

Title: **Conservation Translocations Update and Next Steps**

Date: **06 May 2020**

Purpose:	Information paper. An update on progress with work carried out since the Board paper on conservation translocations of September 2019.
How does this link with our corporate priorities of improving biodiversity or delivering nature-based solutions to climate change	Conservation translocation is a tool that is used increasingly in species conservation and wider ecosystem restoration, including as a means of adapting to climate change (e.g. through assisted colonisation). As well as providing solutions to biodiversity challenges, it generates substantial public interest and engagement
Summary:	A discussion/ paper on conservation translocations was presented to the Board for its meeting of 17 September 2019 (SNH Board/180/13). This paper provides an update on recent progress since then, in particular with the conservation translocation prioritisation exercise in collaboration with RBGE. The paper also provides an overview of engagement being developed to highlight the varied and successful conservation translocation projects that are taking place in Scotland, and the opportunities for working with the IUCN Conservation Translocation Specialist Group in this work.
Actions	The actions are underway.
Recommendations:	The Board is asked to note the ongoing work with conservation translocations
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Appendices:	None

Purpose

1. The Board discussed a paper entitled 'Conservations Translocations' at its meeting on 17 September 2019 (SNH Board/180/13). This information paper provides an update on the work that we have been progressing on conservation translocations since then.

Background

2. Conservation translocation (such as species reintroduction, reinforcement and conservation introduction) refers to the intentional movement and release of living organisms where the primary goal is a conservation benefit. A background to the topic is set out in the paper SNH Board/180/13.
3. The Board noted the work to develop a prioritised list of species which could benefit from conservation translocation work and planned activity to develop a greater awareness of translocation beyond the high profile species.

Update and progress since September 2019 Board meeting

4. **Prioritisation exercise** – A sub-group of the National Species Reintroduction Forum (NSRF) met in November to discuss options. These discussions, and others held with a range of relevant specialists, informed the production of a paper entitled "Prioritising conservation translocations to benefit Scotland's biodiversity" which was presented to the NSRF at its meeting of 15th January 2020. The NSRF approved the approach set out, and supported proposals for the prioritisation exercise
5. The exercise will involve two main elements. The first will focus on how conservation translocation can improve the conservation status of particular 'at risk' species, the second on translocation activity which can contribute to restoring wider ecosystem functions or processes. The first element will be informed, by an ongoing assessment of species at risk that SNH is leading. Both elements will involve consultation with NSRF and other partners, and the specialist input of SNH staff and partners. We anticipate seeking input from the SAC when the work is further advanced.
6. SNH will be working in close partnership with the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE). The RBGE view conservation translocation as an important, developing area of positive action that contributes to addressing the biodiversity and climate change crises. It has already worked closely with SNH in producing the Scottish Code for Conservation Translocations, and in carrying out plant reintroductions and reinforcements in Scotland. Staff from SNH and RBGE will therefore lead on the drafting of the outputs, which are planned for completion in summer 2021.
7. **IUCN Conservation Translocation Specialist Group (IUCN CTSG)** – The IUCN CTSG are just finalising their ten year plan, which sets out their ambitions in science, guidance, policy, training, action and outreach during the UN 2020-2030 Decade of Ecosystem Restoration. SNH were invited to comment on the draft document, and will be using this to guide our approach. We have participated in

follow up discussions with the IUCN CTSG on how some of the work in Scotland can be used to promote effective conservation translocation activity internationally.

8. **Communications** – A common theme raised during recent discussions, was the limited profile given to many of the novel and complex conservation translocation projects going on in Scotland. Work is underway to prepare a communication plan with the aim of highlighting less well known success stories. This also overlaps with the ambitions of the IUCN who wish to substantially increase their conservation translocation outreach programme, and so there are opportunities to increase SNH's international profile in a field of work which can deliver positive conservation and public engagement benefits.
9. **Ongoing conservation action** – Further conservation translocation action has taken place since September 2019. This includes the establishment of a partnership that will develop a strategic approach to pine marten conservation translocations in Britain (partly to ensure that requests for pine martens for projects in England/Wales do not detrimentally affect the conservation status of the Scottish population); the development of a national twinflower conservation translocation strategy;; the formal launch of the LIFE-funded Saving Wildcats project that will involve conservation breeding and translocation (SNH is a primary funder); ongoing conservation translocations of alpine blue sow-thistle; the planning of the translocation of the single threatened population of Schleicher's thread moss to avoid its complete extirpation in Britain, plus ongoing work to translocate oceanic heath bryophytes to Beinn Eighe NNR, and the reintroduction of the moss *Orthodontium gracile* to Roslin Glen. Work on all these projects will be affected by the Covid 19 situation to varying extents.

Recommendations

10. The Board is asked to note the ongoing work with conservation translocations, in particular progress with the prioritisation exercise in collaboration with RBGE and the opportunities for engagement and outreach that will be addressed through a communications plan. The Board is also invited to note the interest shown by the IUCN in the work Scotland is leading, and that opportunities are being explored for future collaboration.

Martin Gaywood

13 April 2020