Workshop: Facilitating Human-Wildlife Interactions in Conservation Translocations

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Workshop Goals

In this workshop we will discuss findings from the HWIWG that illustrate how the human dimension influences each stage of the conservation translocation project life cycle.

We will introduce the framework **Guidelines to facilitate Human-Wildlife Interactions in Conservation Translocations.**

We would like to hear participants' experiences of how the human dimension affects conservation translocations and to promote useful and multidimensional insights.

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Overview of workshop

Presentation of key Human-wildlife interaction elements of each stage of a CT:

1. Planning stage: before initiating contact with community and various interest groups
2. Initiation stage: initiating contact with community and other interested parties
3. Implementation stage
4. Ending stage and exiting the project
5. Post-exit stage

Q&A and Discussion: key issues, barriers and opportunities

The Human-Wildlife Interactions Working Group (HWIWG)

- 2018
- IUCN/SSC Conservation Translocation Specialist Group (CTSG)

Aims:
- To promote discussion of key issues of HWI in CT; to aid practitioners in finding solutions based on the experience of practitioners and expert advice; to help develop networks and collaborations; to provide advice to projects in all stages of development
- To support and inform the IUCN Conservation Translocation Guidelines
- To share related resources with the wider conservation translocation community

Justification

- Conservation Translocations are management interventions to restore depleted species

- The CBD (Article 9(c) 1992) "Adopt measures for the recovery and rehabilitation of threatened species and for their reintroduction into their natural habitats under appropriate conditions."

- The IUCN guidelines (2013): to establish a viable, free-ranging population in the wild it is necessary to enlist public support

- Human dimensions/ conservation professionals.

- Affect the success of the reintroduction/translocation project.

- Investments in human-dimension aspects improve community involvement, peers' acceptance and the support from various interest groups.

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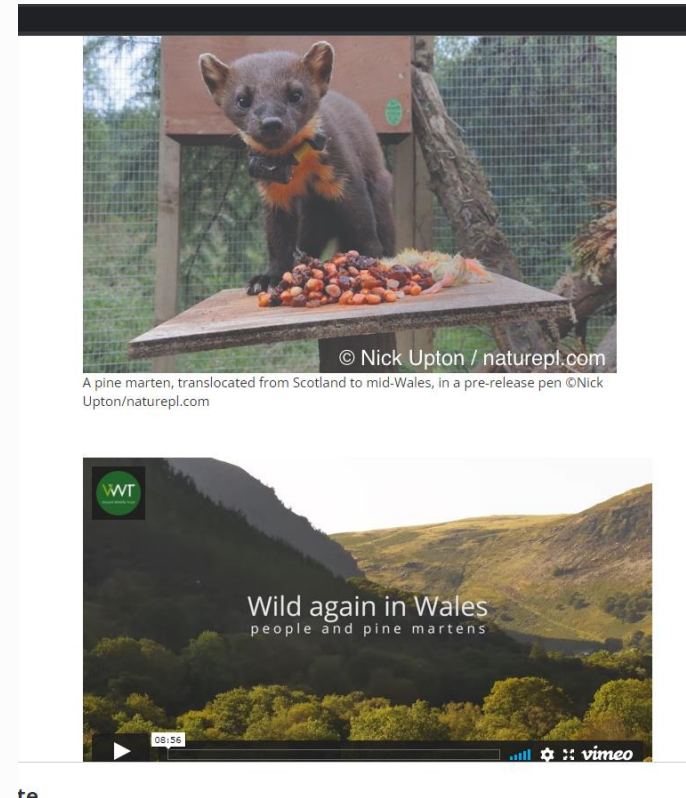
Human-Wildlife Interactions

- Human-wildlife interactions can be both positive and negative

- They are dynamic and can be influenced by context and by previous experience, trends in society and individual processes (socio-demographic variables)

- HWI studies require the integration of several disciplines and knowledge systems

- Material dimensions (based on ecosystem services and income generation)

- Non-material dimensions (based on cultural, psychological, and spiritual factors)

- People-people conflicts

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1. Planning stage of the project- Pre project contact with communities and interested parties

Deciding how involved local people should be in the project planning stage to foster support for the reintroduction

Recommendation: Developing communication channels and mechanisms with local communities from an early stage, which include a forum where local people can voice their concerns about project plans.

Recommendation: Put mechanisms in place to address residents' concerns about HWI effectively, consistently and transparently; ensuring communities and others are aware of these processes.

A pine marten, translocated from Scotland to mid-Wales, in a pre-release pen ©Nick Upton/naturepl.com

Wild again in Wales
people and pine martens

1. Planning stage

•Ethical obligations to people living around the reintroduction area

•**Recommendation:** Practitioners planning to work with local communities need an ethics protocol and/or ethics approval from their institutions, and this should be factored in from the early stages of the project

•**Recommendation:** Research and confront the effects of colonial history and its continuing influence on the people and places involved in the translocation

"We only read about buffalo in a book. We only saw buffalo at a zoo, or in a wildlife preserve that was non-Indian" BearCub Stiffarm, Fort Peck, 2020. (https://text.npr.org/904893046)

1. Planning stage

- Understand and consider the values of different interest groups

- **Recommendation**: Talk to local people to understand their concerns about coexisting with the focus species.

- **Recommendation**: Clearly assess the positive and negative consequences of local cultural attitudes towards reintroduced species; recognise the cultural foundations for local community attitudes and understand the basis for resistance to species restoration.

PEOPLE NATURE | BRITISH ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Conflicts over wildlife conservation: Learning from the reintroduction of beavers in Scotland

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Abstract
1. Species reintroductions have become a common conservation tool, but they can be controversial and may generate social conflicts.
2. We examine the social dimension of beaver reintroduction in Scotland to understand the issue, the potential for, and impact of, conflict between groups or individuals with differing views on beavers and reintroductions.
3. Using a literature review and semi-structured interviews, we studied planned and unplanned beaver reintroductions to three contrasting landscapes in Scotland: in Knapdale, the reintroduction was planned and science-led, whereas in Tayside and the Highlands, the reintroductions were accidental and/or illegal.
4. Our results highlight the context dependency and complexity of reintroductions. Nationally, the reintroduction of beavers has not become a conflict. At the local

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1. Planning stage

• Build trustful relationships between interest groups. Trust is hard to build, easy to lose and almost impossible to rebuild.

• **Recommendation**: Ensure the involvement of indigenous and local knowledge holders in all project stages of the project.

• **Recommendation**: Foster self-reflection about our role as conservationists AND social actors.

• **Recommendation**: Combine qualitative and quantitative data to provide a richer, more nuanced understanding of people's world views.

• **Recommendation**: Considering the local cultural context and particularities of the relationship between people and the focus species when attempting to transpose methodologies. One solution does not fit all.

1. Planning stage

- **Costs and Benefits for local community and project**

Recommendation: Developing measures of wellbeing together with the local community allows for meaningful and relevant assessment of the costs and benefits of the project.

Recommendation: Assessing both positive and negative economic impacts on the local communities; teasing out solutions that are both politically and culturally acceptable, while optimising gains that are most beneficial to the local economy.
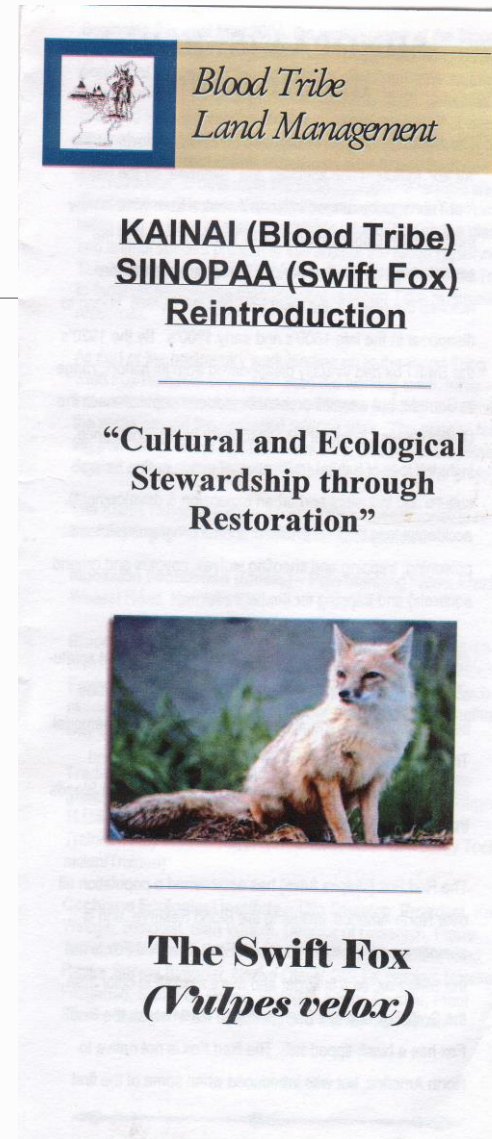
1. Planning stage

- **Understand and consider political and jurisdictional Issues**

Recommendation: Ensure that the planning stage includes representatives of all groups who may be affected by the planned translocation.

Assume additional financial resources will be needed with some species

Recommendation: Considering the foreseeable needs of animals with large home ranges and species such as primates, and carnivores.

Blood Tribe
Land Management

**KAINAI (Blood Tribe)
SIINOPAA (Swift Fox)
Reintroduction**

**"Cultural and Ecological
Stewardship through
Restoration"**

**The Swift Fox
(Vulpes velox)**

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2.Initiation Stage: beginning contact with community and other interested parties

- **Building trusted relationships through inclusion**
  - **Working together with local and Indigenous communities**

    Recommendation: Identifying interest groups and their values and expectations towards the reintroduction project.

  - **Listening and giving people a voice**

    Recommendations: Listening and learning before introducing information; finding out what people already know before introducing the project to them; then identifying the gaps in knowledge and the areas that must be targeted for change through communication and education

  - **Cross-disciplinary research collaboration to support this process**

    Recommendation: social scientists/behaviour researchers to listen and document people's views; assuring that the concerns and viewpoints of interest groups are respected and incorporated into decision-making; but making clear that research may not dictate policy

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2.Initiation Stage: beginning contact with community and other interested parties

Hawaiian monk seal

- **Building trusted relationships through inclusion**

  - **Building strong relationships to mitigate any potential conflicts**

  Recommendations: Focusing on coexistence and on bringing people together to find solutions, rather than focusing on conflict; focusing on common ground; listening to solutions proposed by various interest groups; valuing local solutions as they can be better for the context than solutions devised from the outside.

  Recommendations: Trying to understand the motivations behind negative attitudes and/or illegal activities → finding solutions; not relying on knowledge gathered from previous experiences but collecting context specific data.

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Sprague, R.S., Draheim, M.M. 2015. Hawaiian monk seals: labels, names and stories in conflict. In draheim, M.M. Madden, F., Mccarthy, J-B., Parsons, E.C.M. Human-wildlife conflict: complexity in the marine environment pp. 115-136

2.Initiation Stage

- **Education and awareness: building support**

Recommendation: Building a relationship with local leaders; developing an understanding of how attitudes towards individual animals and the focus species may support the project goals; investigating associations between attitudes towards the focus species and people's affiliations, and to their proximity to release sites.

- **Role of accredited zoos and aquariums**

Recommendation: Developing partnerships with local zoos, aquarium and botanical parks to promote positive attitudes towards the focus species, and support towards the project.

- **Identifying and changing behaviours**

Recommendations: Developing cooperation between bio scientists, social or behaviour scientists and management to promote people's behaviours (local practices and beliefs etc) that favour reintroduced species, and to target behaviours that could increase negative HWI.

Maintaining clarity and transparency about costs and benefits of project

Recommendation: Developing information based on quality assessments of the ecological, social and personal costs and benefits associated with the reintroduction and ensure it is available early on in the planning phase.

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Case study: addressing issues related to feral and domestic dogs, and dog owners

- How do local people manage their dogs?
  - Which areas need to be addressed (knowledge, attitudes, norms, etc…)
  - What is the best ways to address them (education, compensation, regulation…)

- What is the role of dogs in the community?
  - Listening to local leaders, interest groups and people in general

- How do dog owners relate to wildlife and to the project?
  - A lack of engagement and care may affect people's behaviours towards the effect their dogs may have on wildlife.

- Project may need to take the initiative on action, by providing services such as:
  - inoculation or neutering of free roaming dogs,
  - dog collars, microchipping,
  - control/relocation/pounding of dogs found within protected areas,
  - free or subsidized breeding/providing/training of livestock guardian dogs/territory guarding dogs, who have been vaccinated and spayed/neutered, to local people (e.g. wolves in Europe and USA);
  - trading dogs for another species that may benefit local people but do not affect reintroduced animals; alternative guard animals, e.g. geese.

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3. Implementation Stage

- **Trust and public perception of risk over time**

Recommendations: Developing longitudinal studies of human dimensions to be undertaken at key stages of the project to provide a picture of changes of attitudes over time, in a way that mirrors the monitoring of wildlife populations.

- **Understanding how local people perceive the focus species and the reintroduction project**

Recommendations:

Obtaining a deep nuanced understanding of local people's perceptions of the species being reintroduced, and of how these may change over time (e.g. Sariska Tiger Reserve, India)

Informing communities, even when the project is locally owned and managed, as projects can be seen as an intrusion.

PROJECTED AREA
SPEED LIMIT
30
K.M.P.H.

PROJECTED AREA
SPEED LIMIT
30
K.M.P.H.

TIGER RESERVE
SARISKA
बाघ परियोजना
सरिस्का

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3. Implementation Stage

- **Trust and public perception of risk over time**
  - **Levels of knowledge and misconceptions**

  Recommendations:

  Developing clear and consistent communication between the project and diverse local groups;

  recruiting the help of trusted members of the community to convey project information;

  consulting local people and leadership of interest groups to listen to their beliefs, concerns, as well as knowledge, as these change over time.

3. Implementation Stage

- **Actively involving the local communities**

Recommendation: Ensuring social significance, and consequently increasing local support, active participation and local ownership of the project

- **A dedicated institution/group for *restoration project-local community interface***

Recommendation: Allocating resources for the intensive and time demanding work of engagement with local communities and stakeholders

3. Implementation Stage

- **Actively involving the local communities**
  - **Considerations for cultural beliefs in management decisions**

  Recommendation: Discussing the use of invasive biological data collection methods before release to identify the most appropriate method acceptable in the socio-cultural context

  - **Community Development Initiatives**
  - **Addressing HWC**

  Recommendation: Continuing to consult the local community and its representatives to identify and address conflicts and negative attitudes and to build support; making use of varied strategies to protect and empower local people, while promoting knowledge exchange, conflict mitigation and coexistence.

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4. End Stage and exiting the project

- Plan for the long-run: conservation begins after the translocation!
- Design an Exit Strategy for ´stewards` and members of the project´s team to allow for continuity
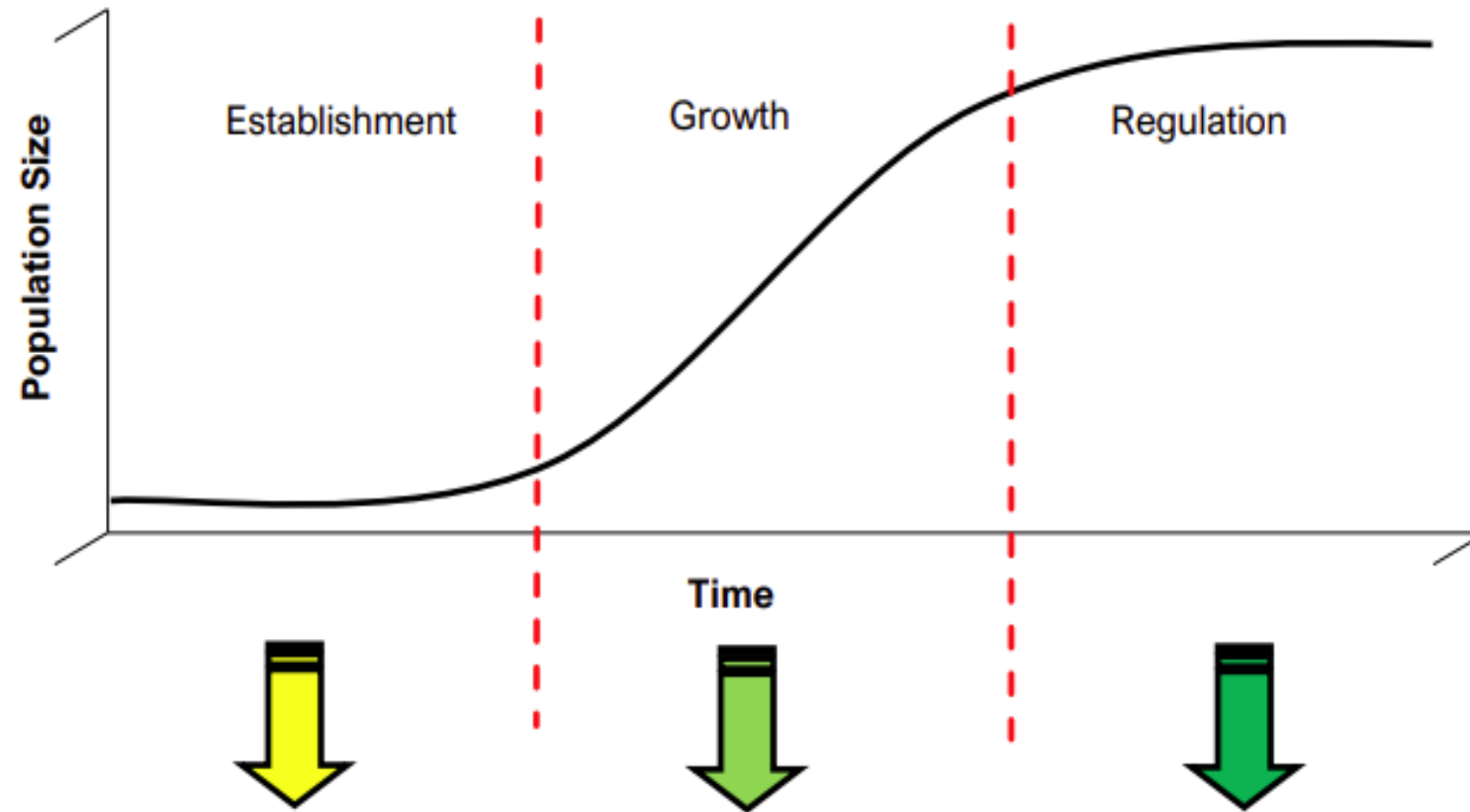
Main Recommendations:

- Building Exit Strategies into the project´s strategy in connection with its goals
- Analysing the positive contributions a funder can make and the negative impacts of its unplanned exit in relation to the goals of the project
- Discussing strategies regarding: a minimum time duration of their commitment to funding the project (including a transition period in case of unexpected changes in their circumstances); an exit strategy, with funding partners as part of the planning process. These may be part of a contract or a pledge.
- Considering other stakeholders when planning ES, as the reintroduction and its exit may affect each one differently.

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Goal: End the Project with minimal negative consequences to the translocation or to the conservation network

EXIT SCENARIOS

BENEFITS OF EXIT STRATEGY		CONSEQUENCES OF NO EXIT STRATEGY
Data shared / Stakeholders enthusiastic	**SUCCESS**	Legal problems / Resources lost / Stakeholder disenchantment / No plan for staff redeployment
Learning opportunity / Data shared / Stakeholders satisfied	**FAILURE**	Legal / financial problems / Data loss / Stakeholder disenchantment
Stewardship continuity / Capacity maintained / New opportunities / Local empowerment	**HANDOFF**	Loss of stewardship / Capacity diminished / Financial/legal problems / Data loss
Stewardship & project continuity / Stakeholder substitution / Network maintained / Local empowerment / Opportunities created	**CESSATION**	Financial/legal problems / Capacity diminished / Data loss / Potential Project failure

Consider
◦ Timing/Pace
◦ Responsibilities
◦ Reasons for Exit

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Establishment | Growth | Regulation

Population Size (y-axis), **Time** (x-axis)

Exit Strategy (main tasks)

Establishment	Growth	Regulation
Hand-off to new steward (build capacity, ease transition)	Hand-off to new steward (build capacity, ease transition)	Success (Share data and learning, end obligations)
Failure (share learning, mitigate damages)	Voluntary Cessation (mitigate damage to Network)	Voluntary Cessation (maintain network)
Cessation (mitigate damage to Network)	Success (share data and learning, maintain network)	Hand-off (to watchdog, new conservation steward)

4. End Stage and exiting the project

- **Public perceptions of exit and the hand-off strategy**

Recommendations:

- Securing long term sustainability for new career opportunities created by the project (which are transferable) and for infra-structures that are more environmentally friendly'; ´weaning´ people off the project infrastructure.

- Investing in long term strategies to prevent the return of livelihoods/practices that create impact on focus species/biodiversity (e.g. poaching); preventing the development of negative attitudes towards the project that may impact pro-environmental practices and affect the long term conservation of focus species.

4. End Stage and exiting the project

- **Community based monitoring**

Recommendations: To ensure that the restoration is stable, complete and successful monitoring efforts may be aided by the local community; monitoring must be funded to ensure stability and long-term success of the conservation translocation.

- **Enabling and enhancing traditional practices**

Recommendations: Enabling and enhancing traditional practices that are already in place may be the most effective way to promote biodiversity conservation and to benefit the focus species, in certain cases.

5.Post-exit Stage

- **Ensuring sustainability after ´Handoff´ strategies**
- **Recommendations**:
  - Considering the positive and negative consequences of a project beyond its immediate goals, in relation to how it affects the conservation of biodiversity in general.
  - Maintaining clear communication with interest groups, to avoid making unrealistic promises.
  - Capacity building for long-term maintenance or pursuit of new goals is key

Q&A and Discussion

Please share your own experiences from the field and/or research

The paper **Guidelines to facilitate Human-Wildlife Interactions in Conservation Translocations** is in review as part of the **Special issue of the Frontiers in Conservation Sciences**, Animal Section "**Human Dimensions of Animal Translocations**", for publication in 2022.

Please get in touch with adriana.consorte-mccrea@canterbury.ac.uk if you would like to be included in our mailing list

- Researchgate: https://www.researchgate.net/project/IUCN-SSC-RSG-Human-and-Wildlife-Interactions
- Website: https://iucn-ctsg-hwi.wixsite.com/workinggroup
- Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/IUCN-CTSG Human-Wildlife Interactions