



## **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 Endangered Species Advisory Committee's draft Policy for Translocations of Vertebrate Animals in Australia and the 1987 IUCN statement on translocation of living organisms. However, in developing this statement, AWMS has recognised the need to make a series of modifications to accommodate the principles of adaptive management.

Translocation is defined here as the movement of an organism from one place with free release in another and refers collectively to: (1) introduction, (2) re-introduction and (3) re-stocking.

1. Introduction refers to non-endemic species and their movement into an area where they did not formerly exist. Such introductions are made for a variety of reasons: hunting, fishing, economic development, and as biological control agents. In the past introduction of many exotic species has been disastrous and it is important to recognise that translocation of endemic species may also lead to similar undesirable outcomes. Therefore caution should be exhibited when translocating endemic as well as exotic species.
2. Re-introduction refers to the release of a species of plant or animal into an area where it was indigenous before it was exterminated by a natural event or by humans. The latter could result from human persecution, over-harvesting or from habitat modification, or deliberate or accidental introduction of pests.
3. Re-stocking refers to the release of a plant or animal species into an area where it is already present in order to increase its population size.

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.

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### **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 a 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 appropriate or acceptable level, unless the program is part of a project designed to identify these threats.
5. Taxa involved in a re-introduction 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.*