

Additional Protected Wildlife Evidence at Poynton Pool – Otter

An Otter was recorded at Poynton Pool on 23/01/24, this is one of a number of sightings in the area over the last 12 months including the canal and Poynton Brook. It is also noted that the record database contains records of Otter along the Macclesfield Canal in Bollington (22/02/2022) and at Mottram Bridge (02/10/2022).

This provides a clear indication this is an important corridor and feeding site for this species in the local area between Poynton Brook, Norbury Brook and the Canal. This particular record has now been added to the local records database and adds to the Otter records on the local records database in the Macclesfield area that have been recorded within the last 12 months.

They are mainly nocturnal and as stated on the Mammal Society website they can range through 20 kilometres or more of habitat:

'General Ecology: Otters can travel over large areas. Some are known to use 20 kilometres or more of river habitat. Otters deposit faeces (known as spraints, with a characteristic sweet musky odour) in prominent places around their ranges. These serve to mark an otter's range, defending its territory but also helping neighbours keep in social contact with one another. Females with cubs reduce sprainting to avoid detection.'

<https://www.mammal.org.uk/species-hub/full-species-hub/discover-mammals/species-otter/>

There are undisturbed areas at the north end of the pool that are inaccessible to humans and dogs that they may use to lie up.

This species is protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and it would be expected Cheshire East Council would take evidence of this species extremely seriously with regard to planning applications.

The Environmental Assessment Report for the Poynton Spillway application stated the following:

(h) Otter

No records of otter were returned by the LRC during the desk study and no signs were seen during the field surveys. Poynton Pool was, however, considered suitable for occasional foraging otter due to the presence of fish. **The site has limited connectivity with other suitable habitats**, particularly to the west where the busy A523 road would act as a barrier to and from habitat on the west of the road. Due to the high levels of disturbance within the proposed Scheme boundary the potential for otter resting sites is limited and this species is **considered of Less than Local Importance**. Resting otter can be considered likely to be absent from the proposed Scheme boundary; however, otters may commute to the pool to forage.

We would dispute there is limited connectivity to other suitable habitat given the close proximity of Poynton Brook, Norbury Brook and the Canal. The photograph show the Otter just before it entered the scheme boundary and as can be seen the trees overhanging the water are important for the species to move around generally undetected.

Based on this evidence we would also dispute that Poynton Pool is of 'less than local importance' for this species.

Please see pictures below that illustrate the Otter, it's location at Poynton Pool and a map showing it's path within the scheme boundary.

Picture 1: Photographic evidence of Otter at Poynton Pool, 23/01/24



Picture 2: Wider shot of the sighting showing the tree it was standing on, it moved off along the tree edge to the north at the back of this picture



Picture 3: Map of Poynton Pool from the Environmental Assessment Report showing the scheme boundary, the yellow cross is the location of the picture and the arrow indicates the path the Otter followed.

