyone interested in monitoring their local population.

## Coordinators

We welcome two new coordinators to assist with coverage for 2023. Lucy Pendrick for the Tone catchment and Marc Thole for the coastal area between Minehead and Bridgwater. The Exe catchment will continue to be coordinated by Martin McNeil, Frome by Tony House and the Brue by Jo Pearse.

## Exmoor National Park

The Devon side of Exmoor National Park was surveyed again to co-ordinate with the Somerset survey.

## Two-Day Survey 2022

This year we had a number of people join the survey from our facebook group, enabling more coverage. Many thanks for all your efforts with the 2022 Survey.

Thanks to SERC for continued collection of the normal monthly survey records.

## Two Day Survey - other species reported

TWO DAY EVENT OTHER MAIN SPECIES									
	bittern	cuckoo	dipper	g.wagtail	kingfisher	l. egret	mink	w. vole	beaver
2015	2	0	16	5	5	2	14	4	
2016	2	0	18	5	5	1	3	3	
2017	0	0	15	7	7	4	0	0	
2018	1	2	14	4	4	4	4	2	
2019	0	1	15	3	3	0	7	0	
2022	2	1	7	15	10	3	11	3	2

Each year, surveyors also record the riparian wildlife they encounter.

Dippers are noticeably lower in sightings, perhaps due to lower surveyor numbers, but kingfisher numbers hit a record high as did grey wagtails. Unfortunately mink number were also high. Perhaps something we can blame on covid as mink control during the two years would have been curtailed.

It's not too late to add to any of the data if you have anything more to report.

The full set of other species data will be passed into SERC and the birds to RSPB.

## Other points of interest

As usual observant surveyors have noticed other points of interest whilst conducting their surveys.

- Marc Thole noticed skinned frogs on the Chalkwater.
- Scott and Clemence Scott Bolton on the Doniford Stream observed a skinned hedgehog! Poor thing, more likely the work of a badger.
- Lucy Pendrick on the Tone watched a female merlin.
- Nicole Turnball and Lorraine Boon found a small jellyfish along side crab remains at Steart.
- Angela Upshall recorded beaver signs in the east of the county.
- And lucky Caroline Wright on the Parrett catchment saw an otter.

## Two Day Survey Map 2022



- Day 1 Saturday fresh spraint
- Day 2 Sunday fresh spraint

NB The markers are for an indication only, not the exact location.

If you have any further results that haven't been sent, please email to [sogjoparse@gmail.com](mailto:sogjoparse@gmail.com) and they can be added to the results.

## Two Day Data 1995 - 2022

Month	MAY	MAY	MAY	MAY	MAY	MAY	OCT	MAY	MAY	MAY	APR	MAY	MAY	APR	APR	APR	APR	APR	APR	APR	APR	APR	APR	APR	APR	APR	APR	APR	APR	APR	APR	APR	APR	APR	APR	APR	APR	
Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	F&M		spate		C-19		C-19		
Patches				31								58	65	69	109	129	121	124	127	143	135	138	139	137	138	122									91			
Total Sites			114	145	166	174	132		121	126	275	239	271	309	428	520	521	477	519	564	524	510	531	496	496	473										388		
Sites Positive			84	98	100	124	78		56	96	198	169	197	227	306	381	380	318	331	390	273	372	304	326	243	249										161		
% Sites Positive			73	67	60	71	59		46	75	72	69	73	74	71	73	73	66	64	69	52	73	57	66	49	52											42	
Hits	9	11	18	39	26	42	42		27	26	71	30	35	68	99	95	109	91	76	114	68	102	71	89	71	63										51		
Near Misses	8		7	11	17	11			14	7	8	6	11	16	17	30	16	26	22	18	25	19	21	19	8											9		
Total Scores	17	11	25	50	43	53			27	40	78	38	41	79	115	114	139	107	102	136	86	127	90	110	90	71											60	
Located	15	16	25	32	37	34			21	30	54	39	32	44	54	59	66	66	55	64	47	66	50	66	56	56											38	
Adjudicated Ranges											54	50	45	45	65	62	69	69	67	67	56	66	56	66	56	56												39
% Total sites with Hits			16	27	16	24	32		22	20	25	12	13	22	23	18	21	19	15	20	13	20	13	18	14	13												13
% Positive Sites with Hits			21.4	39.7	26	33.8	53.8		48.2	27	35.8	17.7	17.7	29.9	32.3	24.9	28.6	28.6	22.9	29	25	27	23	27	29	25												31
Blank Patches		5	1									4				5	6	10	8	8	15	9	22	10	25	20	30	26										23

## Cubs reports

Every year we hope for new reports of cubs. The two days survey greatly adds to our understanding of cub distribution across the county. Sometimes a best guess has to be arrived at for reports of grown otters together.

This year, following the survey, I have added four more records to the annual count, mostly from the Tone and Parrett. Its never too late to add reports and the list is added to throughout the year. A final tally will be given during the 2022 year report during early 2023.