

THE IUCN CONSERVATION TRANSLOCATION SPECIALIST GROUP:

A PLAN FOR PROFOUND GLOBAL BENEFITS TO
SPECIES, ECOSYSTEMS AND PEOPLE BY 2030





OPPORTUNITY

An Opportunity to Make a Difference

The anticipated tripling of the human population from 3 billion in 1960 to 9 billion by 2040 signifies unprecedented impacts for life on Planet Earth. Regional and global extinctions of species have come to threaten the ecological fabric of nature and associated life-support systems for humanity. But many species have also been saved, thanks in part to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The IUCN is the most powerful environmental network in the world. Founded in 1948, headquartered in Switzerland, linked with the United Nations, and comprised of experts spanning almost all countries on Earth, the IUCN has identified needs and innovative actions to conserve biodiversity.

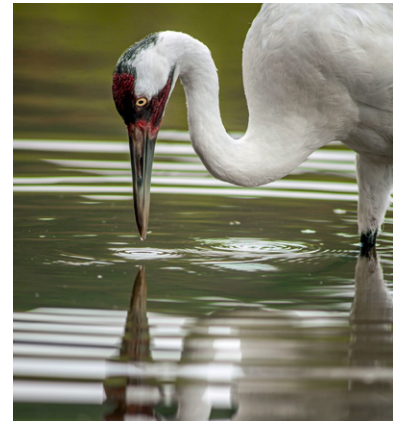
Within IUCN's Species Survival Commission, the Conservation Translocation Specialist Group (CTSG) oversees and promotes the responsible use of a powerful conservation tool. Conservation translocations are the intentional movement and release of living organisms for conservation benefit. Conservation translocations have been used for thousands of species ranging from corals in oceans, plants in deserts, frogs in rainforests, birds on tropical islands, and large carnivores in grasslands. These activities not only save species. They restore form and function of vibrant habitats and ecosystems for a sustainable future.

The Conservation Translocation Specialist Group consists of experts spanning all continents who are united by exceptional expertise, a desire to help others, and a passion to make a difference for the benefit of nature and people around the world. Since 2019, the Conservation Translocation Specialist Group pursues the following mandate:

Vision: A world where courageous action repairs nature's past damage and secures against threats of the future

Mission: To empower responsible conservation translocations that save species, strengthen ecosystems, and benefit humanity

The Conservation Translocation Specialist Group sees global challenges as global opportunities. We present here an ambitious 10-year plan to work with others to make a lasting impact that all can cherish for generations to come. Read on, and explore how you too can make a difference... !





Humanity and the natural world are facing immense intertwined challenges. Tackling these will require novel partnerships, inspiring innovation, and bold action. Building upon past successes, the IUCN's Conservation Translocation Specialist Group is ready to ramp up leadership and collaborations to help nature and to yield increasing hope and inspiration for people around the world.

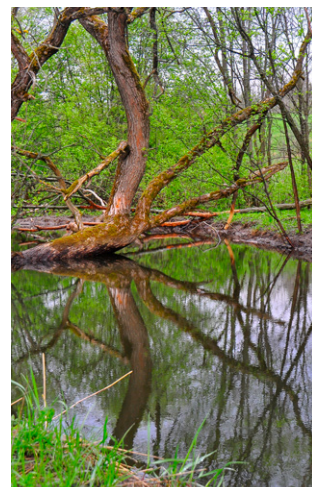
Translocations can be proactive to avert extinction, or reactive to return species that have been lost locally or globally from the wild. Activities include moving species among different sites in nature or any form of conservation breeding, propagation, or headstarting for subsequent release. 'Reinforcements' and 'Reintroductions' are used to restore populations. 'Assisted Colonization' and 'Ecological Replacement' involve moving species to new sites to prevent extinction or to restore lost ecological function as part of rewilding efforts. Conservation translocations work in concert with other strategies such as habitat protection, habitat rehabilitation, invasive species management, disease mitigation, public education, and socio-economic incentives.

The best conservation translocations are those that never need to occur. As such the Conservation Translocation Specialist Group is happy to assist any organization that helps prevent the endangerment of species or ecosystems. That said, documented conservation translocations have increased 30-fold across 30 years, and predictions suggest that the rate of growth will increase in the future. Among other drivers, conservation translocations will have an increasingly important role in preventing the extinction of species due to climate change.

Evolving concepts including mitigation translocation, rewilding, and de-extinction continue to grow and diversify global directions and perceptions for conservation translocations. To embrace such emerging challenges and opportunities for nature, the formerly named 'Reintroduction Specialist Group' was renamed after its proud 30-year history to become the 'Conservation Translocation Specialist Group' in 2018. Spearheaded through its Global Secretariat in Calgary, Canada, the CTSG aims to integrate and elevate science, guidance, training, action and outreach to unprecedented heights for the good of nature and humanity. This plan is visionary, ambitious, and daring. Yet, it is also realistic; as it builds upon past successes and deep credibility.

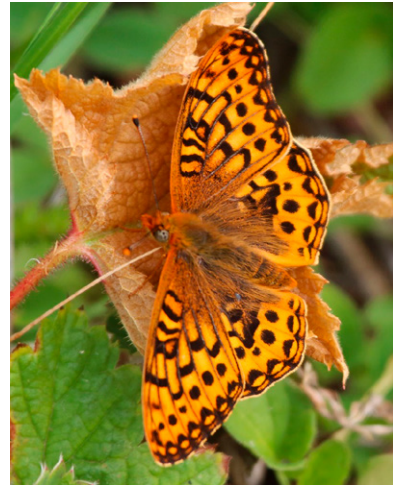
Partnerships and funding support are absolutely essential. We cannot do this alone. We do not wish to do this alone. We invite others to support us, and experience the joy of making a real difference for nature. To find out how, please contact:

Dr. Axel Moehrenschrager;
Chair, IUCN SSC Chair of the Conservation Translocation Specialist Group
e-mail: iucnsscctsgchair@gmail.com



SCIENCE

Species that are threatened with regional or global extinction have usually faced dramatic declines in abundance or range. Sometimes the causes are obvious, but often they are elusive. Addressing critical problems requires an understanding of past, current, and future threats. This is particularly crucial given projections of climate change. Developing timely solutions to achieve desired outcomes requires iterative innovation, action, and learning. Past increases in the frequency of conservation translocations are linked to improvements in reintroduction science which have refined methods, demonstrated success, and increased confidence in this conservation tool. As old challenges persist or new ones emerge, science will always be crucial to develop new and innovative approaches that benefit species and ecosystems in close association with human interests. While CTSG experts are often scientific leaders, CTSG's real power lies in an unrivaled global mandate to link, facilitate, network, recognize, and showcase conservation translocation practitioners and their innovations around the world.



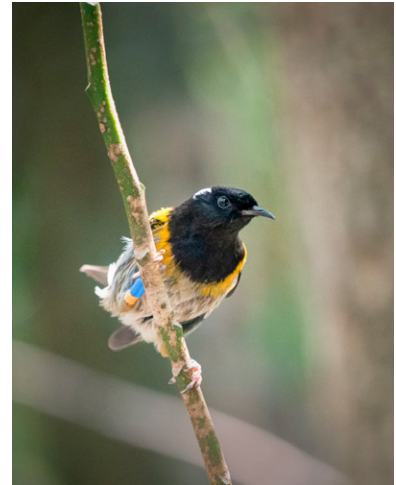
By 2030, the Conservation Translocation Specialist Group will:

- Publish 5 IUCN books that showcase conservation translocation objectives, methods, and success evaluations for hundreds of species from all around the world. This will add to 6 previous 'Global Perspective' books that have illustrated case studies for over 400 species.
- Building on previous reintroduction science books produced through major publishers, CTSG members will lead publication of a book entitled 'Conservation Translocations' through Cambridge University Press.
- Launch a peer-reviewed scientific journal, or similar global platform, to share innovations in conservation translocations.
- Build on formative conferences in the USA in 2008 and 2018, to host CTSG-led global conferences in Australia in 2021, and on other continents in 2024, 2027, and 2030.



GUIDANCE

Early conservation translocation successes for iconic species in the 1970s and 1980s drew greater attention to the immense potential for this conservation tool. Concurrent with the genesis of the IUCN Reintroduction Specialist Group, the first ‘IUCN Reintroduction Guidelines’ were published in 1998 to promote scientifically-based best practice that incorporated biological, socio-economic, and legal considerations. Building on tremendous integration into policy and practice worldwide, as well as emerging lessons and opportunities, an international task force recently published fully revised ‘IUCN Guidelines for Reintroductions and Other Conservation Translocations’. These Guidelines are now available in 8 languages, and are applicable to conservation translocations for any terrestrial, freshwater, or marine species on Earth. Associated species-specific guidelines have now been produced in collaboration with taxon-specific IUCN Species Survival Commission groups for great apes, gibbons, other primates, African elephants, Andean bears, and galliforme birds. Amphibian conservation translocation guidelines are also imminent. Emerging opportunities for more species-specific and thematic guidelines have been requested by various agencies around the world – CTSG is ready and enthusiastic to respond.



By 2030, the Conservation Translocation Specialist Group will:

- Collaborate with others to develop taxon-specific IUCN guidelines for conservation translocations of species such as rhinos, deer, and marine mammals.
- Collaborate with others to develop targeted guidelines for conservation translocations of corals and, building upon excellent regional models, for plants.
- Through the work of a recently launched international CTSG task force addressing issues of injured or confiscated species, produce ‘IUCN Guidelines on Responsible Conservation Releases of Displaced Threatened Fauna and Flora’.
- Reflecting interests from several international cities, launch a task force to yield ‘IUCN Guidelines for Conservation Translocations to Restore Threatened Species in Urban Ecosystems’.

POLICY

For most conservation translocations around the world, government agencies are required to initiate or approve permits that allow for the movement of species out of, or into, the wild. As conservation translocations often involve threatened species that capture public attention, many agencies seek to align with best practice that increases the efficient use of resources, maximizes potential benefits, and reduces programmatic or reputational risks. These issues may also be relevant for other organizations where species are propagated by people, such as in zoos and botanical gardens. While a real power of IUCN Guidelines is that they can be pragmatically applied by any practitioner, many agencies also request the development of guideline-linked policies that maximize the likelihood of positive outcomes. This can have a dual benefit for nature and people. On the one hand poorly motivated, planned, or executed conservation translocations can be prevented. On the other hand, agencies that would otherwise be hesitant to permit conservation translocations, may do so if programs are in alignment with internationally renowned best practice. To achieve real impact on the ground and to affect change the CTSG will establish long-term relationships with governments and policy-makers. Application of the IUCN Guidelines for Reintroductions and Other Conservation Translocations has now been formally recommended or mandated by the Council of Europe, the Scottish Government, and the Canadian Government. Among zoos, the British & Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums, the European Association of Zoos & Aquaria, and the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums now recommend or mandate application of these guidelines for any conservation translocations involving their animals. In response to increased requests, CTSG is ready to assist additional needs and opportunities of policy alignment to enable best practice.

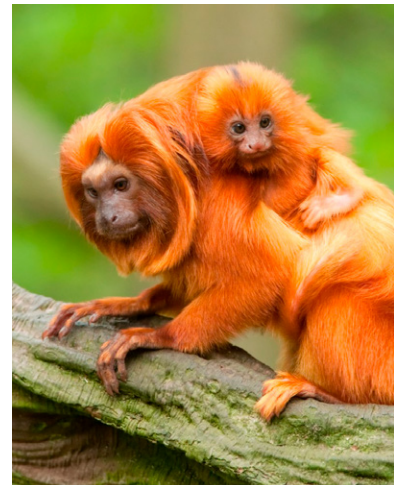


By 2030, the Conservation Translocation Specialist Group will:

- Achieve policy alignment of the IUCN Guidelines for at least 20 countries including at least 2 per continent.
- Achieve policy alignment with zoo associations for Latin America, Southeast Asia, Australasia, Africa, and North America.
- Initiate policy alignment with botanical gardens globally.
- Play a vital role in IUCN's post-2020 strategy for biodiversity conservation.
- Strategically integrate policy and actions to enable the United Nations to achieve global goals for its 2020-2030 Decade of Ecosystem Restoration.

TRAINING

The power of conservation translocations to escalate benefits for nature and people lies in the hands of committed individuals and organizations that want to make a profound difference. The plight of individual species and associated ecosystems is often due to complex challenges associated with threats that are linked to past, present, or future activities of people. While humans generally value nature, they also value resources or activities that may intentionally or unintentionally harm ecosystems. Applying CTSG's IUCN Guidelines relies not only on biological factors, but also on a sound understanding of aligned or competing socio-economic, cultural, ethical, or political considerations. This complexity calls for sound planning that identifies fundamental objectives of all stakeholders, creates alternative strategies, yields decisive actions, and utilizes science-based evaluations to yield successively greater results over time. Addressing this need, the CTSG launched an intensive international training program in 2016 that has been offered since in the USA, UK, Australia, and Costa Rica. Participants have included senior government officials, executive directors of leading environmental organizations, professors, graduate students, and national park managers from 33 countries in the first four years. Outcomes have included improved recovery plans, increased resources committed for conservation, and decisive actions for regionally threatened or globally imperiled species. Such training will be elevated to increase its impact and scale globally.



By 2030, the Conservation Translocation Specialist Group will:

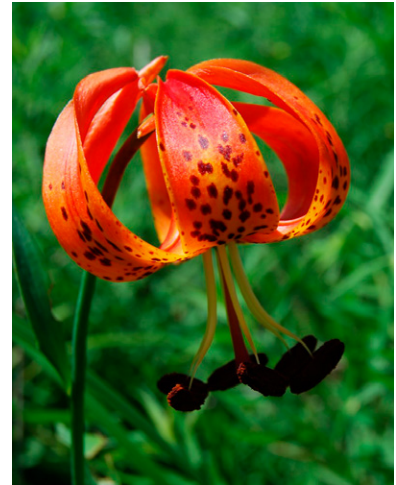
- Offer training courses spanning all continents led by global conservation translocation experts.
- Publish a practitioners training guide, illustrating the pragmatic application of structured decision making for conservation translocations.
- Launch online training to benefit practitioners around the world.
- Develop an on-line certification system to confer formal accreditation of successfully trained practitioners from at least 100 countries.
- Empower a network of trained alumni to meet demands for conservation translocations on all continents and in marine environments.

ACTION

Ultimately conservation translocation successes can be possible only if decisive actions are taken to release species into recipient ecosystems where they can thrive to avert extinction, enable recovery, and re-establish sustainable populations. Conducting such actions responsibly is facilitated by applying the IUCN guidelines, participating in formal CTSG training, and applying science-based approaches. Nevertheless, inspired and engaged practitioners sometimes do not have sufficient capacity or influence to enable sufficient action on their own because of technical, logistical, political, or financial constraints. Therefore the CTSG will expand its support for practitioners increasingly around the world.

By 2030, the Conservation Translocation Specialist Group will:

- Revise and expand its global membership to at least 200 active, engaged experts in at least 50 countries that collectively harbour sufficient diversity of thematic and taxonomic experience to support responsible actions by motivated practitioners.
- Continually engage government agencies, funding organizations, and other conservation groups to support capacity building and responsible conservation translocations of motivated practitioners locally and globally.
- Attract and administer core funding that can be allocated directly to provide or leverage worthwhile conservation translocation programs around the world.
- Develop an award program that recognizes outstanding science and practice at global CTSG conferences held every three years.
- Collaborate with others to identify problems, develop solutions and initiate restoration releases for at least 20 species that are currently extinct in the wild.
- Provide advice, mentorship, planning and/or political support to benefit conservation translocations of at least 300 species.



OUTREACH

One of the biggest challenges facing the planet is that, although the public is increasingly aware of the biodiversity crisis, most people feel resigned or helpless to do anything meaningful. However, conservation translocations, including numerous successful reintroductions, are among the most tangible and powerful examples of how conservation can reverse past wrongs and create meaningful hope for the future. This message should be showcased globally to increase engagement and support for wider efforts that save species and ecosystems. Despite the enormity of the challenges we face, the simple fact that at some point organisms will be released back to the wild is equally engaging to a child, adult, teacher, or head of state. CTSG aims to not only be a science-based organization that innovates, guides and escalates responsible conservation translocations. It also aims to address challenges, facilitate courageous action, learn from setbacks, and celebrate successes that inspire current and future generations to make a lasting difference for nature.



By 2030, the Conservation Translocation Specialist Group will:

- Consult and address local communities, landowners, and other affected stakeholders on their views of conservation translocation challenges and opportunities.
- Launch a task force aimed at increasing the ethical and respectful integration of indigenous culture, values, and knowledge into conservation translocation practice.
- Facilitate mentorship and involve youth in conservation translocations.
- Invite community leaders, celebrities, donors, and political leaders to participate in and advocate for the escalation of responsible conservation translocations.
- Initiate, or support other organizations, to deliver powerful TED talks, blogs, and podcasts.
- Work with global partners to live-stream releases of species into the wild.
- Work with a major film producer to create a leading documentary featuring CTSG-linked champions and activities around the globe.
- Engage, connect and inspire global audiences with a dynamic social media program - elevating CTSG to be among some of the world's leading conservation storytellers.



