

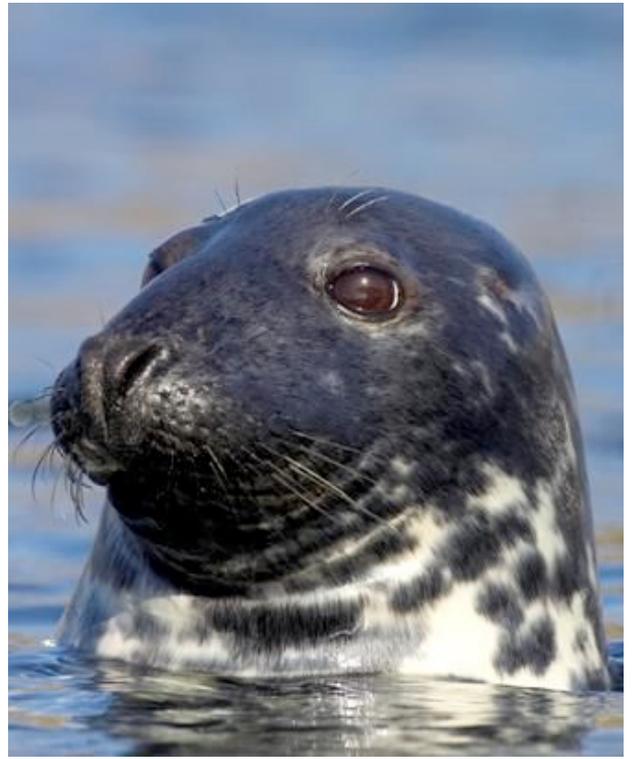
## Grey Seals

### FACTS

Common seals vary in colour from black, brown, grey or tan, with darker patches. The pattern is unique to the individual. They have a relatively large head with a short body and flippers.

They are not endangered. There are between 40,000 and 50,000 in the world.

They haul out onto rocky shores, mud flats and sandy beaches. They may also inhabit fresh water. They do not tend to travel more than 20km from the shore.



### Spotter's Tips

The Seals swim up the river at high tide. They can be spotted as far up as Ruswarp weir. At low tide you might see them in the harbour.

## Pearl Mussel

### FACTS

The Pearl Mussel can be as big as an adult's hand, and live to a hundred years old, making it one of the longest living invertebrates in the world.

They used to be common throughout Britain but it is now in danger of becoming extinct.

The River Esk is one of only a small number of rivers where pearl mussels can still be found. The National Park Authority has set up a project to help the pearl mussel.



### Spotter's Tips

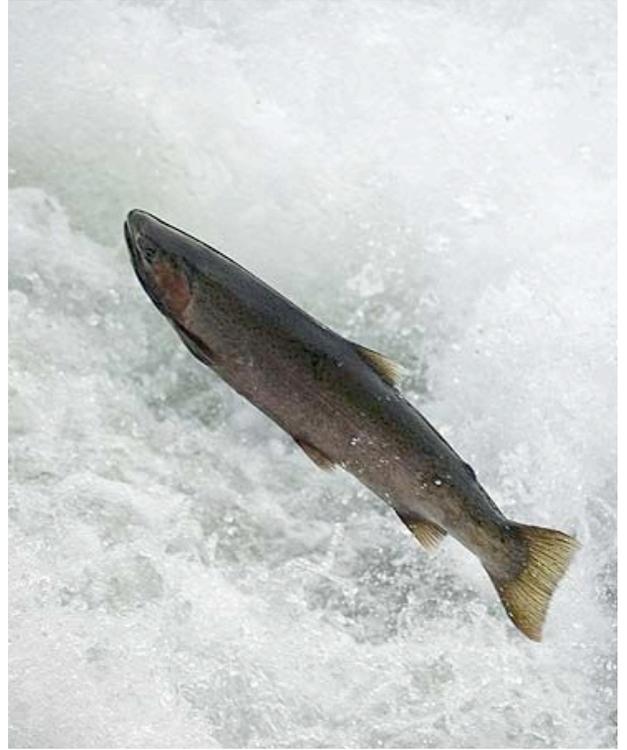
These are rare but can be found between Danby and Glaisdale where there are pebbles and gravel on the river bed.

# Salmon & Sea Trout

## FACTS

The Esk is particularly important as Yorkshire's only salmon and sea trout river and the fishery is an important part of the local economy. If you watch over the side of a bridge in the autumn you might be lucky enough to see sea trout or salmon swimming upstream or resting on the gravels about to spawn.

To help the Salmon swim up the river there are a number of man-made fish ladders. Look out for the one next to the weir!



### Spotter's Tips

Salmon swim up the river in Autumn to spawn. Look out for the fish ladder next to Ruswarp weir where they jump up.

## FACTS

The largest European heron. It can stand with neck stretched out, looking for food, or hunch down with its neck bent over its chest. In flight it holds its neck retracted and has large rounded wings. It is usually solitary although several birds may feed fairly close together.

It stalks its food, often standing motionless for some considerable time. It usually feeds close to the bank or shore, but may wade out into shallow water.



### Spotter's Tips

You can see Herons all along the River Esk, but a good spot is near the Viaduct. Approach slowly and you might get close!

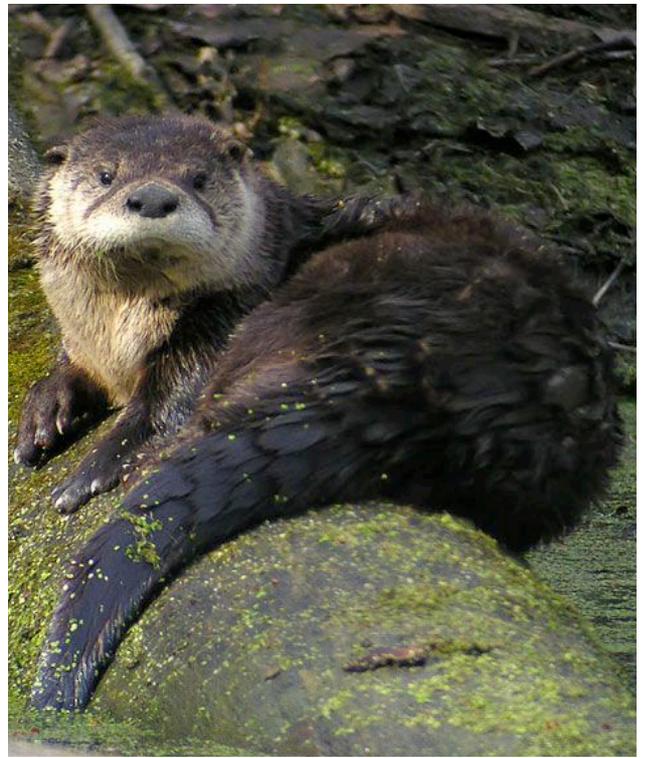
# Heron



## FACTS

**River Otters live in the banks of rivers and streams. They are territorial and their territories can be up to 20km.**

**Otters have no main predator. They are at the top of the food chain and are predators themselves, hunting fish, small mammals and birds. The main threat to otters is from humans, through the destruction of their habitat, from pesticides running off from farmland and polluting watercourses, and from being run over by vehicles while crossing roads and paths.**



Otter

### Spotter's Tips

You can find Otter's all along the river bank. They're very shy though so be quiet! Look out for footprints in the mud.

## FACTS

**The kingfisher is one of our most beautiful birds and is easily recognized, although all you are likely to see is a flash of blue darting like an arrow, up or down a river.**

**Kingfishers mainly eat fish, insects and worms. They are great at catching fish. They often sit on a branch over a river and they can even hover, watching for the movement of small fish such as minnows, sticklebacks, stone loach and small trout. When they see a fish they dive straight into the water to catch it.**



Kingfisher

### Spotter's Tips

You'll usually spot Kingfishers sat on a branch waiting for fish. In April they nest into the sides of steep river banks.