



AWMS POSITION STATEMENT

Translocation for Conservation

Background

This position statement seeks to promote a structured and considered approach to the movement and release of living organisms for conservation objectives. It acknowledges the Commonwealth's Policy Statement *Translocation of Listed Threatened Species—Assessment under Chapter 4 of the EPBC Act* and the 2013 *IUCN Guidelines for Reintroductions and Other Conservation Translocations*. However, in developing this statement, AWMS has recognised the need to make a series of modifications to accommodate the principles of adaptive management.

First, AWMS recognises that the principle action for conserving native species and communities is in situ through the conservation and enhancement of native habitat and effective management of threatening processes. Conservation translocation should be seen as supporting this action where appropriate. Conservation translocation is the intentional movement and release of a living organism where the primary objective is a conservation benefit: this will usually comprise improving the conservation status of the focal species locally or globally, and/or restoring natural ecosystem functions or processes. Conservation translocations consist of (i) 'reinforcement' and 'reintroduction' within a species' indigenous range, and (ii) conservation introductions, comprising 'assisted colonisation' and 'ecological replacement', outside indigenous range.

'Reinforcement' is the intentional movement and release of an organism into an existing population of conspecifics. Reinforcement aims to enhance population viability, for instance by increasing population size, by increasing genetic diversity, or by increasing the representation of specific demographic groups or stages.

'Reintroduction' is the intentional movement and release of an organism inside its indigenous range from which it has disappeared. Reintroduction aims to re-establish a viable population of the focal species within its indigenous range.

'Assisted colonisation' is the intentional movement and release of an organism outside its indigenous range to avoid extinction of populations of the focal species. This is carried out primarily where protection from current or likely future threats in current range is deemed less feasible than at alternative sites. The term includes a wide spectrum of operations, from those involving the movement of organisms into areas that are both far from current range and separated by non-habitat areas, to those involving small range extensions into contiguous areas.

'Ecological replacement' is the intentional movement and release of an organism outside its indigenous range to perform a specific ecological function. This is used to re-establish an ecological function lost through extinction, and will often involve the most suitable existing sub-species, or a close relative of the extinct species within the same genus.

It is recognised that translocation is a valuable conservation tool, both in terms of restoration of plant and animal communities and assessing the extent of ecosystem dysfunction. For example, successful translocation programs include those for the Woylie (*Bettongia penicillata*) and the Chatham Island Black Robin (*Petroica traversi*). Nevertheless, there are potential risks with translocation conservation strategies. For example, disease transmission and impact on other endemic populations may result.

Based on the above THE AUSTRALASIAN WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT SOCIETY acknowledges that:

1. Before any translocation activity occurs, the need for the program should be assessed, the objectives of the proposed program clearly identified, the desired outcomes stated with clear assessment criteria, and monitoring techniques specified (this may include the need for a pilot program and long-term monitoring). The program should be supported by locals and other stakeholders, and funding and other resources must be identified for the duration of the planned program.
2. The long-term aim should be to seek self-sustaining populations under natural conditions with minimal human intervention.
3. There should be an expected net conservation gain to the translocated species and other native species should not become threatened by the process.
4. A species should not be translocated into an area until the current threats have been controlled to an expected appropriate or acceptable level, unless the program is part of a project designed to identify or assess those threats.
5. Taxa involved in a reintroduction program must be as close as possible to those occurring in the area previously, and should preferably be the same taxa.
6. Introduction of non-endemic species should be condoned only if clear benefits to natural communities can be foreseen, and it can be predicted reliably that there are no disadvantages. For example, translocation of threatened species to offshore islands.
7. Full documentation of the entire program should occur to allow transmission of information about both successful and unsuccessful translocation.
8. An introduction program should be monitored and countermeasures be in place to restrict, control or eradicate the translocated species if it becomes a threat to other native species.
9. As far as possible translocated individuals should not contain diseases or parasites which could jeopardise other native species.
10. Natural resource management agencies develop policies and procedures for translocation.

This position statement reflects the content of cited papers and the opinions of the authors. While the views expressed in this position statement have been circulated for comment within the Society, they do not necessarily reflect the views of the AWMS committee or all AWMS members. AWMS makes no claim as to the accuracy of this document and any party using this information does so at their own risk.