

Australian Capital Territory

Nature Conservation (Translocation of Native Flora and Fauna) Conservator Guidelines 2017

Notifiable instrument NI2017–650

made under the

Nature Conservation Act 2014, s 23 (Conservator—Guidelines)

1 Name of instrument

This instrument is *the Nature Conservation (Translocation of Native Flora and Fauna) Conservator Guidelines 2017*.

2 Commencement

This instrument commences on the day after its notification day.

3 Conservator Guidelines for Translocation

Schedule 1 sets out the conservator guidelines for the translocation of native flora and fauna in the ACT prepared by me.

Dr Annie Lane
Conservator of Flora and Fauna
06 December 2017

Schedule 1

(Refer Section 3)

1. Introduction

These guidelines have been designed to improve the translocation activities for *native fauna* and *native flora that are protected or have special protection status* in the ACT. The primary purpose of conservation translocations should be to improve the status of a threatened species, or to restore natural ecosystem functions or processes (IUCN/SSC 2013).

Translocation is the term defined by the IUCN Species Survival Commission as “*the human-mediated movement of living organisms from one area, with release in another*” (IUCN/SSC 2013). Movement includes:

- between wild locations and populations
- from a captive facility or *ex situ* population to a wild location, and/or
- from the wild to a captive facility for population growth, with an intention to return the individuals or their progeny to the wild.

Translocation can occur within a species’ known current or historical distribution (population restoration) or outside of it (conservation introduction) (Appendix 1 - Definitions) (IUCN/SSC 2013).

Translocations assessed via these guidelines would normally only be allowed for the purposes of biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and/or specific scientific research projects to support biodiversity conservation outcomes.

2. Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to support the Conservator of Flora and Fauna (Conservator) in ensuring that a translocation is a suitable activity for a licence to allow actions that might otherwise be considered an offence under the *Nature Conservation Act 2014* (NC Act). In doing so, the guidelines intend to improve the rigour of translocation programs, and reduce the impact from the risks associated with translocation, and to assist the protection and conservation of native animals, native plants and ecosystems. The guidelines aim to ensure that translocations are appropriate, ethical, conservation-orientated, cost-effective, transparent, and accountable.

The guidelines will also ensure that a consistent approach is applied to the assessment of all translocation programs in seeking the agreement of the Conservator.

Principles are provided in section 4 to guide the development of translocation proposals and assist in demonstrating how intended conservation and ecosystem benefits will be produced through long-term, well-planned commitments.

Supporting information and a proposal template is provided on the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) website at <http://www.environment.act.gov.au/>. These are not mandatory requirements, but are provided to support the proponent in the development of a proposal to submit to the Conservator for approval.

3. Scope

These guidelines apply to any government or non-government individual or organisation intending to translocate:

- native animals (including exempt native animals)
- native fish species that are protected or have special protection status
- native invertebrate species that are protected or have special protection status
- native plant species that are protected or have special protection status into reserves or onto public land
- any plant or animal into a threatened ecological community.

These guidelines do not apply to:

- non-native animals
- non-native plants
- native plants that are not listed as protected or have special protection status
- fish species or invertebrates that are not listed as protected or have special protection status
- stocking of fish species into the ACT's urban lakes to provide a recreational fishery
- the movement of sick or injured wildlife to a rehabilitation facility, and the subsequent return to original or appropriate nearby location.
- the movement of venomous snakes or nuisance native animals.
- restoration and revegetation activities that do not involve protected or specially protected species. These activities are subject to an alternative approvals process within the ACT Parks and Conservation Service and by the Conservator.
- the relocation of dead trees or timber to restoration areas for the purpose of providing habitat (even if it is listed as a protected or specially protected species).
- emergency rescue or salvage translocations. In such circumstances a translocation may occur without a full proposal, though actions should follow the guidelines to the greatest extent possible. The Conservator must be informed and provided with an ongoing management plan where appropriate. Native fauna rescues or salvages should provide the Conservator with a follow-up monitoring report to assess its success or failure (and reasons for success or failure).

4. Principles for the Translocation of Flora and Fauna in the ACT

A translocation proposal submitted to the Conservator for approval should be consistent with the following principles:

Meet international and national standards

1. All translocations occurring in the ACT should follow the principles set out in *the IUCN/SSC Guidelines for Reintroduction and Other Conservation Translocations* (IUCN/SSC 2013).
2. Additional principles and guidelines for aquatic species are set out in the *National Policy for the Translocation of Live Aquatic Organisms – Issues, Principles and Guidelines for Implementation*.
3. Additional principles for plant species are set out in the *Australian Network for Plant Conservation’s Guidelines for the Translocation of Threatened Plants in Australia* (Vallee et al. 2004).
4. All translocations involving animals should adhere to the *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes 8th Edition* (2013).
5. The translocation should not be inconsistent with any nature conservation strategy, action plan, native species conservation plan, controlled native species management plan, reserve management plan or licence provisions set out under the NC Act.

Conservation focus

6. A translocation should have a primary focus on biodiversity, ecological, and/or species conservation, and should contribute to ecosystem functioning and restoration.
 - 6.1. Translocations may be trial or experimental in nature, but should have a primary focus to improve species, population, and/or ecological understandings, or to improve translocations methods and techniques, to inform decision making and future, larger-scale translocations.
7. Translocations should aim to establish naturally self-sustaining populations in the wild with minimal or no human intervention.
8. In meeting conservation outcomes a translocation proposal should clearly identify its goals, which may be at a species, community, or ecosystem level.
 - 8.1. To meet these goals, a translocation proposal should demonstrate how the program will be guided by clearly defined objectives and actions.
9. A translocation proposal should demonstrate how the intended conservation outcomes are anticipated to outweigh the identified risks.

Manage risks and threats

10. A translocation proposal should:
 - identify risks and threats associated with the translocation
 - assess the risks, and prioritise them by likelihood and consequence
 - outline strategies and actions that will manage, control or mitigate the key risks
 - balance the benefits of the translocation, and likelihood of success, with the overall risks and impacts.
11. Proponents should demonstrate how any threats responsible for causing the decline or local extinction of the target species should be managed to provide the best opportunity for successful translocation. A translocation proposal should outline how these threats are to be managed or mitigated so that they do not impact on the translocation’s success.

Standards of evidence

12. A translocation proposal should demonstrate the collation of sufficient information and research on the biological and ecological requirements of the target species.
13. A habitat assessment (that includes biotic and abiotic conditions) of the release location should be provided to demonstrate its suitability for the proposed translocation.

Monitor and evaluate

14. To demonstrate how conservation goals, objectives and actions are progressing, a translocation program should provide details of a forward plan for active monitoring, evaluation and adaptive adjustment of practices.
15. Periodic reporting, or a report on exit, should communicate the successes, failures, and reasons identified for success or failure.

Resources

16. A forward plan outlining any investment and resources required initially and into the future should be provided to demonstrate the feasibility of the program in achieving a sustainable conservation outcome.

Appendix 1 – Glossary

animal	see section 11 of the Nature Conservation Act 2014 .
assisted colonisation	the relocation of organisms to an area outside of its known current and historic distribution with the intention to establish a viable population and in doing so, avoid extinction. Assisted colonisation is recognised as a threat mitigation strategy for climate change, agricultural expansion and urbanisation (Burbidge et al. 2011; Gallagher et al. 2015; Hoegh-Guldberg et al. 2008; Seddon 2010). <i>[Synonyms: benign introduction; managed relocation; assisted migration]</i>
biodiversity	see section 19 of the Nature Conservation Act 2014 .
conservation	see section 10 of the Nature Conservation Act 2014 .
conservation introduction	the translocation of living organisms outside of its known current and historical indigenous range to an area of appropriate habitat. The nature of an introduction might involve assisted colonisation or ecological replacement (IUCN/SSC 2013).
ecological replacement	the movement of living organisms to a location where the species will provide a critical ecological function (IUCN/SSC 2013). <i>[Synonyms: taxon substitution; niche substitution; ecological substitutes/proxies/surrogates; sub specific substitution; analogue species]</i>
exempt animal	see section 154 of the Nature Conservation Act 2014 .
goals	a statement of the intended result of the conservation translocation that articulates conservation benefit (IUCN/SSC 2013).
native animal	see section 12 of the Nature Conservation Act 2014 .
native plant	see section 14 of the Nature Conservation Act 2014 .
objectives	a clear and specific statement that details how goals will be realised, and addresses identified and presumed threats (IUCN/SSC 2013).
plant	see section 13 of the Nature Conservation Act 2014 .
population restoration	the translocation of living organisms to an area within its known current or historical indigenous range. Population restoration can be categorised as either reinforcement or reintroduction (IUCN/SSC 2013).
protected native species	see section 110 of the Nature Conservation Act 2014 .

reinforcement	the addition of living organisms to a population of the same species. Reinforcements often require deliberate and strategic manipulation of the population, and its genetic pool, to improve the population's viability and persistence (IUCN/SSC 2013). <i>[Synonyms: re-stocking, enrichment, supplementation and augmentation, and enhancement (plants)]</i>
reintroduction	the movement of living organisms to an area within its indigenous range from which it has disappeared to re-establish a population (IUCN/SSC 2013).
research	applying scientific methods to investigate clearly defined questions which address conservation objectives of the ACT's biodiversity research and monitoring program, including evaluation of data collected.
threatened ecological community	see section 67 of the Nature Conservation Act 2014 .
translocation	the human-mediated movement of living organisms from one area, with release in another (IUCN/SSC 2013).

References

Burbidge, AA, Byrne, M, Coates, D, Garnett, ST, Harris, S, Hayward, MW, Martin, TG, McDonald-Madden, E, Mitchell, NJ, Nally, S & Setterfield, SA 2011, 'Is Australia ready for assisted colonisation? Policy changes required to facilitate translocations under climate change', *Pacific Conservation Biology*, vol. 17, pp. 259 – 269.

Gallagher, RV, Makinson, RO, Hogbin, PM & Hancock, N 2015, 'Assisted colonization as a climate change adaptation tool', *Austral Ecology*, vol. 40, pp. 12 – 20.

Hoegh-Guldberg, O, Hughes, L, McIntyre, S, Lindenmayer, DB, Parmesan, C, Possingham, HP & Thomas, CD 2008, 'Assisted Colonization and Rapid Climate Change', *Science*, vol. 321, no. 5887, pp. 345 – 346.

IUCN/SSC 2013, *Guidelines for Reintroductions and Other Conservation Translocations*, Version 1.0, IUCN Species Survival Commission, Gland, Switzerland
(<https://portals.iucn.org/library/efiles/documents/2013-009.pdf>).

National Health and Medical Research Council 2013, *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes*, Eighth edition, National Health and Medical Research Council, Canberra.
Seddon, PJ 2010, 'From Reintroduction to Assisted Colonization: Moving along the Conservation Translocation Spectrum', *Restoration Ecology*, vol. 18, no. 6, pp. 796 – 802.

Vallee, L, Hogbin, T, Monks, L, Makinson, B, Matthes, M & Rossetto, M 2004, *Guidelines for the Translocation of Threatened Plants in Australia*, Second Edition, Australian Network for Plant Conservation, Canberra.