

England Species Reintroductions Taskforce

Date and time: Thursday 4th June 2026, 09:00-10:30

Venue: Royal Botanical Gardens Edinburgh, EH3 5NZ

Attendees: Andy Clements (AC) (Chair), Sarah Dalrymple (SD), Geoff Hilton (GH), Julia Touza-Montero (JTM), Martin Lines (ML), Mike Shurmer (MS), Andrew Stringer (AS), Jenny MacPherson (JM), Jeremy Sabel (JS) (Secretariat), Zoe Allin (ZA) (Secretariat).

Online: Jake Fiennes (JF), Mike Fay (MF).

Guests: Gabriel Rowland (PhD, University of Leeds), Martin Gaywood (NatureScot & University of the Highlands and Islands), Katie Tourigny-Bridger (Defra), Kat O'Brien (NatureScot).

Apologies: Delphine Pouget, John Ewen, Rachel Gardner, Will Stinson, George Holmes, Ben McCarthy, Karim Vahed, Isabelle Pashley (Secretariat).

Minutes

1. Welcome from the Chair

AC welcomed attendees to the meeting.

2. Minutes and actions from last meeting

AC asked members to confirm their acceptance of the previous minutes.

3. Activity updates

AC invited members to give updates on the following activities:

3.1 Decision-making tools

As commissioned by the Taskforce, the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) and International Union for the Conservation of Nature Conservation Translocation Specialist Group (IUCN-CTSG) have collaboratively produced a suite of interactive and accessible educational resources. Four modules are completed and more are proposed. The Taskforce has been invited to comment to finalise these products and outputs are planned to be published on the IUCN-CTSG website.

Action

- Taskforce to submit comments by the end of the month (June 2026) to John Ewen (ZSL) who will finalise the outputs.

3.2 Systematic map of CT guidance (SD)

The Natural England Evidence Synthesis team has collated over 200 articles from across the world and are now in the process of data extraction and categorisation. The next phase will involve more detailed analysis and produce a short, summary report for publication. The Taskforce then discussed a potential second phase of work which would look to help practitioners navigate the range of available advice and support the understanding and application of different guidance documents.

3.3 Lost species

GH reported that a key theme across conversations from the Lost Birds workshop, that was held in London in February 2026, was the concept of nativeness. Rather than

conducting a review of nativeness or similar synonyms, the Taskforce discussed its approach on how to agree on, and how to interpret the available evidence supporting a species' nativeness.

Action

- AC and Secretariat to scope an ESRT workshop to answer questions around nativeness such as “this is the evidence and this is what it tells us in this space”

3.4 4th International Conservation Translocation Conference

Martin Gaywood reminded the Taskforce about the upcoming conference to be held in Edinburgh on 7-9 September 2026. AC has had a poster submission accepted which broadly presents the views of the Taskforce with respect to a variety of issues, and will be approaching members for support on this.

4. Membership review

AC thanked those that contributed to Membership Review document. Based on those comments, the following was proposed. Firstly, there will be an open advertisement for two new members in February 2027 and two more in September 2028. There will be a call for volunteers from the existing Taskforce to stand down by September 2028. Secondly, representatives from conservation organisations will consider whether they wish to change representative. Thirdly, guidance for applicants will be produced. Recruitment will aim to increase diversity of membership, seek active members and fill the Taskforce's gaps in skills and knowledge. Suggestions were made to bring in external bodies with expertise in early career mentoring to promote leadership in conservation (via the IUCN NCUK), and inclusivity and diversity specialists at the British Ecological Society.

Action

- AC to develop draft guidance for applicants and circulate for comment.

5. Guest presentation – illicit/unregulated Introductions PhD

Gabriel Rowland (University of Leeds) presented the work on his PhD so far on 'Ecological & Conservation Implications of Illicit & Unregulated Species Translocations' supervised by current Taskforce member, George Holmes. The Taskforce were then asked for input on the proposed scope and methods to produce useful research outputs. JTM suggested the addition of economic impacts along with the biological, sociopolitical and ecological impacts. Martin Gaywood proposed including the sociopolitical implications on future conservation translocations and several Taskforce members offered support with data collation/contacts.

6. Budget

JS announced the indicative budget for 2026/27, which is not yet settled.

Action

- AC recommended the Taskforce agree priorities for spend via email.

7. Date of next meeting

Thursday 24 September, location to be decided.

Additional notes:

The Taskforce discussed the following key workstreams in a meeting held jointly with the Scottish National Species Reintroductions Forum held between 11:00-15:00 on 4 June at the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh:

- Conservation Introductions Framework – **Action:** SD to finalise and handover reviewed versions of the Framework and accompanying Guidance in September 2026.
- UK Conservation Translocations Database – **Action:** SD to check final version of database before soft launch and recruitment of organisations/individuals to populate it.
- UK Conservation Translocations Information Hub (Aline Finger, Martin Gaywood) – **Action:** AC and Secretariat to discuss taking this work forward.
- The contribution of conservation translocations to statutory biodiversity targets. AC presented the recommendations of this work – **Action:** Taskforce to decide how to take forward the recommendations.