



Spotted-necked otter (*Hydrictis maculicollis*) – Near Threatened (IUCN Red List)



The spotted-necked otter, average weight 3 to 6 kg, is the second smallest of the world's 13 otter species. It is characterized by an elongated, cylindrical body (.62 – < 1m for adults), tapering tail, short legs, dense brownish fur, individually unique light colored blotches on the lips, throat, or belly, and webbed feet.

The diet consists primarily of fish and crab but they will prey on amphibians and/or insects when these are abundant. They hunt by sight so require clear water to successfully catch their prey.

The otter is known as fisi-maji in Swahili and historically was abundant in the lakes and clear streams/rivers across Sub-Saharan Africa. They are most frequently seen as singletons or female/young pairs. However, males, adolescents and possibly females without young have been seen in groups of up to 20 otters, more frequently < 10 individuals.

To keep warm, they spend long periods rubbing their coats dry on logs, grasses or boulders. This fluffs the coat and traps air within the inner and outer coat layers.

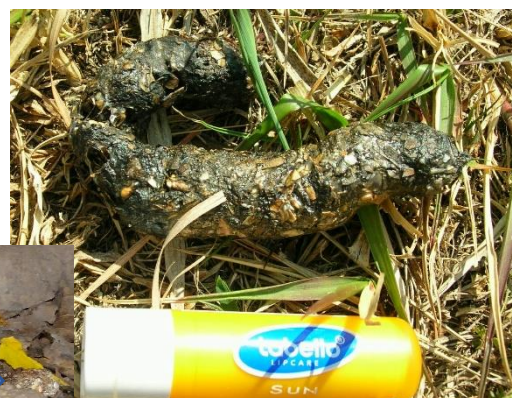




Left front foot and track 40 – 45mm wide; Male's larger than female's



Fresh scat (below) older scat (right top)



Tubular formed scat ~ 11-21mm diameter can also be seen



Latrines, where scat is deposited can cover an area of several metres.



Do not confuse tracks or scat with that of marsh mongoose (below)



← Marsh mongoose tracks: +/- 30mm wide



Marsh mongoose scat - remains of crab, small mammal, frog, insect, bird; roughly 15-22mm in diameter

Marsh mongoose

2 – 5.4kg

Shaggy fur; bushy tail

Nocturnal and solitary

Found on land or shoreline water



Sighting information – when seen, where, how many and other observations can be sent to:
africanotternetwork@gmail.com Questions also are welcome!