

England Species Reintroductions Taskforce

Date and time: 26 September 2024, 10:00-14:00

Venue: Quay Arts, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5BD

Attendees: Andy Clements (Chair), Sarah Dalrymple, Mike Fay, Rachel Gardner, Geoff Hilton, Martin Lines, Ben McCarthy, Delphine Pouget, Mike Shurmer, Jeremy Sabel (Secretariat), Issy Pashley (Secretariat)

Online: Jenny MacPherson, Andrew Stringer, Karim Vahed, John Ewen, Mina Patel, Julia Touza, Will Stinson

Guests: Filippo Marino (University of Leeds), David Appleton (Natural England), Stephen Egerton-Read (Forestry England), Imogen Lloyd (Forestry England) and Tim Mackrill (Roy Dennis Wildlife Foundation)

Apologies: Jake Fiennes, Martin Gaywood (NatureScot)

Minutes

1. Welcome from the Chair

Andy Clements welcomed attendees to the meeting.

2. Minutes and actions from last meeting

Andy Clements asked members to confirm their acceptance of the previous minutes, noting that the agreed actions formed substantive items for this meeting's agenda.

3. Sub-group updates

Andy Clements invited members to give updates on the following activities:

3.1 *Barriers and enablers*

Filippo Marino gave a presentation of the results of his 6-month post-doctoral study. Some of the recommendations include:

- Transforming the translocation system in England
- An online translocation hub and database
- A translocation network for practitioners: better collaboration, data sharing and coproduction
- Achieving interdisciplinary integrated approach throughout the project cycle
- Embracing new technologies especially for genetics and movement analysis
- Securing better funding through collaboration
- More proactive role of government and public bodies

Filippo is also nearing completion of the barriers and enablers policy brief he has been commissioned to write.

3.2 *Predator guild assessment*

Julia Touza presented the results of this study including:

- Significant gaps in the evidence base regarding the benefits and challenges of reintroduction of these predators.
- The need for more evidence, the need for what evidence there is to be used more and made more accessible.
- Stakeholders' prioritisation of reintroduction criteria showed little variation across predator species, with "Native Species and Ecosystem Services" consistently weighted more, followed by "Livestock Impact," "Social Acceptance," and "Cultural Value."

- Identification of four clusters of differing preferences/priorities among the stakeholders: "Conservation orientation", "Cultural conservation", "Agriculture and ecological balance" and "Social management".
- The broad representation of stakeholder groups across these clusters, there is potential for collaboration across different stakeholder groups around shared interests to build consensus around reintroductions.

3.3 Online hub and database

Sarah Dalrymple presented the results of the online survey to inform the development of the online hub and database. There is a clear demand for more guidance and information transfer.

3.4 Assisted colonisation framework assessment

Sarah Dalrymple described the work that the Taskforce has commissioned from Liverpool John Moore's University:

- Review of current framework and develop a revised framework
- Produce analytical workflow (R-script)
- Test using case studies

3.5 Practitioners and regulators workshop

Delphine Pouget updated the Taskforce on this workshop which we hope will be delivered in March 2025.

3.6 Development of a decision support framework for conservation translocations

John Ewen has produced a scoping document for this piece of work which could introduce decision science to a wider audience including the use of case studies and showcasing the use of monitoring to inform decision making.

Actions

- Share the barriers and enablers report with all Taskforce members and take these recommendations forward (JS/AC/DP)
- Share the barriers and enablers policy brief with all Taskforce members for comment (JS/DP)
- Share predator guild report with all Taskforce members and think about next steps (JT/JS/DP)
- Share online hub and database presentation with all Taskforce members for comment (SD/JS/DP)
- Explore locations for online hosting of hub and database especially Applied Ecology Resources (SD/DP/WS)
- Comment on the decision support framework (all)

4. Communications update

Issy Pashley updated the Taskforce on the launch of the LinkedIn site in July 2024 and the communications plan going forward with blogs and conference attendance.

Andy Clements led a discussion on report publication with various reports now nearing completion.

Actions

- Investigate OEP college of experts/IUCN CTSG as potential candidates for peer reviewers (JS/DP)
- Investigate locations for online publication including Applied Ecology Resources (JS/DP/WS)

5. Proposing, commissioning, procurement & QA

Andy Clements led a brief discussion on this topic which introduces new clauses to the terms and conditions for the Taskforce to increase transparency.

Action

- Comment with a view to finalising and updating terms and conditions (all)

6. Stakeholder engagement plans 2025

Andy Clements led a discussion on stakeholder engagement plans for next year.

Explore the following actions

- a conservation translocations conference with Ministers (WS/DP)
- a Parliamentary reception (WS/AC/ML)
- a British wildlife mini-series (IP/JS/DP)
- a green finance/conservation translocations workshop (JS/DP)
- contributing to other conferences (all)
- articles in Farmer's weekly (JS/DP/ML)

7. Member updates

Andy Clements led a round table session on topical organisational news and wider issues related to conservation translocations. These included:

- Two pine marten translocation projects currently in progress, one in Devon, one in Cumbria
- Buglife have been involved in narrow headed ant translocations in Devon this summer
- Strandline beetle – MoA with NE. Considering translocations from South Wales in future.
- Research on ex-situ conservation spending by zoos worldwide – ZSL is a case study.
- Julia is one of the lead authors for the IPBES monitoring assessment report for biodiversity indicators
- Forestry England/University of York have finalised a report on wood ant translocation (x 2 species) – pilots in Wild Ennerdale, Cumbria next year.
- Forestry England are working in Yorkshire to understand pine marten populations there – working with YWT, focussing on outreach with farmers, game keepers and the public
- Forestry England are assessing fungal communities in the nations forests using eDNA. Fungal communities are deficient and conservation translocations could restore them.
- Good article on Field Cricket translocation in British Wildlife in August edition.
- Water vole translocations planned at RSPB Haweswater.
- Two papers coming out about wading birds/headstarting 1. black-tailed godwits – success or not? 2. When and why should you translocate wading birds.
- Sarah Dalrymple - working with Plantlife on guidelines for translocation and on developing a database
- Two papers in review 1. centre for plant conservation database (US). 2. conserve plants database covering Europe.
- National Trust looking at Meadow Ants in Surrey, also Crayfish, Beavers etc..

- National Trust are about to agree their 10-year strategy which will include translocations.
- International conservation congress with discussion on organisms with strong symbiotic associations but with different reactions to climate change.
- It's soon to become a legal requirement for all zoo's to be involved in native species conservation projects when the new Secretary of State's Standards of Modern Zoo Practice is published.
- Natural England are working on a survey for zoos to understand the ambition and scope of captive breeding of native species in England.
- Natural England are working more closely with NatureScot, NRW and DAERA with regards to conservation translocations and are looking to formalise that relationship.
- The [Scottish Animal Welfare Commission](#), established by the Scottish Government, is currently working on a review of welfare considerations associated with conservation translocation.
- [Gaywood, M.J. 2024. Conservation translocations in a changing climate. Churchill Fellowship report, London.](#) This has now been published – Martin Gaywood provided a presentation on his preliminary findings at the ESRT meeting in York, February 2024.

Date of next meeting – 28 November 2024, location Whipsnade Zoo