

Saving species by translocation – new IUCN Guidelines

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A new publication by IUCN has set a precedent for deliberately moving plants and animals for conservation purposes around the world. Based on 30 years of experience and pioneering reintroductions such as the Arabian Oryx (*Oryx leucoryx*) in Oman, the Golden Lion Tamarin (*Leontopithecus rosalia*) in Brazil and the Red Wolf (*Canis rufus*) in the USA, and many other plants and animals subsequently, this publication is an essential guide to the contentious but increasingly necessary action of translocating species.

Published by the Reintroduction Specialist Group (RSG) and Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG) of the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC); 'Guidelines for Reintroductions and Other Conservation Translocations' explores the biological, social, and political aspects of translocating species, and provides a starting point for risk assessment and feasibility studies. It is envisaged that by incorporating these guidelines into wider conservation strategies, conservationists will be evermore prepared to intervene and save species, should extrinsic pressures require it.

"Adoption of the new Guidelines has been swift, a few weeks ago the Spanish central government's Wild Fauna and Flora Committee proposed a new national code for conservation translocations, based in detail on the new IUCN guidelines" says **Dr Emilio Laguna, senior**



**Iberian Lynx *Lynx pardinus*
Critically Endangered**



**Red Wolf *Canis rufus*
Critically Endangered**



**Golden Lion Tamarin
Leontopithecus rosalia
Endangered**



officer in the Wildlife Service, Valencia, Spain.

Humans have moved organisms between sites for their own purposes for millennia, and this has yielded benefits for human kind, but in some cases has led to disastrous impacts. Most invasive alien species are the result of non-conservation related movements, and in some cases invasive species have been introduced due to mistaken conservation efforts. The Canadian Beaver (*Castor canadensis*) for example, was mistaken for the Eurasian Beaver (*Castor fiber*) and released into Finland in the early 20th Century, where it now out-competes the native species, and the Cane Toad (*Rhinella marina*) originally introduced to Australia to control sugar cane pests, has caused wide ecological disruption across the country.

"Any conservation translocation must be justified, with development of clear objectives, identification and assessment of risks, and with measures of performance. These Guidelines are an essential tool for any proposed conservation translocation; they are based on principle rather than example, and offer a platform to make an informed decision about this increasingly common conservation intervention" says **Dr Mark Stanley Price, Chair of the IUCN SSC Sub-Committee for Species Conservation Planning.**

Translocation is usually considered a last resort by

wildlife conservationists, but as the world's biodiversity faces the incessant threats of habitat loss, invasive species and climate change, this type of conservation intervention will become more frequent all over the world. The Council of Europe has based its November 2012 Recommendation No. 158 (2012) of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention on "Conservation translocations under changing climatic conditions" on the new IUCN Guidelines. Further, the Turner Endangered Species Fund of the USA and the UK's Royal Society for the Protection of Birds have already used the Guidelines for their own planning purposes.

**Notes to editors
About the Guidelines**

These Guidelines and their Annexes were developed by a Task Force of the Reintroduction and Invasive Species Specialist Groups, working between 2010 and 2012. The Chair of the Species Survival Commission, Dr Simon Stuart, appreciated that IUCN's 1998 Guidelines for Reintroductions needed review and revision and the Chair of the Reintroduction Specialist Group, Dr Frédéric Launay, offered the resources of the Reintroduction Specialist Group to carry out this task. He, in turn, invited Dr Mark Stanley Price to assemble and manage a small Task Force for the work. It soon became evident that the Invasive Species Specialist Group contained expertise of direct relevance to the work, and its Chair, Dr Piero Genovesi, wholeheartedly brought in his Specialist Group. The Guidelines can be downloaded here: <http://ow.ly/mRgRG>



**Arabian Oryx *Oryx leucoryx*
Vulnerable**



**Arabian Oryx *Oryx leucoryx*
Vulnerable**



**Cane Toad *Rhinella marina*
Least Concern**

November 2012 Recommendation No. 158 (2012) of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention on "Conservation translocations under changing climatic conditions" - <http://ow.ly/nOSr4>

About IUCN

IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most

pressing environment and development challenges by supporting scientific research; managing field projects all over the world; and bringing governments, NGOs, the UN, international conventions and companies together to develop policy, laws and best practice.

The world's oldest and largest global environmental network, IUCN is a democratic membership union with more than 1,000 government and NGO member organizations, and almost 11,000 volunteer scientists and experts in some 160 countries. IUCN's work is supported by over 1,000 professional staff in 60 offices and hundreds of partners in public, NGO and private sectors around the world. IUCN's headquarters are located in Gland, near Geneva, in Switzerland. www.iucn.org

[The Species Survival Commission](#) (SSC) is the largest of IUCN's six volunteer commissions with a global membership of around 7,500 experts. SSC advises IUCN and its members on the wide range of technical and scientific aspects of species conservation, and is dedicated to securing a future for biodiversity. SSC has significant input into the international agreements dealing with biodiversity conservation.

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