

# **THE LIFE STORY OF AN OTTER**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649220304

The life story of an otter by J. C. Tregarthen

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**J. C. TREGARTHEN**

**THE LIFE STORY  
OF AN OTTER**





OTTER CUBS.

*Reproduced by kind permission of Her Grace the Duchess of Bedford.*

Frontispiece.

# THE LIFE STORY OF AN OTTER

BY J. C. TREGARTHEN

AUTHOR OF 'WILD LIFE AT THE LAND'S END' AND  
'THE LIFE STORY OF A FOX'

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



LONDON  
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

1909



OL  
795  
D: T73

~~12130.~~

TO  
MY WIFE





## PREFACE

20

THE otter has long seemed to me worthy of serious attention, if only for the successful struggle it has waged against those exterminating agencies under which the badger, the wildcat, the polecat and the marten have all but succumbed.

Its survival throughout Great Britain is due, partly to its endurance and resources when hunted, partly to qualities and habits which differentiate it from the other creatures of the wild. Its scent, for instance, unlike that of fox or badger, to which every tike and lurcher will stoop, is noticed by few dogs save hounds that have been trained to own it; and the outlawed beast thus gains a certain immunity from destruction.

Then the otter is a great wanderer, who not only traverses long stretches of coast and follows streams and rivers to their source, but crosses hills and even mountains to reach its fishing-

grounds. It has been known to travel fifteen miles in a night, and not infrequently the holts where it lies up during the day are ten or twelve miles apart.

On the way to its quarters it will linger to fish or hunt, and the remains of eel, salmon, pike, rabbit, moorhen or wild-duck mark the scene of the midnight feast. But no matter how much it may leave uneaten the otter never returns to a kill, and so escapes the traps with which gamekeeper or water-bailiff is sure to ring the ground about it. Unlike its congener the polecat, the otter does not hoard food; unless the caches of frogs occasionally found in marshes are its work, and not that of the heron as is generally supposed.

However that may be it is certain that it does not hibernate, but is abroad night after night the whole year round. Indeed, as often as not, the female produces her young in the depth of winter, and indefatigable forager though she is, must often be sore pressed to provide food for her litter. At times the conditions are too severe, and a tragedy ensues. At Mullyon, in Mount's Bay, one bitterly cold December, when the Poldhu stream was frozen and the sea too rough and discoloured for the otter to fish, the