

### **3. Eurasian Otter**

**Prelims Syllabus:** Environment

**Mains Syllabus:** GS-III Environment; Biodiversity



#### **Why in News?**

- The first photographic record of the Eurasian Otter was caught on the infrared camera along the Neeru stream in Jammu and Kashmir.

#### **Eurasian Otter:**

- Eurasian Otter (*Lutra lutra*) is an elusive semi-aquatic carnivorous mammal species.
- The Eurasian Otter has one of the widest distributions as its range covers three continents (Europe, Asia and Africa).
- In India, Eurasian otters are found across the northern, northeast and southern parts of India.
- The Eurasian Otters have short limbs, brown fur, and sensitive whiskers near the snout that help detect prey.
- They also have webbed feet and claws and the ability to close the small ears and the nose when underwater which has helped them adapt to an aquatic lifestyle.
- Eurasian Otters are usually nocturnal in nature and can be found near freshwater environments such as lakes, rivers, streams, marshes, and swamp forests.
- The diet of Eurasian Otters includes fish, crustaceans, amphibians, birds, eggs, insects and worms.

- Eurasian Otter is regarded as a flagship species and an indicator of high-quality aquatic habitats.

**Conservation status:**

- **IUCN RedList:** Near threatened
- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Schedule II
- **CITES:** Appendix I

**Neeru stream:**

- Neeru river is located in Jammu and Kashmir.
- The Neeru stream is a tributary of the Chenab river.
- Neeru is a 30-km perennial stream that originates in the Kailash Lake at 3,900 metres above mean sea level and drains into the Chenab at Pul-Doda in the Doda district.
- The presence of Eurasian Otters is encouraging for the health of the Neeru stream.

