

**Monitoring vidre v sezoni 2025/2026 in sintezno poročilo
vzpostavitve in izvajanja monitoringa populacije vidre na območju
Slovenije v sezonah 2022/23, 2023/24 in 2025/26**

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**Otter Monitoring in the 2025/26 Season and Synthesis Report on
the Establishment and Implementation of Otter Population
Monitoring in Slovenia in the 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2025/26
Seasons**

SUMMARY

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1 UVOD

V sezoni 2025/26 je bil zaključen prvi sistematični nacionalni monitoring vidre v Sloveniji, ki je potekal v treh monitoring sezonah (2022/23, 2023/24 in 2025/26). Poročilo predstavlja prvi celovit pregled razširjenosti, velikosti populacije, stanja habitata in stanja ohranjenosti vrste v Sloveniji, pripravljen na podlagi enotne metodologije.

Monitoring vidre je bil izveden z namenom spremljanja razširjenosti, velikosti populacije, stanja habitata in stanja ohranjenosti vrste v Sloveniji. V sezoni 2025/26 je bil zaključen prvi sistematični nacionalni monitoring vidre, ki je potekal v treh sezonah (2022/23, 2023/24 in 2025/26). Poročilo predstavlja prvi celoviti pregled razširjenosti, ocene velikosti populacije, stanja habitata ter stanja ohranjenosti vidre v Sloveniji, pripravljen na podlagi enotne metodologije. Poleg rezultatov monitoringa poročilo vključuje oceno velikosti populacije na območjih Natura 2000 in zunaj njih, oceno trendov, kjer to omogočajo razpoložljivi podatki, ter priporočila za nadaljnje izvajanje nacionalnega monitoringa vrste.

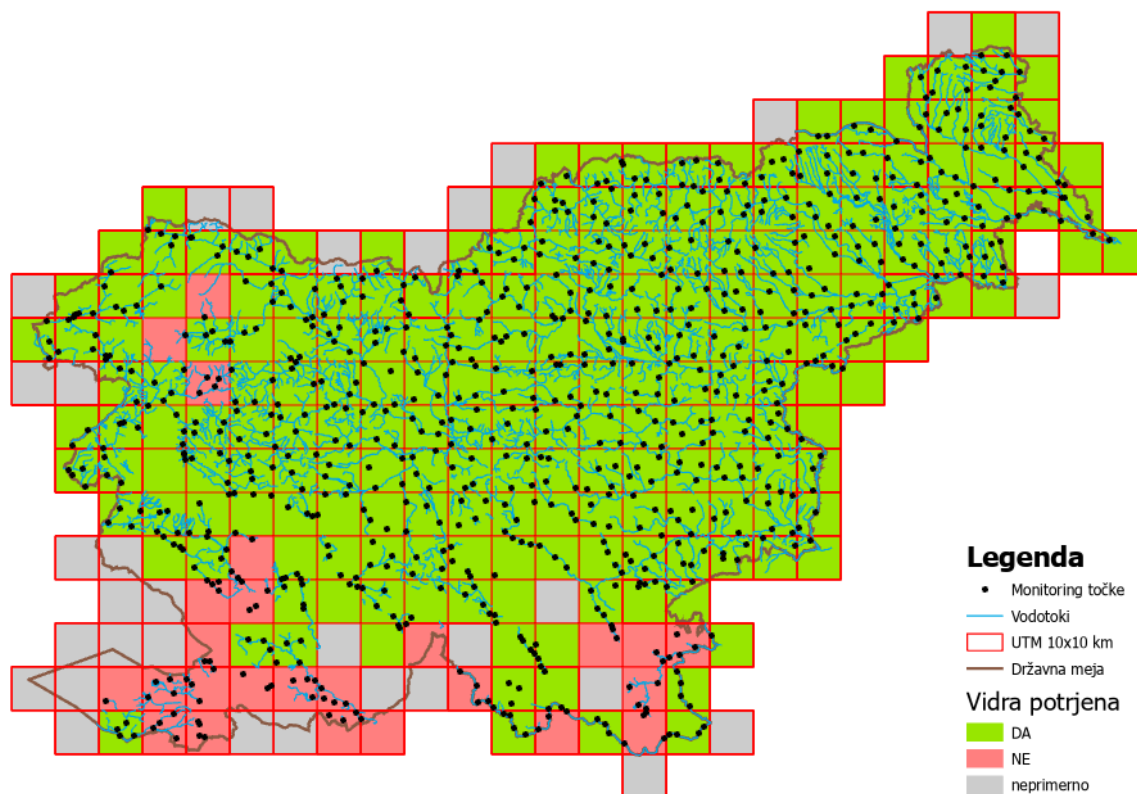
2 POPISNI PROTOKOL in SKLADNOST POPISA S PROTOKOLOM

Monitoring vidre temelji na standardizirani metodi popisa znakov prisotnosti vrste, ki je zaradi neinvazivnosti, dobre ponovljivosti in primerljivosti rezultatov med državami najpogosteje uporabljena metoda spremljanja razširjenosti evrazijske vidre v Evropi. Popisni protokol temelji na t. i. standardni oziroma »angleški« metodi, ki jo priporoča tudi IUCN in temelji na mreži kvadrantov UTM 10 × 10 km. Podrobnejši opis metodologije, terenskega dela, prepoznavanja znakov prisotnosti, obdelave podatkov in analiz je predstavljen v Priročniku za monitoring vidre v Sloveniji.

Terensko delo je bilo v vseh treh sezonah (2022/23, 2023/24 in 2025/26) izvedeno pretežno v zimskem obdobju. Skupno je bilo pregledanih 995 popisnih točk, monitoring pa je bil izveden skladno s popisnim protokolom. Z izvedbo tretje sezone je bil zaključen prvi sistematični pregled območja razširjenosti vidre v Sloveniji po enotni metodologiji, ki predstavlja izhodišče za dolgoročno spremljanje populacije vrste.

3 OBMOČJE RAZŠIRJENOSTI

Evrasijska vidra je danes razširjena v večjem delu Slovenije in je bila potrjena v več kot treh četrtinah primernih UTM kvadrantov. Takšna razširjenost je skladna z okrevanjem populacije po njenem izrazitem upadu v drugi polovici 20. stoletja, ki je bil, podobno kot drugod po Evropi, predvsem posledica preganjanja vrste, onesnaženja vodotokov in degradacije habitatov. Sedanja razširjenost verjetno odraža kombinacijo postopnega okrevanja populacije po njenem zgodovinskem upadu ter boljšega poznavanja razširjenosti zaradi sistematičnega monitoringa, pri čemer so k okrevanju populacije pomembno prispevali zakonsko varstvo vrste, izboljšanje kakovosti vodnega okolja in zmanjšanje neposrednega preganjanja.



Slika 1: Karta prikazuje razširjenost vidre v Sloveniji na ravni UTM mreže 10 × 10 km.

4 STANJE HABITATA

V okviru monitoringa je bila ocena stanja habitata izvedena na podlagi dveh kazalnikov: biomase rib kot glavnega prehranskega vira ter ohranjenosti priobalnega prostora. Razpoložljivi podatki o biomasi rib kažejo na precejšnje prostorske razlike med posameznimi hidrografskimi območji. Vidra je bila potrjena tudi na območjih z nižjo ocenjeno biomaso rib, kar kaže, da na njeno prisotnost poleg razpoložljivosti rib pomembno vplivajo tudi kakovost obrežnega habitata, povezanost vodnega omrežja ter dostopnost alternativnega plena. Biomasa rib zato predstavlja pomemben, vendar ne edini kazalnik kakovosti habitata za vidro.

Analiza ohranjenosti priobalnega prostora je pokazala, da se je med letoma 2014 in 2024 v 86 % hidrografskih območij druge ravni zmanjšal delež lesne in grmovne vegetacije v priobalnem pasu, kar kaže na postopno slabšanje kopenskega dela vidrinega habitata na ravni celotne Slovenije. Tudi na območjih Natura 2000 primerjava dejanske rabe tal med letoma 2014 in 2024 kaže trend zmanjševanja površin kategorije gozd, drevesa in grmičevje ter kmetijskih zemljišč, poraslih z gozdnim drevjem, v 5-, 10- in 50-metrskem priobalnem pasu.

5 VELIKOST POPULACIJE

Velikost populacije vidre v Sloveniji je ocenjena na 618–759 osebkov, od tega 107-148 osebkov na območjih Natura 2000. Ocenjena velikost populacije je skladna z dosedanjimi strokovnimi ocenami in skupaj z ugotovljeno razširjenostjo vrste kaže, da Slovenija sodi med pomembnejša območja razširjenosti evrazijske vidre v srednji Evropi. Zaradi uporabljene metodologije rezultatov ni mogoče

obravnavati kot natančnega popisa osebkov, temveč predstavljajo robustno strokovno oceno, ki omogoča primerjave med območji in spremljanje dolgoročnih trendov.

Rezultati kažejo, da pomemben del slovenske populacije vidre živi zunaj območij Natura 2000. To potrjuje, da ohranjanje ugodnega stanja populacije ni odvisno zgolj od upravljanja znotraj območij Natura 2000, temveč tudi od zagotavljanja ugodnega stanja vodotokov in priobalnih habitatov v širšem prostoru.

6 OCENA STANJA OHRANJENOSTI VRSTE

Na podlagi rezultatov vseh treh sezon monitoringa ocenjujemo, da je stanje ohranjenosti evrazijske vidre v Sloveniji trenutno **ugodno** tako v alpski kot tudi v celinski biogeografski regiji. Ocena temelji na široki razširjenosti vrste, ocenjeni velikosti populacije ter odsotnosti dokazov o njenem splošnem upadanju. Hkrati rezultati opozarjajo na več dejavnikov, ki lahko dolgoročno vplivajo na stanje populacije, predvsem na postopno zmanjševanje kakovosti priobalnih habitatov, potrebo po ohranjanju povezanosti vodotokov ter še vedno nepojasnjeno redko pojavljanje vrste na območju Kolpe in Lahinje.

Nadaljnje izvajanje nacionalnega monitoringa ter spremljanje kakovosti habitatov ostajata ključnega pomena za pravočasno zaznavanje morebitnih sprememb stanja populacije ter načrtovanja učinkovitih varstvenih ukrepov.

SUMMARY

1 INTRODUCTION

The otter monitoring programme was carried out to assess the species' distribution, population size, habitat condition, and conservation status in Slovenia. The 2025/26 season marked the completion of the first systematic national otter monitoring programme, conducted over three monitoring seasons (2022/23, 2023/24, and 2025/26). This report presents the first comprehensive overview of the distribution, population size, habitat condition, and conservation status of the Eurasian otter in Slovenia, based on a standardized monitoring methodology. In addition to the monitoring results, the report includes an assessment of the population size within and outside Natura 2000 sites, an evaluation of trends and recommendations for the future implementation of the national otter monitoring programme.

2 SURVEY PROTOCOL AND COMPLIANCE

The otter monitoring programme is based on the standardized method of surveying field signs of the species. Owing to its non-invasive nature, high repeatability, and comparability of results across countries, this is the most widely used method for monitoring the distribution of the Eurasian otter in Europe. The monitoring protocol is based on the so-called standard or "English" method, which is also recommended by the IUCN and is based on a 10 × 10 km UTM grid. A more detailed description of the methodology, field survey procedures, identification of field signs, data processing, and analyses is provided in the Manual for Otter Monitoring in Slovenia.

Field surveys were carried out predominantly during the winter period in all three monitoring seasons (2022/23, 2023/24, and 2025/26). In total, 995 survey sites were inspected, and the monitoring was conducted in accordance with the established monitoring protocol. The completion of the third monitoring season marked the first systematic assessment of the Eurasian otter's distribution across Slovenia using a standardized methodology, providing a baseline for the long-term monitoring of the species.

3 DISTRIBUTION

The Eurasian otter is currently distributed throughout most of Slovenia and was confirmed in more than three-quarters of all suitable UTM grid cells. Such a distribution indicates a successful recovery of the population following its marked decline during the second half of the twentieth century, which, as elsewhere in Europe, was primarily caused by persecution, water pollution, and habitat degradation. The current distribution most likely reflects a combination of the gradual recovery of the population after its historical decline and an improved understanding of the species' distribution resulting from systematic monitoring. Population recovery has also been significantly supported by the legal protection of the species, improvements in water quality, and a reduction in direct persecution.

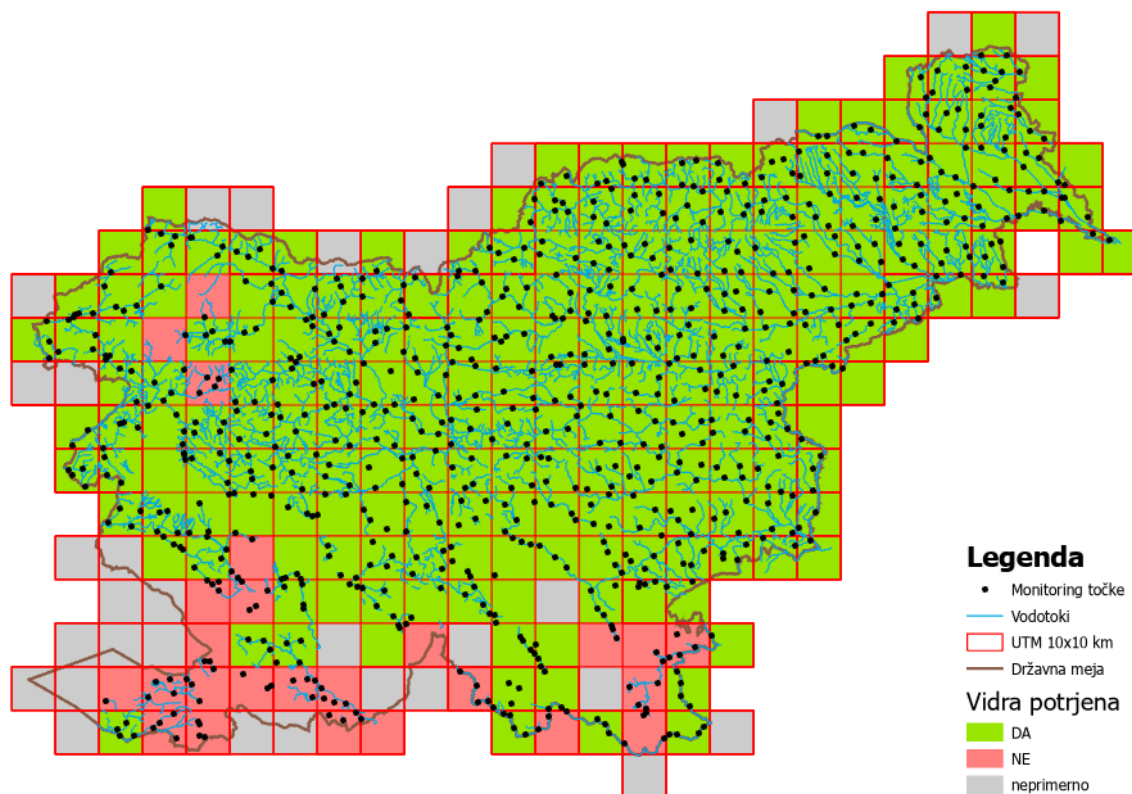


Figure 1. Distribution of the Eurasian otter in Slovenia presented on a 10 × 10 km UTM grid.

4 HABITAT CONDITION

Within the monitoring programme, habitat condition was assessed using two indicators: fish biomass as the principal food resource and the condition of the riparian zone. The available fish biomass data revealed considerable spatial variation among individual second-order hydrographic areas. The Eurasian otter was also confirmed in areas with relatively low estimated fish biomass, indicating that, in addition to fish availability, the species' occurrence is strongly influenced by the quality of riparian habitats, the connectivity of the river network, and the availability of alternative prey. Fish biomass therefore represents an important, but not the sole indicator of habitat quality for the Eurasian otter.

The assessment of riparian habitat condition showed that between 2014 and 2024, the proportion of woody vegetation within the riparian zone decreased in 86% of the second-order hydrographic areas, indicating a gradual deterioration of the terrestrial component of otter habitat across Slovenia. Similarly, within Natura 2000 sites, the comparison of land-use data between 2014 and 2024 revealed a declining trend in the area covered by the land-use category forest, trees and shrubs, as well as agricultural land with scattered forest trees, within the 5 m, 10 m, and 50 m riparian buffer zones.

5 POPULATION SIZE

The population size of the Eurasian otter in Slovenia is estimated at 618–759 individuals, of which 107–148 individuals occur within Natura 2000 sites. The estimated population size is consistent with previous expert assessments and, together with the documented distribution of the species, suggests that Slovenia represents one of the more important areas for the Eurasian otter in Central Europe. Owing to the methodology applied, the results should not be interpreted as an exact census of

individuals but rather as a robust expert estimate that enables comparisons among different areas and facilitates the long-term monitoring of population trends.

The results indicate that a substantial proportion of the Slovenian otter population occurs outside Natura 2000 sites. This confirms that maintaining the species at a favourable conservation status depends not only on the management of Natura 2000 sites but also on ensuring the favourable condition of watercourses and riparian habitats across the wider landscape.

6 CONSERVATION STATUS

Based on the results of all three monitoring seasons, we conclude that the conservation status of the Eurasian otter in Slovenia is currently favourable in both the Alpine and the Continental biogeographical regions. This assessment is based on the species' wide distribution, the estimated population size, and the absence of evidence indicating an overall population decline. At the same time, the results highlight several factors that may affect the population in the long term, particularly the gradual deterioration of riparian habitats, the need to maintain connectivity of watercourses, and the still unexplained low occurrence of the species in the Kolpa and Lahinja river basins.

The continued implementation of the national monitoring programme, together with regular assessments of habitat condition, remains essential for the timely detection of potential changes in the status of the population and for planning effective conservation measures.