

A Management Plan for the Otter in the Parishan Wetland

For the preparation and development of a management plan for the otter in the Parishan wetland, a collaborative approach has been utilized. Stakeholders' participation will result in the consideration of opinions, knowledge, and interests of relevant individuals and groups in the wetland for the preparation of the plan. The purpose of this approach is to increase plan continuity, the participation of stakeholders in the implementation of the plan, and the support.

The preparation process of a management plan requires consideration of the values of the wetland and otter species. In addition, threats to this valuable species (otters), as well as the capacities and potentials existing in the main respective bodies and groups to manage the wetlands must be recognized, thoroughly, and paid attention to.

In the preparation process of a management plan in the Parishan lake, training workshops were carried out to increase the teachers' awareness level and sensitization, non-governmental organization (NGOs), and local communities between 2010 and 2011. Similar workshops were also carried out for the park rangers and people local to villages living around the Parishan lake. Finally, a consultative assembly was carried out to finalize the preparation of management plan for the otter in the Parishan Wetland at the presence of local people, members of the subcommittee on biodiversity, and representatives of provincial and local government agencies.

In the forthcoming management plan, not only the problems and threats to the otters living in Parishan wetland and necessary strategies to decrease these issues were considered but also the responsibilities of administrative bodies were determined.

This plan aimed to provide an administrative solution in the framework of creating an integrated management system based on the ecosystem of catchment areas to decrease the major threats to these species in the preserved wetland area. Due to the rapid development of various activities in the area, decreased water resources, and ecological features of the wetland being effected, adopting this approach is necessary. However, the current structure and traditional approaches for managing the wetland are unable to consider, control and administer the needs of the local people, desirably, as well as the destructive activities around the wetland area.

In addition, it seeks to provide a solution based on the values and advantages of desired species alongside the ecosystem benefits. The forthcoming plan is based on the participation of interested

groups, especially local people, and was prepared to encourage them toward rational use of wetland resources and existing biodiversity within. As mentioned earlier, it pays special attention to the increased intersectoral collaboration to achieve desired common goals and promote public awareness on the importance of otter species.

Otters mainly hunt at night. They are following the prey in the water, catching it over the grasses, tearing the prey with their sharp teeth, bringing it over the closest land, and eating them. Otters hunt and grab the fishes with their mouth and dive to catch crustacea and seashells.

Otters mate, commonly, in the summer. These otter species in Iran have a gestation period of about two months, expecting to give birth to 1 to 5 babies. According to some sources, otters in Asia start mating between Esfand (February) and Ordibehesht (April), having a gestation period of about 60 to 62 days. No delay occurs in the gestation time and they gave birth in the respected season, Ordibehesht (April) and Khordad (May). In addition to security, the quality of food resources is one of the most important factors affecting the reproduction of these species. Many of the scholars believe that decreased quality of food resources may cause a decline in the success of reproduction during the gestation period and the death of newborns after birth.