

Otter deaths

Otters are protected, killing them is illegal and could lead to a £5,000 fine or imprisonment for up to six months.

The irresponsible and illegal setting of crayfish traps is leading to an increased number of otter deaths. Anyone setting a crayfish trap must have consent from the Environment Agency and permission from the owner of the land where they want to set the trap.

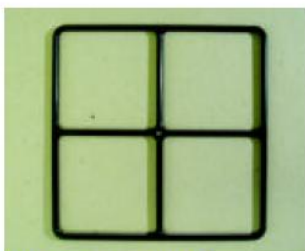
For traps to be consented, they must conform to strict criteria including specific dimensions and some designs need to be fitted with an otter guard to prevent otters entering and drowning.

Except where previously agreed with the Environment Agency in writing, the opening or entrance to any trap shall not exceed 200mm in diameter and the mesh size shall not exceed 30mm at its widest point.

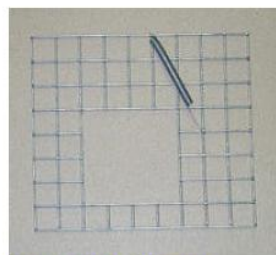
All traps where the entrance to the trap is greater than 95mm internal diameter must be fitted with an otter guard which should consist of either:

- (i) tightly stretched flexible netting with a mesh size measured when wet of not more than 75mm knot to knot or 300mm round the perimeter;
- (ii) a rigid square grille with bars separated by not more than 85mm; or
- (iii) a rigid ring guard with internal diameter of not more than 95mm and should be fitted to the funnel leading to the entrance of the trap.

Some traps can also unintentionally capture water voles. If they are known to be present, the traps should be placed away from the banks, reducing the risk of catching this rare mammal.



Plastic otter guard



Wire otter guard

For more information please call the Fisheries, Permitting and Enforcement team through our National Customer Contact Centre (NCCC) on 08708 506 506.

Think Otter

Irresponsibly set fish traps can cause otter deaths.
Stay within the law.



- Otters are a protected species, killing them is illegal. If a crayfish trap is allowed, it must conform to strict size dimensions for this very reason.
- Unless previously agreed in writing with the Environment Agency the opening or entrance to any trap shall not exceed 95 mm in diameter. All traps where the trap entrance is greater, up to 200 mm must be fitted with an otter guard.
- Trapping can do real damage and increase the spread of alien crayfish if not carried out responsibly .
- We want to help! If you are unsure, please speak to the Fish Movements Authorisation Team on 01480 483968 to make sure your traps are legal.



Otter caught in a crayfish trap.

Would you want to be responsible for this?

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