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STOP-GRIDS FOR FISH TRAPS IN DENMARK

Aksel Bo Madsen¹ and Bjarne Sogaard²

¹*National Environmental Research institute, Department of Wildlife Ecology, Grenåvej 12, DK-8410 Rønne, Denmark*

²*National Forest and Nature Agency, Ålholtevej 1, DK-6840 Oksbøl. Denmark*

Abstract: From 1 January 1991, the Danish Ministry of Fishery has decreed that all trap fishers using fish traps in otter habitats must use stop-grids or stop-net in their fish traps; failure to do so incurs a fine of DM 175 (\$110) per trap, and the trap will be confiscated. This has now been extended to cover the whole of Denmark's fresh water, and certain areas in brackish and salt water.

Stop-grids that fit into the inner end of the first fyke tunnel of fish traps have been tested and used by experienced Danish trap fishers since 1986. The results are positive and have been published in the Proceedings of the Vth International Otter Colloquium, Habitat 6, Hankensbüttel, 1991 pp 237 - 241, entitled "Otter (*Lutra lutra*) mortalities in fish traps and experiences with using stop-grids in Denmark".

From 1 January 1991, the Danish Ministry of Fishery has laid down that all trap fishers using fish traps in otter habitats must use stop-grids or stop-net in their fish traps. If the trap fisher ignores this regulation, the penalty per fish-trap without stop-grid is DM 175, or \$110, and the tool will be confiscated.

During the last two years, the National Forest and Nature Agency and The National Environmental Research Institute have been negotiating with the Danish Ministry of Fishery for an extension of the law of 1991.

As a consequence, the law will be extended from 1 April 1994, as follows: in fresh water (lakes, rivers and streams), trap fishers in the whole of Denmark must use stop-grids; fishermen must be granted an exemption. In salt and brackish water trap fishers only in a limited geographical parts of the fiords must use stop-grids (Figure 1).

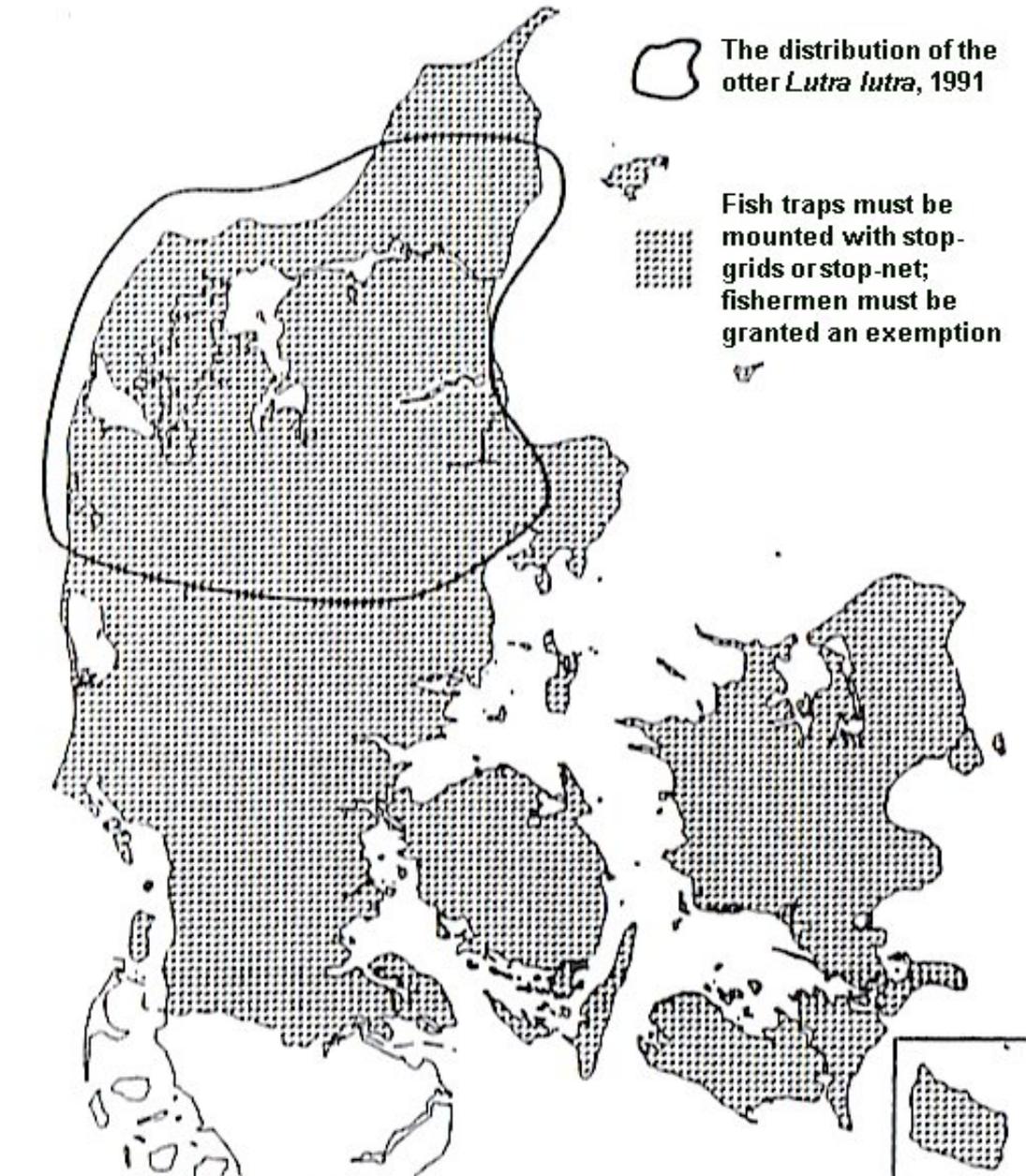


Figure 1. Otter distribution in Denmark and the area where stop-grids must be used

The stop-grid is a reasonable compromise between on one hand, protection of the otter population on, the other fishing interests. Two types of stop-grids are approved by the authorities in Denmark: one rigid, square, made of plastic (180 mm x 180 mm) and one rigid, square, made of steel (268 mm x 268 mm), both with 85 mm bar length (Figure 2).

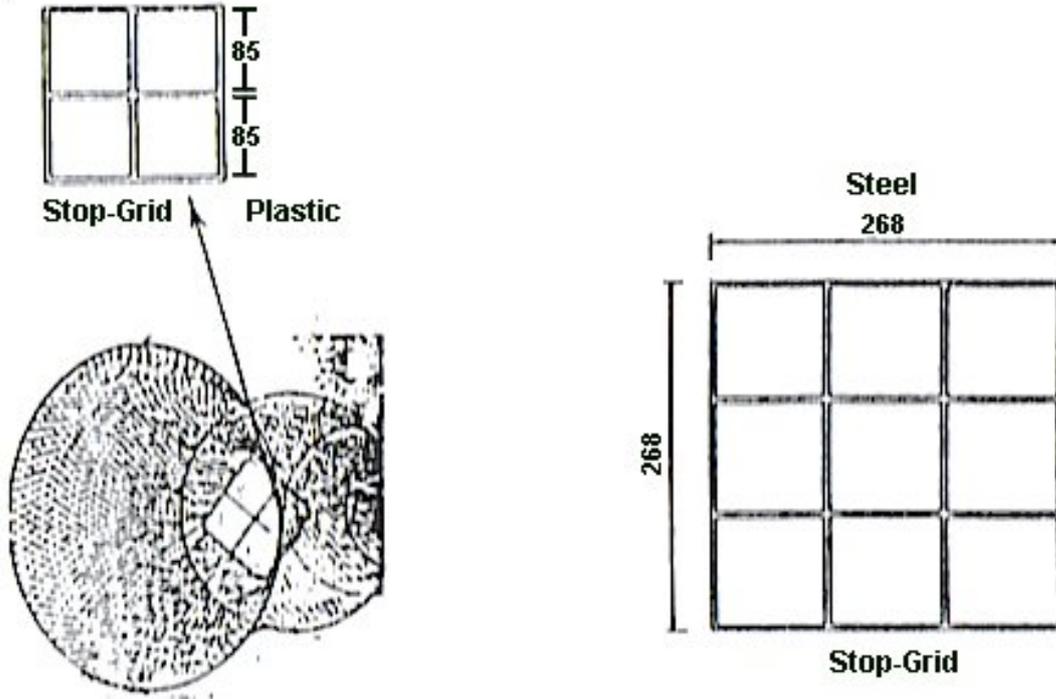


Figure 2 .The stop-grid

Both types of stop-grids are manufactured and sold by the Centre of Technology and Product Development in the County of Aarhus:

PROCON
Rudolfgaardsvej 1B
DK-8260 Viby J.
Denmark
Telephone+45 86 29 65 88
Telefax +45 86 29 65 64