



Somerset
Wildlife Trust



Somerset Wildlife Trust Position Statement

Species Translocation & Development

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Introduction

The aim of this document is to outline the Trust's response to the following areas in context of species translocation (moving species to another site):

Planning Applications: The Trust is often notified of proposals that involve the translocation of species as mitigation for development.

Requests to use Trust reserves as receptor sites: The Trust is occasionally asked to use reserves as receptor sites for translocations as mitigation for development.

This document exists to provide a broad overview of our approach. It will not go into the detail of the requirements of the planning system or protected species licensing, nor will it provide a tailored response to every species this may apply to.

Planning Process

Planning permission will often be refused if a development will cause a net loss of biodiversity or a negative impact on protected habitats or species. Developers are required not just to account for both, should they be present, but to thoroughly review and amend their plans to prevent or otherwise minimise (and subsequently reverse) any negative impacts upon them. This is applied through the *avoid » mitigate » compensate* hierarchy, where moving to the next step must only occur if all reasonable attempts to adjust plans to acceptably remove or reduce the impact have been exhausted.

The European Protected Species requirements also stipulate 3 further key tests which would sensibly apply to other wild species as well:

- The activity is for a certain purpose, for example it's in the public interest to build a new residential development.
- There's no satisfactory alternative that will cause less harm to the species.
- The development does not harm the long-term conservation status of the species.

It is therefore extremely unlikely (though not impossible) that a development will have undergone the necessary level of scrutiny and it still concluded that the best outcome for the species would be to move them elsewhere or to one of our reserves.

Proposals that require the need to translocate species should be rare, with plans adjusted as necessary to protect or otherwise enhance the level of good quality habitat on site. There is significant information and advice available through Natural England or professional associations such as CIEEM to assist in the necessary considerations for impacts upon species.



Practicality

Translocation is one of, if not the last option for consideration for development mitigation because it is unlikely to be successful given the complex nature of the operation itself and, in many cases, has been demonstrated to or is likely to have failed.

Finding, enhancing or creating suitable new habitats/areas is challenging with the high number of variables involved. Our reserves are likely to be unsuitable candidates for receptor sites for a variety of reasons including: potential to introduce disease to existing local populations; current absence of the species indicating unsuitability; site carrying capacity; distance from the donor site; translocated species being unsuccessful in establishing their own territory to support themselves; as well as numerous site-by-site considerations. *(It is worth noting that the same difficulty would also apply to private individuals wanting to move species from private land to a nature reserve).*

Our Approach

Given the likelihood of success is generally low, Somerset Wildlife Trust's default position is to oppose translocation proposals.

This is not to say that translocation cannot be successful and will never be considered, but the effort and funding required to plan and achieve a potentially successful translocation proposal cannot be overstated. The Trust will only engage in discussions regarding translocations to our reserves where it can be evidenced that there is no other acceptable alternative, and where the developer can provide the significant commitment necessary to achieve the necessary high levels of confidence in success. This assessment is entirely at the discretion of the Trust and is likely to be declined in all but the most exceptional circumstances.
