

England Species Reintroductions Taskforce

Date and time: Thursday 12 June 2025, 09:00-13:00

Venue: David Attenborough Building, Pembroke St, Cambridge, CB2 3QZ

Attendees: Andy Clements (Chair), Sarah Dalrymple, Mike Fay, Jake Fiennes, Rachel Gardner, George Holmes, Delphine Pouget, Martin Lines, Julia Touza, Mike Shurmer, Will Stinson, Jeremy Sabel (Secretariat), Mina Patel (Secretariat)

Online: Karim Vahed, John Ewen, Ben McCarthy, Jenny MacPherson

Apologies: Geoff Hilton, Andrew Stringer, Anita Hashmi (Natural England, Secretariat)

Guests: In person: James Phillips (Natural England), Joe Hamm (University of Leeds); Online: Martin Gaywood, Catherine Whatley & Kat O'Brien (NatureScot), Philippa Richards (Natural England)

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

George Holmes informed the Taskforce that the barriers and enablers report has been peer reviewed and is being updated as a result. The report and policy brief will be published soon as well as a journal article in due course.

3.2 Predator guild assessment

Julia Touza informed the Taskforce that the predator guild assessment has been peer reviewed and is being updated as a result. The report will be published soon as well as a journal article in due course. Reviewers made the following three observations about how this study could be taken forward: (a) landowner/land manager responses were lacking and need to engage more with this sector; (b) the report did not express a view on any of the species (this wasn't part of the brief) but the literature review of c.300 studies did not result in clear evidence of impact beyond what people think the impacts are; (c) more insights into the thoughts of participants – more qualitative data needed?

3.3 Database

Sarah Dalrymple presented progress including the completion of the prototype database. The Steering group and all Taskforce members have been invited to view and comment on the prototype database and the Phase 2 development specification. NatureScot are willing to contribute financially to this workstream.

3.4 Conservation introductions framework

Sarah Dalrymple presented progress on developing the framework including the report on Phase 1 of this work. The Steering group and all Taskforce members have been invited to comment on the Phase 1 report and the Phase 2 development specification. NatureScot are willing to contribute financially to this workstream.

3.5 Stakeholder's workshop

Delphine Pouget reported on the first meeting held on 27.02.25 at ZSL London Zoo. The meeting was deemed a success with great facilitation and agreement to meet again/for a network and

work collaboratively on breaking down barriers and enabling more and better conservation translocations.

3.6 Online hub & publishing reports

The Taskforce will work on the content of the online hub to host the database as well as signpost guidance, training and other useful information. The Taskforce will subscribe to Applied Ecology Resources (AER) to publish their reports.

Actions

- Finalise barriers and enablers report, policy brief and seek publication of a peer reviewed paper (GH, Filippo Marino, DP, AC and JS)
- Finalise the predator guild report, seek publication of a peer reviewed paper, create a one page summary for a wider audience/blog (JT, AS, RG) and create a comms plan for farming/land-use to develop with Martin Lines
- Taskforce to decide if and how we take forward the predator guild work (AC/DP/JS)
- Comment, by the end of June, on the draft specification for Phase 2 of database development including requirements for user-testing and engagement (All)
- Comment, by the end of June, on the conservation introductions framework and Phase 2 specification (All)
- Sign a Memorandum of Agreement with NatureScot for collaboration and joint funding of database and conservation introductions workstreams (JS, DP)
- Set up a steering group for the stakeholder's network (DP, Anita Hashmi)
- Support a workshop on key performance indicators/measures of success to be held by Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology/University of Kent on 22nd October (DP, Anita Hashmi)
- Comment on any gaps in stakeholder engagement (All)
- Publish priorities and workplan on .gov.uk (DP/JS)
- Subscribe to AER to enable the Taskforce to publish reports (JS)

4. Human-carnivore conflict and coexistence

Jo Hamm presented the results of his PhD on 'Paying for the presence of predators: conservation performance payments in theory and practice' at the University of Leeds.

5. How do Conservation Translocations contribute to biodiversity targets?

The Taskforce heard presentations on this theme from Karim Vahed, Geoff Hilton, Mike Shurmer, Ben McCarthy, Rachel Gardner and James Phillips. The Taskforce had a discussion on this theme and agreed that this area of work should be a priority for the coming year. Themes could include: (i) whether to produce a priority list; and (ii) how to measure conservation translocation contributions to species recovery; and (iii) conservation translocations driving nature recovery through flagship species/story telling; and (iv) conservation translocation contributions to ecosystem function.

Action:

- Taskforce to commission a piece of work that researches this question and these themes (All)

5. Priorities and budgets

Delphine Pouget presented a summary of the Taskforce budget for this year alongside the results of the prioritisation exercise that the Taskforce carried out using the recommendations of the barriers and enablers work. The priorities included the workstreams listed in sections 3, 5 and 6 as well as working on (i) structured decision-making tools (ii) public information campaign and (iii) rapid review of existing UK and international CT guidelines. The Taskforce will take forward these priorities over the next year.

Action:

- Feedback on budgets and priorities by the end of June (All)
- Write and share articles and blogs and seek opportunities for talks at external events (All)

6. Taskforce futures

Members agreed that Will Stinson (Defra) should become a full member of the Taskforce. All current members have agreed to a second term on the Taskforce. Andy Clements stated that the terms of reference will be updated to make sure that membership of the Taskforce is refreshed regularly going forward.

Action:

- Update terms of reference (AC, DP, JS)
- Add Will Stinson as member of Taskforce (JS)
- Work on messaging to Government to raise the profile of conservation translocations, their importance in meeting biodiversity targets and the role of the Taskforce (AC, WS, DP)

Dates and location for next meeting: Thursday 25th September, Wild Ennerdale – Cumbria