

## Cornish Otters

Dear Carpworld,  
I read an article in October's Carpworld containing a report by Adam Roots regarding the otter problem affecting Devon and Cornwall. I am the owner of Furzebray Carp Lakes, which appeared on the list of fisheries affected, and I felt the need to follow it up with a short piece to highlight the fact that Adam failed to contact me, or many of the other fishery owners, to obtain the correct facts before writing his report.

The foremost reason for me writing this was the fact that I felt the article implied that all the fisheries on the list had been decimated by otters, or were in the process of being decimated. Well I can assure you that this is not the case; I know several of the fisheries have adequate fencing, as is the case of Furzebray Lakes, where a full otter fence was erected before the fishery opened to the public. Since we opened in 2008 we have lost NO fish to otters. I am sure there's no doubt that unfenced fisheries are suffering damage and losses, but articles like this could make matters worse for fishery owners by driving anglers away who think there are no undamaged fish left, which is not the case.

Although I agree totally with Tim and Adam about highlighting the damage these otters are doing, and that we should push English Nature to review the otter release programme, we must be careful not to jeopardise the industry many of us rely on for our business and pleasure. Furzebray Lakes and many other southwest fisheries have anglers visiting from all over the UK, and I feel this is not the best way to promote our fisheries.

There are now a growing number of fisheries in the southwest, some more well known than others, that are fencing their lakes against the otters. Ashmead has fenced its 17-acre site, we have fenced Furzebray

Lakes' 12-acre site, Digger Lakes, Stenhill, Gunna Barn, Darts Farm, Spires Lake, and Penpol Place, to name but a few, have all got otter fences around them, and there's more in the pipeline over the next 12 months. As stated in Adam's article, some of these fisheries have been affected by otters in the past, but I felt it needed to be highlighted that they now have fences to protect their fish. Although fencing is not cheap, it's the only reasonable measure available to keep the otters at bay, and I'm sure it will be a necessity for all fisheries in the future if they wish to stay otter-free.

Furzebray Lakes hold some stunning fish untouched by otters, and we are in the process of digging a third lake, which is being fenced as I write this. I hope this has put a different light on things here in Devon and Cornwall; there is light at the end of the tunnel and the future of carp fishing in the southwest looks very bright. There is a new generation of carp waters coming through, run by anglers who are aware of the problems we face, and who are taking measures to safeguard the future of the southwest carp fishing.

Regards,  
Tony Kingdon,  
Furzebray Lakes.  
[www.furzebraylakes.co.uk](http://www.furzebraylakes.co.uk)



Otter fencing at Furzebray Lakes.

## Otter Fencing

Dear Carpworld,  
I read both the Carp Leader feature and Adam's report on otters in the October issue with great interest, as not only do I live in Cornwall but I have also been involved in a new syndicate carp lake that has been dug in the last two years.

I have been fishing for carp in Cornwall for about 18 years, and I suppose over the last five I have seen the damage and heartache that otters cause for both small and larger fisheries. Many of these fisheries have been open for years and have never needed otter fencing, however, a lot of these fisheries will struggle to fence some lakes, which would be an almost impossible task, not only due to the size and terrain, but the cost of installing a fence suitable to keep predators out is prohibitive. This in turn will have a knock-on effect on the fishery that has big carp killed

by otters, because a lot of anglers wanting to catch (sometimes) the only 30 or one of the few 20s in a lake will go elsewhere. Sad, but it happens.

We are in the process of fencing our lake, which is about two acres in size and surrounded by beautiful Cornish countryside, and as we have all been fishing for carp for many years, we know we have to do this right. This lake will not only be our future, but hopefully the future for other generations that will eventually take over.

As we are in the process of fencing the lake and always open to advice, we would like to get in touch with anyone from outside the syndicate to share some knowledge with us; the lake is in its early stages and any advice would be welcome.

Many thanks,  
Mick Fisher.  
[mickeyfish@live.co.uk](mailto:mickeyfish@live.co.uk)

## Otter Fencing Advice and Financial Assistance

The Environment Agency has a 36-page downloadable document available which contains a great wealth of information on otter fencing. It contains details on the law, fencing design, and other methods for preventing predation. The document can be found by visiting [www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk) and then searching for 'how do I get advice?'. The page displayed has the downloadable documents. The EA will consider applications for funding for otter fencing in some circumstances. Unfortunately, private syndicates are not eligible, although open membership clubs and day ticket waters are. The rules are:

- The fishery is open membership or day ticket and not a syndicate.
- Funding will be up to a maximum of 50% of the fencing costs but typically less than this.

- The owner and/or operator will contribute to the costs to reflect the fact that the assets belong to them, and they should have the major interest in looking after them. The EA are not able to contribute to funding for work that has already been undertaken.
- Ongoing maintenance will be the responsibility of the owner/operator.

## Commercial Fencing

There are several companies that supply otter fencing to fisheries, including Tornado Fencing in Warwickshire and Wildlife Fencing, who supply a wide variety of fencing to keep wildlife out/in. Farm supply companies can offer valuable advice on fencing and electric fencing, and the EA documentation gives details of specifications.

More information:  
[www.tornadowire.co.uk](http://www.tornadowire.co.uk) or  
[www.wildlifefencing.co.uk](http://www.wildlifefencing.co.uk)