

AFRICAN CLAWLESS OTTER SITE - ETHIOPIA 2019

I visited Ethiopia in March 2019 for the first time. As I did not visit any major areas that would be new to this site, I did not include a full trip report.

While I have seen on past trip reports that people have seen African Clawless Otters by chance in Ethiopia, I came across a more reliable site and so wanted to share it.

On my way between Bale Mountain National Park and Awash National Park I stayed at the Haile Resort - Hawassa on Lake Awasa. It was probably one of the nicer non lodge based places I stayed, and was placed there by my tour agency, not as a requested site.

If you exit the bottom floor of the back of the hotel and walk straight down the flight of stairs to the lake edge, the hotel has a bar called the Sunset Wine Bar. My friend and I decided to put the bar to good use and went down to watch the sunset and drink. I was not facing the water at one point and my friend gasped and said "What is that behind you?". Right on the shore was a male otter just staring at both of us. If you are facing the water, to the right of the outside bar area is a cement dock with small boats used for lake tours. I included the Marabou picture only to show what the dock looks like. On the right side of the dock about

half way down (in front of a few tires), there is an opening that I assume is a den site. I watched a male and female otter in and around this area for about an hour (from 18:00 to about 19:00), then again the following morning from 7:00 until 8:30). Our waiter told us they are always there in the evening and seemed amazed I was even interested in them. I did get the classic “Don’t you have otters in your country question” from him. At one point, I had a small crowd of staff and security guards behind me while I was watching the otters (there may have been some wine induced noises coming from me directed at the otters). I would imagine if you do not want to stay at the hotel based on price, you could tell the security guards at the entrance that you are going to the hotel for dinner.





