

OTTER SPRRAINT COLLECTION PROTOCOL

HEALTH & SAFETY WARNINGS:

Otter spraints contains pathogens which can infect human beings. If you feel unwell after handling spraint, seek advice from your GP. Wash your hands after handling spraint and never touch them with your bare hands.

COLLECTION INSTRUCTIONS FOR VOLUNTEERS:

Each sample collection kit is designed to collect 1 spraint sample. Items included in each collection kit:

- 1 x guide to finding otter spraint
- 1 x otter spraint collection protocol
- 1 x datasheet where you will record info about the spraint
- 1 x pair disposable nitril gloves
- 1 x pencil
- 1 x plastic spoon
- 2 x sample bags, 1 bigger than the other
- 1 x screw-top collection tube
- 1 x plastic waste bag

1. When you find an otter spraint, open your sample collection kit. Record the following information on the datasheet:
 - today's date
 - your initials
 - your what3words location
 - the spraint freshness at time of collection, either fresh/drying/dry (use the reference scale below in Figure 1 to guide you)

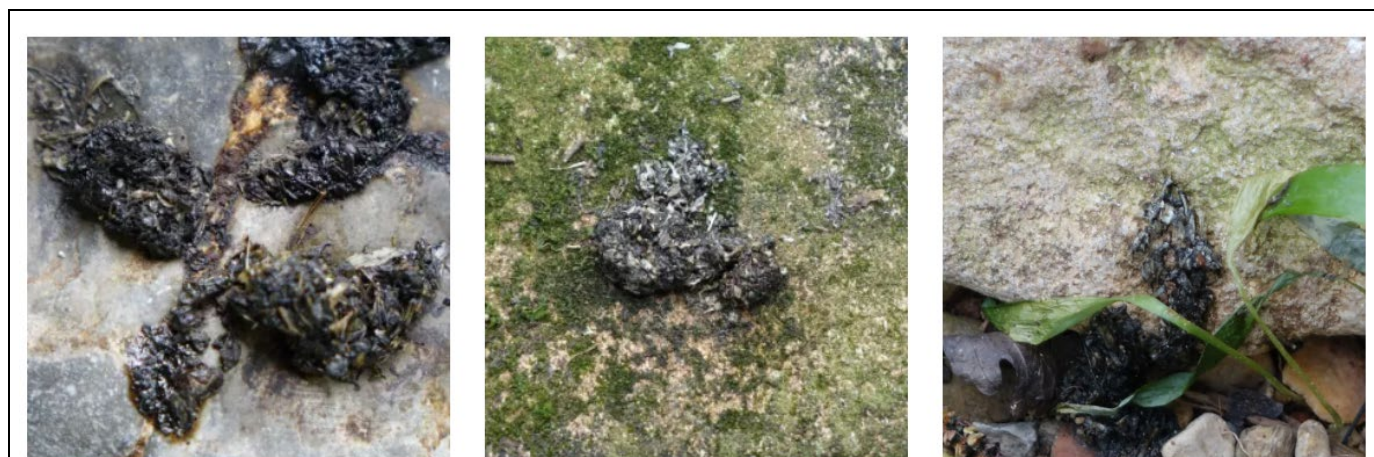


Figure 1: A guide to judging otter spraint freshness (Somerset Otter Group 2022). For the freshest spraints, record these as 'fresh', for those in the middle record these as 'drying', and for those which are dry record these as 'dry'.

Fresh spraints are black, wet and tar-like.

Drying spraints will still have some tar-like mucous covering them but will crumble more easily when sampled.

Dry spraints will be mostly grey in colour, and crumbly. They will be mostly made of prey remains, including bone and scales, with little black/brown faecal matter remaining.

2. Put on the nitril gloves and open the screw-top collection tube.

3. Using the plastic spoon, place the spraint in the collection tube. Do not touch the spraint with your gloved hands. Screw the lid onto the collection tube tightly.
4. Place the collection tube into the small sample bag. Seal the small sample bag.
5. Into the large sample bag, place the small sample bag containing the otter spraint **as well as your completed datasheet**. Seal the large sample bag.
6. Dispose of waste. Place the plastic spoon into the disposable waste bag. Remove your gloves and place them in the disposable waste bag as well. Tie the waste bag and dispose of it. You might want to put this collection protocol and the guide to finding spraint in the waste bag as well.
7. Send a text to Grace Roberts on 07972096120, with the message: "Otter spraint sample found, date XX/XX/XX."
8. Return the sample to be stored in the freezer within 24 hours.

Thank you!

References

Somerset Otter Group. 2022. 'OTTER SIGNS'. <http://www.somersetottergroup.org.uk/94-2/elementor-2862>.