TUESDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2017

ZSL SCIENCE AND CONSERVATION EVENT

The Meeting Rooms, Zoological Society of London, Regent’s Park, London NW1 4RY

AGENDA

Reintroductions for saving species – meet the wildlife movers

Chair: Dr John Ewen, Institute of Zoology, ZSL

Receive the following communications:

Dr Mark Stanley Price, WildCRU, University of Oxford
*Thoughts on reintroductions in a changing world*

Dr Sarah J Converse, US Geological Survey, Washington Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, School of Environmental and Forest Sciences (SEFS) and School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences (SAFS), University of Washington
*Tough choices: making better decisions for greater conservation success*

Dr Martin Gaywood, Scottish Natural Heritage
*People and reintroductions: the Scottish experience*

Dr Axel Moehrenschlager, Calgary Zoological Society Centre for Conservation Research
*Who does, or should, decide what is moved for conservation?*
Reintroductions for saving species – meet the wildlife movers

Tuesday 28 November 2017
The Meeting Rooms, The Zoological Society of London, Regent’s Park, London NW1 4RY

Thoughts on reintroductions in a changing world
Dr Mark Stanley Price, WildCRU, University of Oxford

Reintroductions have demonstrably increased over the last 40 years or so, with varying levels of success, usually as assessed by the practitioners. We have seen the development of simple do’s and don’ts about reintroductions evolve into the science of translocation, with major contributions by ZSL.

But, we know that reintroduced species often need continuing or long-term management support, which begs the question as to why. Further, why do many reintroductions fail? Are we overlooking factors or being naïve about the prospects for reintroduction? Should we be more critical about best-prospect ecosystems, communities or habitats or the species themselves which are likely be reintroduced successfully?

My exploration stems from my experiences with the Arabian oryx in Oman, where it was evident that we were on the way to achieving a population of wild oryx, which was the objective; but, at the same time, they were a facsimile of the aboriginal population of 20 years before: did this matter?

So, to explore these issues, I will present a simple qualitative, pictorial model of a community and see how this changes under various pressures and opportunities, with implications for niche availability for a candidate reintroduction species.

I will then extend the conclusions from this to consideration of what the future will or should hold for translocation, accepting that changing communities and novel ecosystems must mean we move from being at best preservationists, protecting our familiar baselines, to being predictive conservationists in a world in which translocation is likely to play a growing role. This will be necessary if we aim to keep as many species as possible in conditions of wildness even if they are living in less than fully wild habitats.

Mark Stanley Price has had a long association with the theory and practice of reintegration. This started with the 1982 release of the Arabian oryx into Oman, using captive-bred animals to replace the last indigenous population which had been hunted to extinction in 1972. From 1988 to 2000 he was founder Chair of the IUCN SSC Reintroduction Specialist Group. After spells with the African
Wildlife Leadership Foundation and as chief executive of the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, Mark is now at WildCRU, University of Oxford, where he led development of the 2013 Guidelines for Reintroduction and other Conservation Translocations, and more recently Guidelines for Species Conservation Planning. His interests now include contemplation of re-wilding, and the conservation world’s need to explore what it wants in a changing world.

Tough choices: making better decisions for greater conservation success  
Dr Sarah J Converse, US Geological Survey, Washington Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, School of Environmental and Forest Sciences (SEFS) and School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences (SAFS), University of Washington

We all like to think we’re good decision makers, and humans certainly are evolved to make lots of decisions quickly and efficiently. Unfortunately, humans mostly aren’t naturally good at making some very complex and difficult decisions. Deciding whether and how to do a conservation reintroduction is this sort of decision. Reintroductions are often controversial and involve many different stakeholders. Also, scientific predictions about the effects of reintroduction are uncertain. Just as science is a disciplined method designed to overcome humans’ inherent cognitive shortcomings in learning about how the world works, decision analysis is a disciplined method designed to overcome humans’ inherent cognitive shortcomings in making decisions. In this presentation, I’ll introduce decision analysis and demonstrate how it is crucial for helping wildlife managers make reintroduction decisions. I’ll present some case studies of difficult decisions and demonstrate how organizing our thoughts in a structured way, and using the right analytical tools, can lead to better decisions. Better decisions, in turn, should lead to greater conservation success.

Sarah Converse is a research ecologist with the US Geological Survey, the Unit Leader of the Washington Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, and an Associate Professor with a joint appointment in the School of Environmental and Forest Sciences & the School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences at the University of Washington, in Seattle. Before taking this position in early 2017, Sarah spent 10 years as a scientist at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center near Washington DC. Sarah focuses on building quantitative models of populations to better understand their ecology and management. She is most interested in doing science that helps managers make better, more informed, and more transparent decisions about the conservation of threatened wildlife.

People and reintroductions: the Scottish experience  
Dr Martin Gaywood, Scottish Natural Heritage

There have been increasing numbers of conservation translocations in Scotland in recent years. Many of them have been low profile, often involving plant or invertebrate species being moved at local or regional scales. However a few, such as the reintroduction of the Eurasian beaver and the white-tailed eagle, have generated enormous public attention, political and media interest, and passionate debate between supporters and opponents. I’ll provide a potted history of some of these translocation stories, and in particular look at how they have sometimes created human-wildlife conflict, and how in Scotland we are trying to find ways of reducing this conflict. This has included the establishment of fora involving stakeholders from across the conservation and land-use spectrum (such as the National Species Reintroduction Forum), and the production of the Scottish Code for Conservation Translocations. I’ll also look forward and give some examples of the practical challenges we face, and how we need to use an adaptive approach to management.
**Martin Gaywood** is based at Scottish Natural Heritage at the Inverness HQ, and leads on a number of species projects. He was manager of the ‘Species Action Framework’ project which targeted management action on 32 Scottish species, and is currently the SNH manager for the multi-partner Scottish Wildcat Action project. He has been SNH’s lead specialist on beaver reintroduction for 17 years, and was editor of the final ‘Beavers in Scotland’ report to Scottish Government in 2015. He provides the secretariat role for the National Species Reintroduction Forum, and co-authored the Scottish Code for Conservation Translocations.

**Who does, or should, decide what is moved for conservation?**

*Dr Axel Moehrenschlager, Calgary Zoological Society Centre for Conservation Research*

The best conservation translocation is one that never needs to occur because species and ecosystems are healthy. Yet, the use of this tool is consistently on the rise. At least 1500 species have already been moved, and up to one quarter of IUCN’s Red List may require conservation translocations as an element of recovery. Similar science-based assessments within Canada show that one third of recovery plans for nationally imperiled species call for releases from captive or wild source populations. But who decides which of these scientific recommendations will result in action? I review some of the central motivations behind North American animal conservation translocations, and some key success challenges. Bridging beyond animals on land, we dive into the global oceans to see what key drivers are behind conservation translocations in marine systems. Is there sound alignment between need, feasibility, and action? A better understanding of synergistic or competing human values may help to upscale conservation translocations to avert extinction, mitigate emerging threats, restore ecosystems, and escalate global hope in conservation.

**Axel Moehrenschlager** is the Chair of the IUCN Species Survival Commission Reintroduction Specialist Group. He is motivated to amplify translation, policy integration, training, and application of the IUCN Guidelines for Reintroductions and Other Conservation Translocations to help more species, ecosystems, and people worldwide. He is the Director of Conservation & Science at the Calgary Zoological Society, Adjunct Associate Professor at the University of Calgary (Canada), Adjunct Associate Professor at Clemson University (USA), and Research Associate at Oxford (UK).

**Chair: Dr John Ewen, Institute of Zoology, ZSL**

John Ewen is a Senior Research Fellow at the Zoological Society of London and has a research focus on reintroduction biology and threatened species recovery. He is co-chair of New Zealand’s Hihi (Stitchbird) Recovery Group and has also been coordinating a research group working with this species since 2004. Beyond hihi, John is involved in a growing number of species recovery projects including birds and mammals spanning New Zealand, Australia and Mauritius. He is particularly interested in decision making for threatened species recovery and how we make best use of science to inform these decisions. In 2016 John started working closely with the IUCN SSC Reintroduction Specialist Group to develop training in the application of their published Guidelines and he continues to promote best practice application of reintroduction and other forms of conservation translocation as powerful conservation tools.
FORTHCOMING SCIENCE AND CONSERVATION EVENTS
www.zsl.org/science/whats-on

Can we still save coral reefs and what if we don’t?
Tuesday 12 December 2017, 6pm - 7.45pm
ZSL Science and Conservation Event

Coral reefs are widely recognised as a conservation priority, yet recent bleaching events have shown that protected reef systems are still impacted by global environmental change. Speakers will discuss what the latest field observations suggest about a viable future for corals, and how scientific understanding should inform future habitat threat-assessment and conservation policy.

FIND OUT MORE

Collaborating for conservation in China
Tuesday 13 February 2018, 6pm - 7.45pm
ZSL Science and Conservation Event

China is a vast ‘megadiverse’ country that contains over 10% of global mammal species and a wide range of ecosystems. However it is experiencing a loss of natural habitats due to recent economic growth. This event will present the range of conservation projects being delivered by multiple organisations to protect China’s unique biodiversity.

FIND OUT MORE
www.zsl.org/science/whats-on/collaborating-for-conservation-in-china

Safeguarding space for nature, securing our future: developing a post-2020 strategy
27-28 February 2018
Symposium

An international science-policy symposium to support negotiations on the Convention on Biological Diversity’s post-2020 strategy and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

BOOK TICKETS
http://www.zsl.org/spacefornaturesymposium