

England Species Reintroductions Taskforce: Farmer and land manager stakeholder meeting

Date and time: 30th October 2023, 11:00-13:00

Location: 12 Bloomsbury Square,

Attendees: Andy Clements (Taskforce Chair), Jimmy Woodrow (Pasture for Life), Ian Danby (British Association for Shooting and Conservation), Richard Allan (Livestock farmer), Henrietta Appleton (Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust), Tim Weston (National Gamekeepers Organisation), Martin Lines (Nature Friendly Farming Network, Taskforce member), Jake Fiennes (Holkham Estate, Taskforce member), Sarah Lee (Countryside Alliance), Phil Stocker (National Sheep Association), Christopher Price (Rare Breeds Survival Trust), Poppy Sherborne (National Farmers Union), Thomas Binns (Farmer, National Farmers Union Uplands Forum), Judicaelle Hammond (Country Land Owners and Business Association), Simon Lee (Natural England).

Note of the meeting

1. Welcome and introductions

Andy Clements welcomed everyone to the meeting, followed by individual introductions including summaries of respective professional backgrounds and experience with conservation translocations.

2. Background to the Taskforce

Andy Clements, Martin Lines, Jake Fiennes and Simon Lee provided a brief account of the formation and backdrop to the Taskforce covering governance, funding, membership, vision, purposes and current activity. Andy Clements also set out the key roles of promoting and publicising best practice and the value of public communications and stakeholder engagement with the Taskforce, highlighting the aims and objectives of this meeting: to present the work of the Taskforce; and, to listen to views, concerns and experiences of the stakeholders.

Key topics raised and discussed at this stage:

- Presumption that conservation translocations are a positive means for nature recovery.
- England licensing regime of conservation translocations.
- Interaction/relationship with the Dangerous Wild Animals Act.
- Definitions of native status and confusion over differing terminology, noting that the remit of the Taskforce relates to all types of conservations translocations.
- Tools of management of contentious species/projects.
- Value of long-term monitoring and need for exit strategies, which may require ongoing management interventions.
- Call for broader base of evidence that includes practioner knowledge and experience.

- Best ways for stakeholders to engage with the Taskforce.

4. Roundtable discussion

Attendees contributed to a wide-ranging and stimulating discussion, debating contemporary topics and issues around conservation translocations, public communications and ways of sustaining an ongoing interaction with the Taskforce.

Key subjects raised and discussed:

- Taskforce links to similar fora in Scotland and Wales.
- Refocus public messaging to include broader range of species and programmes.
- Need to properly incentivise landowners to achieve nature recovery.
- Connections and opportunities with other national and regional funding streams.
- Sharing the work plan and other outputs of the Taskforce.
- Importance of stressing role of conservation translocations in population reinforcement alongside habitat management and enhancement in public messaging.
- Proposed model for future engagement with this stakeholder group is to test/debate a series of topics such as legislative blockers and policy development.
- Basis of Taskforce outputs being both scientific research and practical guidance.
- Taskforce to learn from the good work of the Beaver Forum.
- Need for Taskforce to call out bad practice in conservation translocations.
- Role of the Taskforce in advising the sector on addressing non-compliant and illegal translocations.
- Legal restrictions around population management.
- Public communications around population management and potential role of Taskforce
- Update or addition to IUCN/England codes with practical guidance on initiating a translocation project, focussing on community and stakeholder engagement.
- Appropriate conduits for feeding future issues and topics to the Taskforce.
- Value of broadening statutory license conditions beyond best practice.
- Consistency in following IUCN/England codes, including public bodies.

5. Summary and round up

Andy Clements thanked attendees for their open, candid and valuable contributions, noting the following as agreed actions from the meeting:

- Natural England to send round a note of the meeting (with an agreed version posted on the Taskforce webpage), including links to the Taskforce [blog](#) and [GOV.UK Website](#)
- Natural England to share a summary work plan of the Taskforce in the New Year.
- The Taskforce will conduct a detailed review of the definitions of native status as a key piece of work in future.
- Legal restrictions around population management to be included in the Taskforce review of barriers and enablers to conservation translocations.
- Andy Clements and all agreed that these themed discussions should continue on a regular basis, perhaps including the suggested model of testing hot topics/issues with this group.

