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Editorial: Human dimensions of animal translocations

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Editorial on the Research Topic

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Introduction

Conservation translocations are intentional movements of wildlife for conservation purposes (IUCN 2013). They are widely used management interventions that offer solutions to wicked problems: reversal of dramatic population declines, local extinction of species, defaunation and empty forests, and wildlife restoration. As such, translocations are inherently complex and are most effective as part of a broader long-term integrated conservation effort.

Human dimension considerations include human-wildlife interactions (HWIs) customarily treated as human-wildlife conflict but we also consider positive interactions; (2) relationships among stakeholders and the conservation network that creates the social milieu that influences governance and the perception of success or failure, and local community engagement and participation; (3) perceptions, values and ethics of stakeholders and local community; (4) issues about profits and other benefit sharing (such as ecotourism or wildlife watching revenues); and (5) planning, exiting, and the decision-making framework for translocations. Human dimensions are dynamic and influenced by context and by previous experience, trends in society, and individual processes.

International biodiversity conservation conventions encourage the use of conservation translocations to restore populations of native species (see Bern Convention (1979), Article 11(2); and CBD (1992), Article 9(c)). They provide key actions to help achieve recovery goals and targets of the post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (CBD, 2021). Although the IUCN's guidelines for conservation translocations state that to establish a viable, free-ranging population in the wild it is necessary to enlist public support (IUCN/SSC 2013), considerations for human dimensions are often not well recognized or accounted for during implementation of these endeavors. Nevertheless, overlooking or treating such aspects lightly may jeopardise the success of the translocation project.

The study of human dimensions requires multidisciplinary integration of knowledge systems. Formed in 2018, the Human-Wildlife Interactions Working group of the IUCN/SSC Conservation Translocation Specialist Group (CTSOG) aims to develop networks and collaborations, to provide advice to projects in all stages of development, and to support

and inform the IUCN Conservation Translocation Guidelines. This special issue is part of our goal to promote discussion and share evidence, to aid practitioners in finding solutions to restore biodiversity.

The articles

Achieving success in conservation translocations requires developing long-term relationships with groups of interest, rooted on built understanding of context-specific interactions between people, groups and project. The practice review article by the HWIWG, *Guidelines to Facilitate Human-Wildlife Interactions in Conservation Translocations*, outlines a framework for taking into consideration human dimensions across all stages of the project life cycle: planning, initiation, implementation, ending stage, and post-exit (Consorte-McCrea et al.). The perspective article *Evolving Our Understanding and Practice in Addressing Social Conflict and Stakeholder Engagement Around Conservation Translocations* argues for the use of a Conservation Conflict Transformation approach to underpin such relationship building and recommends a “Levels of Conflict” model for the analysis of social conflict (Glikman et al.).

Direct human-wildlife interactions and conflicts were treated in four articles. The research article, *Assessment of leopard translocations in South Africa*, focusses on the role of translocations in mitigating human-carnivore conflict, and evaluates the success of 60 leopard translocation events (McManus et al.). Findings suggest translocations benefit from the use of protocols and of non-lethal alternatives to address human-carnivore conflict. *Paradox of Success-Mediated Conflicts: Analysing Attitudes of Local Communities Towards Successfully Reintroduced Tigers in India* examines the socio-economic drivers of the attitudes of local communities towards the reintroduced tigers in the Panna and Sariska Tiger Reserves (Malviya et al.). Their findings reinforce a need for community engagement, particularly of women and the elderly. In *Factors Influencing People’s Response Toward Tiger Translocation in Satkosia Tiger Reserve, Eastern India* attitudinal research investigates the concerns and issues of the local communities towards the carnivore translocation programme, as part of an adaptive management strategy (Vasudeva et al.). They recommend that the needs of villages and landscape be addressed by context-specific interventions. Finally, the issue of public perception of translocations of “problem animals” is explored *via* analysis of institutional social media profiles in the paper *Social repercussion of translocating a jaguar in Brazil* (Martins et al.).

Social perceptions and community involvement were two other overarching themes covered by the articles from different methodological approaches. After 20 years of one of the first beaver reintroduction to the UK, following a 400 years’ absence, the research paper *A glimpse of the long view: Human attitudes to an established population of Eurasian beaver (castor fiber) in the lowlands of south-east England* investigates local attitudes towards its presence, and perceived benefits and impacts (Oliveira et al.). The article, *Human Dimensions of the Reintroduction of Brazilian*

Birds, analyses the inclusion of community engagement in various bird National Action Plans, Brazil’s strongest governance tool for endangered species developed by the Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation (Martins et al.). The power of integrating tools of wildlife ecology and social science to examine the feasibility of translocation for population reinforcement is demonstrated in *When Ecological Analysis Reveals Hidden Human Dimensions: Building on Long-Term Community Participation to Enable a Conservation Translocation of Mountain Bongo in Kenya* (Sheppard et al.). The study of local perceptions of the factors affecting the outcomes of wildlife translocation into a community conservation area was used in the article *Stakeholders’ Perceptions of the Outcomes of Translocated Eland in Nyae Nyae Conservancy, Namibia* to highlight the complexities that are not experienced by reintroductions in state protected areas (Lendelvo et al.).

Where to go from this?

The articles published in this Research Topic address several topics of the Human Dimension of animal translocations in various countries. They show the diversity of approaches and tools available to address Human Dimension issues, and their application to specific cases. Collectively, they demonstrate how human dimensions are crucial to evaluate feasibility of a project and the likelihood of success after implementation. We hope the collection shows the significance of Human Dimensions for Translocation and fosters interest for further study and to incorporate these considerations into all phases of translocation projects. We see this publication as a starting point to foster more discussion, research or inclusion of these themes in animal translocations.

Author contributions

All authors listed have made a substantial, direct, and intellectual contribution to the work and approved it for publication.

Conflict of interest

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