



Policy on Introductions and Re-Introductions

Position Statement

Most introductions and re-introductions fail. Nevertheless, there are good reasons to attempt them under certain circumstances. Moreover, many people keen to see an environment rich again in butterflies and moths want to help this happen. However, a careful approach is needed, not least because we need to learn from attempts being made. Following an attempt at introduction or re-introduction, continuity of management and monitoring are vital. The habitat requirements of the species and the reasons for its decline should be understood, while the cause of its extinction on the receptor site should have been removed. There should be a long-term management plan that will maintain suitable habitat, and the site should be large enough to sustain a viable population.

- The Society's goal is to secure and improve the status of butterflies and moths throughout the UK.
- In attempting to achieve this, it gives priority to conserving existing populations in the areas where they naturally occur, while promoting improvements in land management to enable butterflies and moths to naturally recolonise former areas and to naturally extend their ranges.
- The Society acknowledges that we live in a fast-changing environment subjected to climate change, fragmentation of habitat, successional habitat development, and rapidly-evolving land management practices, as a result of which butterflies and moths will change in distribution and abundance with or without human assistance.
- The Society recognises:
 - the wish of the general public, as well as members of the Society, to see abundant and widespread naturally-occurring populations of butterflies and moths throughout the United Kingdom and to see them restored to their former ranges

- that attempts at introductions and re-introductions of butterflies and moths will continue to take place and wishes to encourage a responsible approach, openness and good practice. This involves the proper recording of introductions and re-introductions and properly informing organisations and individuals responsible for monitoring butterfly and moth populations, so that their changing status can continue to be accurately assessed.
- that, in restoring and creating habitat, it may be felt desirable in some circumstances to establish butterfly and moth populations through re-introductions or even introductions
- the legitimate interest in captive breeding; and in introducing and re-introducing species when it is scientifically sound to do so

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- The Society's goal is to secure and improve the status of butterflies and moths throughout the UK
- In attempting to achieve this, it gives priority to conserving existing populations in the areas where they naturally occur, while promoting improvements in land management to enable butterflies and moths to naturally re-colonise former areas and to naturally extend their ranges
- The Society itself will only devote resources to re-introduction as an avenue of last resort – where, for instance, a species has been lost; the habitat extent and quality is now suitably restored; and the species has no realistic chance of re-colonising naturally
- The Society will support re-introductions if these are in line with Regional Action Plan (RAP) priorities and its staff have been fully involved from the inception of the project
- The Society will only support the re-introduction of butterflies and moths if all of the following conditions are met:
 1. The re-introduction and necessary management for success and persistence has the permission and support of the appropriate landowner
 2. Extinction is confirmed at the receptor site and natural re-establishment is shown to be unlikely

3. The proposal does not conflict with requirements or provisions for legally protected species or sites
 4. Careful consideration is given to the possibly adverse effects of habitat modification carried out for the re-introduction on other naturally-occurring species of conservation concern in the area
 5. Evidence is provided that the proposal will not have a harmful impact on the donor population
 6. The habitat requirements of the species and the reasons for its decline should be understood, and the cause of its extinction on the receptor site should have been removed. There should be a long-term management plan which will maintain suitable habitat, and the site should be large enough to sustain a viable population
 7. The proposal and selection of donor and receptor sites arises from a recovery strategy for the species
 8. Evidence is provided of the likely success of the species establishing and sustaining itself
 9. The re-introduction is properly monitored, recorded, and evaluated and the records are submitted to the appropriate recording agencies
 10. The Society and all other relevant conservation bodies and authorities have been fully consulted about the proposal
- The Society's Director of Conservation will be responsible for advising those seeking the Society's support with proposals for re-introducing species and will report decisions taken to the Society's Conservation Committee
 - The Society encourages the open documentation of all releases, whether or not these take place under its auspices. It discourages the casual release of captive-bred stock
 - There is educational value in the rearing of common and widespread species and their release back into the environments from which they were taken. Where 'surplus' or unwanted stock of captive-bred rare and threatened species is available, advice should be sought from the Director of Conservation
 - The release of non-native species is illegal under UK law
 - The Society considers that 'rescue' translocation is unacceptable as an excuse for permitting the destruction of sites occupied by rare and threatened species

Guidelines for Proposals

For BC to take a favourable view of your proposal, you should consider the following points when formulating a species re-introduction strategy. These should be addressed in any formal proposal:

- i) The species should have declined significantly, or be threatened with extinction, at national or regional level
- ii) Remaining natural populations should be being conserved effectively and the re-introduction proposal should be an integral part of a recovery strategy derived from the national Species Action Plan (SAP) and Regional Action Plan (RAP)
- iii) The habitat requirements of the species and the reasons for its decline should be understood, and the cause of its extinction on the receptor site should have been removed. There should be a long-term management plan which will maintain suitable habitat, and the site should be large enough to sustain a viable population
- iv) Extinction should be confirmed at the receptor site, the mobility of the target species should be assessed, and natural re-establishment should be shown to be unlikely, despite measures that may be being taken to enable it to occur
- v) Opportunities to restore networks of populations are preferable to single-site re-introductions, unless the latter is a necessary prelude to the former
- vi) Sufficient numbers of individuals should be used in the re-introduction to ensure a reasonable chance of establishing a genetically-diverse population
- vii) As far as possible, the donor stock should be the closest relatives of the original population, from a similar habitat geographically as close as possible
- viii) The receptor site should normally be within the recorded historical range of the species
- ix) Removal of livestock should not harm the donor populations. Donor populations must be monitored before, during and after the re-introduction programme and receive no less management care and attention than in the receptor site
- x) The possibility that re-introduction of a species and associated management might adversely affect other key species on the receptor site should be carefully considered
- xi) The use of captive-bred stock presents difficulties as it should be healthy and genetically diverse to avoid problems of in-breeding and maximise the chances of adaptation to the new site. Progeny derived from wild-caught individuals should not normally be captive bred for more than two generations.
- xii) Re-introduced populations should be monitored for at least five years and contingency plans made in case the re-introduction fails, the donor population is adversely affected, or other species are adversely affected

- xiii) For BC approval, proposals should be submitted to the Society's Director of Conservation and should include consultation responses from the relevant conservation bodies and statutory organisations
- xiv) Approval and support must be obtained from the owners of both receptor and donor sites and, in the case of BC branch proposals, their partner RAP branches
- xv) The entire process should be fully documented and reported to the Society, to local record centres, and the statutory conservation agencies

You may obtain a questionnaire form from the Director of Conservation to whom you should submit it when you have completed it. Before you do, we would encourage you to discuss your proposal informally with the Director.

Terminology

These definitions are drawn from those given in the 'IUCN Guidelines for Re-introductions' 1998.

Introduction – *termed 'Conservation or Benign Introduction' in the IUCN guidelines to define an attempt to establish a species, for the purpose of conservation, outside its recorded distribution but within an appropriate habitat and eco-geographic area.*

Re-introduction – *an attempt to establish a species¹ in an area which was once part of its historical² range, but from which it has been extirpated or become extinct³.*

Re-establishment – *a synonym for re-introduction but carrying the implication that the attempt has been successful.*

Re-enforcement / Supplementation – *an attempt to strengthen or otherwise modify an existing population by the addition of individuals of the same species.*

Translocation – *the deliberate action of moving individuals from one site to another in an attempt to effect one of the above.*

Release – *in the simplest sense the action of letting go live animals, but often used to describe opportunistic, casual or clandestine efforts.*

Restoration – *The overall purpose and context for re-introduction attempts. In this document use of the term should be assumed to mean it has an objective and planned strategic basis.*

¹ *or recognised sub-species or race*

² *for practical reasons should be limited to known or recorded native range*

³ *A taxon is extinct when there is no reasonable doubt that the last individual has died. The causes may be both human induced and /or natural.*