A Conservation Translocations Information Hub for the UK: Scoping Study

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ESRT England Species Reintroductions Taskforce

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Summary

Conservation translocation - the deliberate movement of species for conservation purposes - is increasingly used across the UK to address biodiversity loss and support ecosystem recovery. When well designed, such interventions can deliver significant ecological and societal benefits. When poorly planned or governed, they risk biological harm, social conflict, regulatory failure and loss of public trust. Although high-level guidance exists through the IUCN Guidelines and the Scottish and English Codes, the wider body of information needed to support effective decision-making remains fragmented, inconsistent and sometimes difficult to access.

This scoping study assessed the feasibility, desirability and risks of establishing a **UK-wide Conservation Translocations Information Hub (CT Information Hub)**. The work was undertaken by UHI Inverness and the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh as part of a collaborative partnership with Natural England on behalf of the England Species Reintroduction Taskforce. It comprised three elements:

1. A UK-wide online stakeholder survey
2. Interviews with managers of existing conservation information hubs
3. An assessment of technical and operational considerations for developing and maintaining an online hub

Evidence of need and support

The online survey received 123 responses from practitioners, regulators, researchers, NGOs, land managers and other stakeholders. There was strong and consistent support for a central, trusted “one-stop shop” for conservation translocation information. Respondents highlighted persistent problems with information being scattered across multiple platforms, inaccessible due to paywalls, unpublished, or dependent on informal networks. Key gaps include project-level detail, long-term monitoring outcomes, social and human-dimensions evidence, animal welfare considerations, plant health and biosecurity risks, and accounts of unsuccessful or contentious projects.

Importantly, respondents emphasised that trust is critical. Any hub must avoid advocacy or selective reporting and instead present balanced, evidence-based information, including uncertainty, failures and contested cases. Transparent governance, visible quality assurance and broad representation of interests - including land and water managers and critical voices - were identified as essential conditions for success.

Core functions of a CT Information Hub

Across the survey and interviews, several priority functions emerged:

- **Centralised guidance and signposting**, bringing together international, national and specialist guidance and clarifying how these relate across UK jurisdictions.
- **Standardised case studies**, including unsuccessful and mixed-outcome projects, covering ecological, social, welfare, biosecurity and other aspects.
- **Practical tools and templates** to support feasibility assessment, licensing, stakeholder engagement, monitoring and risk management.

- **A modest national project register** in the early stage, closely linked to the developing UK Conservation Translocations Database, to improve transparency and consistency.
- **Dedicated coverage of under-represented areas**, particularly social dimensions, animal welfare, plant health and small or less charismatic taxa.
- **Public-facing content**, presented in accessible language, to improve understanding and support public engagement commitments (this links to Scottish Biodiversity Strategy action 21.5 to be addressed by 2030)

Technical and governance considerations

The technical assessment indicates that a flexible, open-source content management system, developed through a phased approach, would best support sustainability and cost-effectiveness. However, the study makes clear that the success of any hub will depend less on technology and more on governance, staffing and long-term resourcing. Dedicated staff time, secure funding and clear separation between information provision and regulatory decision-making are essential.

Recommendation and conclusion

Six broad options were assessed, ranging from doing nothing to establishing multiple national hubs. The study recommends **establishing a single, UK-wide CT Information Hub**, designed to complement - not duplicate - existing resources and databases. This option offers the greatest potential to reduce fragmentation, raise standards, support cross-border learning and collaboration and provide consistent messaging across devolved administrations.

The study concludes that a CT Information Hub is **warranted and widely supported**, provided it is carefully scoped, transparently governed and realistically resourced. A further phase of stakeholder engagement and co-design is recommended to further build joint ownership, transparency and trust. The study sets out a proposed way forward. If developed in line with the recommendations set out in this report, such a hub could significantly improve the quality, consistency and legitimacy of conservation translocation practice across the UK, delivering better outcomes for nature and for people.

Acknowledgements

The authors are very grateful to the 123 stakeholders who took the time to respond to our online survey at short notice. We would also like to thank those with whom we had one-to-one interviews and provided extremely useful information on the content and management of other online sources of information and data. Sarah Francis of Yellow Cherry Digital Ltd provided valuable information on the technical issues associated with setting up online resources. Our collaborative partners Jeremy Sabel and Delphine Pouget at Natural England (NE) provided us with useful insights. Audrey Decou supported us through the ethical approval process.

Thanks go to the Churchill Fellowship which funded MG's research during 2023 when some of the initial thinking for a Conservation Translocations Information Hub was developed.

This project was supported by the England Species Reintroduction Taskforce through NE, the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) and UHI Inverness. Jeremy Sabel at NE organised the contractual elements in collaboration with Monika Maleszka-Ritchie at UHI Inverness and Michelle Wagner at RBGE.

1 Introduction

Conservation translocation involves moving species for conservation purposes. This may be to restore the conservation status of individual species or help restore whole ecosystems. The number of proposals is increasing rapidly, and can involve different types of species, in terrestrial and/or aquatic habitats, led by a diverse range of people and organisations with different motivations, levels of expertise, experience and resources. The projects tend to be complex and resource intensive. Most are biologically challenging, some are also particularly socio-economically challenging.

Done well, conservation translocations can make a significant impact in restoring biodiversity and our wider physical and cultural environment. Done badly, they can result in negative biological impacts, increased human-wildlife conflict and a loss of trust between conservationists, local communities and wider stakeholder groups. Recently illicit and unregulated releases of certain species have risked more polarisation and entrenchment (Holmes 2025).

Over recent years there have been significant developments in producing high level, standardised guidance for practitioners, policy makers and others. The IUCN SSC (Species Survival Commission) Conservation Translocations Specialist Group (CTSG) published its revised guidelines in 2013 (IUCN/CTSG 2013) closely followed by the related *Scottish Code for Conservation Translocations* designed for domestic purposes (National Species Reintroduction Forum 2014), and the *Reintroductions and Other Conservation Translocations: Code and Guidance for England* (Defra 2021). However, a wide range of additional information and material has also been produced in a variety of ways. Much of this information and guidance is currently scattered, often confusing and sometimes even misleading. The authors recognised an increasing need to develop a new online Conservation Translocations Information Hub (CT Information Hub) of trusted resources, in line with national policy and legislation, to help people make good decisions and design projects that succeed for nature and people (Bavin & Bavin 2025, Gaywood 2024).

In response to this, UHI Inverness and the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) started to look at options in 2025 for developing an online hub to hold conservation translocation information for Scotland. The England Species Reintroduction Taskforce (ESRT) also started to discuss the potential for establishing such an online hub. It was decided that there were many benefits to coordinating these activities and to investigate the development of such a resource suitable for all parts of the UK, not least because of the increasing number of trans-boundary translocations taking place.

As a result, a collaborative partnership was established between UHI Inverness, the RBGE and Natural England (NE) acting on behalf of the ESRT. At the end of 2025 an initial 'scoping study' was designed by the partners to conduct a preliminary assessment of the feasibility, desirability, potential risks and opportunities, and practical considerations of establishing such a CT Information Hub. A formal memorandum of agreement between the three partners was finalised on 16 January 2026, with a report submission date set for 31 March 2026. The intention was to involve specialists with national and international experience working in the policy, practice and science of conservation translocations, together with other key stakeholders influenced by and/or with lived experience of such projects. This report is the output of the scoping study. The expectation is that it will be used to help inform whether and how an online CT Information Hub can be established.

2 Aims and objectives

The overall aim of the project was to carry out an initial scoping exercise to examine the issues surrounding the development of a new, UK-wide online hub of conservation translocation guidance and information. Any future hub would be designed to help practitioners, policy makers, decision-makers, communities and other key stakeholders consider and, if judged appropriate, run conservation translocation projects in such a way that they contribute to the restoration of nature and provide benefits to people.

Within the short timescale available for the study, the objectives were:

- To undertake a preliminary survey of experienced or affected stakeholders to gain an understanding of their experience, aspirations, concerns and requirements in relation to conservation translocations
- To identify some of the practical challenges associated with the production and longer-term management of an online CT Information Hub
- To set out several potential options for a CT Information Hub, with associated pros and cons
- To provide recommendations for a way forward, with associated timelines and resource considerations

In addition, consideration was given to the role an online hub could play in raising public awareness of the science and practice around conservation translocations through public engagement, thereby addressing Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and other UK biodiversity targets.

3 Methods

Although the project developed from initiatives involving parties based in Scotland and England, it was decided that the scope should be the whole of the UK. Any further phases of work will, and should, involve a range of other lead organisations, including those in other parts of the UK.

All types of conservation translocation (as defined in the *IUCN Guidelines on Reintroductions and Other Conservation Translocations* and the associated Scottish and English Codes) were considered relevant to this project. Other types of translocation, for example those wholly motivated by commercial purposes, management, welfare etc., were excluded.

The scoping study was run as a desk-based exercise, with the core work led by UHI Inverness and RBGE. The members of the project team have extensive experience in the research, policy, and practice surrounding conservation translocations, and in wider biological, environmental and social research. The project began with an initial start-up meeting between all three partners, with regular contact throughout the process.

Engagement with practitioners, policy makers, and other affected and interested stakeholders was judged to be an essential requirement for the scoping study, and indeed any future phase of project development. This was based particularly on the experience gained from Scotland over recent decades, and the complexities of partnership working, human-wildlife conflict scenarios and community and stakeholder engagement associated with conservation translocation. There is increasing recognition of the significance of the human dimension to conservation translocations, and the value of ensuring proper engagement (not just simple consultation) to conservation outcomes and social justice (Marino et al. 2025)

Information was collated through three main approaches, described below.

3.1 The online survey

3.1.1 Ethical framework and approval

As stated above, stakeholder engagement was judged to be the most important element in considering and developing any CT Information Hub. Ultimately this will require a range of approaches in any future phases of work. However, given the short project timescale project (ten weeks) it was decided the most efficient and effective means of getting a good sample of views from stakeholders across a range of sectors and throughout the UK was through an online survey. Therefore an online survey was designed to address the primary project objectives and to gather stakeholder views on the development and production of a CT Information Hub. A particular focus was placed on determining whether a hub was needed, what type of product would be of most value, and the type of information that it could most usefully hold.

Initial preparations for this started in late 2025, including gaining ethical approval for an appropriately designed project. The two UHI Inverness team members had both received research ethics training, and the UHI Research Ethics Framework was applied. The framework has been designed to promote a fair balance between a researcher's right to unrestricted academic enquiry whilst ensuring adherence to appropriate and robust ethical standards to protect those participating in research studies. The process included a requirement that certain material to be shared with survey participants was first assessed and approved, including:

- A participant information sheet (Appendix 1)

- A questionnaire designed for the online survey, including questions relating to consent (see Appendix 2)

The participant information sheet was designed to make the purpose and use of the research clear so that participants could decide if they were willing to provide informed consent prior to taking part. All participants were given the option of having the information they submitted anonymised. The UHI Animal Welfare and Environment Committee granted ethics approval on 5 January 2026.

3.1.2 Participant selection

The sampling was purposive. The project team was able to draw together a mailing list of 534 key stakeholders involved in the policy and/or practice of conservation translocation based across the UK or working for UK organisations. Stakeholders and stakeholder groups that would have experience of both undertaking and being affected by conservation translocations were identified. The team set out to give no specific consideration to whether the experiences and effects were positive or negative, hoping this information would develop organically from the survey responses. The final list included participants identified from the following groups:

- Members of Scotland's National Species Reintroduction Forum
- Members of the England Species Reintroduction Taskforce
- UK-based members of the IUCN SSC CTSG and the IUCN NCUK Species Survival Working Group
- Known specialists based at the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisations (SNCOs) and other public environmental bodies
- Known specialists/leads based at environmental NGOs (eNGOs) and other membership organisations
- Members of the People and Conservation Translocations Network (PaCT)
- Individuals known by the members of the project team in the conservation, environmental, land and freshwater management sectors and involved with, or influenced by, conservation translocations

Members of the project team did not take part in the online survey.

The team used a snowball sampling technique (where survey respondents were asked to recommend additional individuals they felt should be involved) in an attempt to reach as many relevant stakeholders as possible. Due to the short timescale of the project only three of these recommendations could be added to the list of survey participants. However, the recommendations made will be used to inform future phases of the project.

3.1.3 Survey design

The survey was carried out using Jisc Online Surveys. This online survey tool is approved by UHI for projects of this type as it is recognised as a secure platform for collecting and storing individuals' data.

The online survey was launched on 20 January 2026. A cover email (Appendix 3) was sent to the 534 invited participants together with a weblink to the questionnaire. The project participant information sheet and consent forms were embedded in the survey, and participants could not proceed to the questions without completing them. A deadline of 2 February 2026 was set, meaning it was open for two weeks (ten standard working days). A reminder was sent to all invited participants on 28 January 2026. Initially, there were plans to extend the deadline by a

further week, but 123 participants responded during the short survey period, sufficiently high that it was decided that an extension was not required. This decision accounted for the need to ensure there was sufficient project team capacity to properly analyse the survey results and report back by 31 March 2026.

The online survey questionnaire involved 28 questions (see Appendix 2 for the full list of questions):

- Type 1: Questions 1-6 (six questions) were about consent. The answers given have been used to ensure the participants' wishes regarding anonymity, and the sharing of their responses in this report, are applied.
- Type 2: Questions 20, 26-28 (four questions) gathered basic information on the names of participants' organisations, email addresses, willingness to be engaged in future phases of work, and recommendations of other individuals and organisations who should also be involved in future phases.
- Type 3: Questions 7, 11, 21-25 (seven questions) involved requesting background information on the roles and expertise of participants, their general involvement in conservation translocations and how easy/difficult they found sourcing information. These questions involved selecting an option or options from a drop-down menu.
- Type 4: Questions 8-10, 12-19 (eleven questions) sought to gather free text responses from the participants to describe their experiences, views, concerns, aspirations etc. of conservation translocation information and guidance.

In all cases, care was taken over the wording to try to avoid leading questions and ensure objectivity.

3.1.4 Survey analyses

The Type 3 and 4 questions were designed to help us learn more about the participants' views and experiences with conservation translocation information and on a potential future online hub. The Type 3 questions requested simpler background information, were based on fixed categories, and analysed using simple quantitative approaches. In contrast, the responses to the Type 4 questions involved the use of free-text answers and were qualitative. The Type 4 questions were the core element of the survey, and a qualitative approach was judged appropriate to enable more in-depth, nuanced insights into the experiences, motivations, and behaviours of the participants. Qualitative approaches tend to be more effective at dealing with more sensitive topics and producing rich data, often surpassing quantitative surveys in understanding "why" and "how".

The qualitative nature of the key Type 4 questions required careful and appropriate analyses of the answers. The eleven questions were answered by 123 participants, meaning there were 1,353 free-text answers to collate and analyse. Broadly, the data were analysed using a team thematic analysis – the project team members read through the responses and identified themes individually, before coming together to discuss and agree on the themes for inclusion in this final report. Two main, interrelated methods were employed by team members in determining their initial themes.

The first method involved the use of AI. The data from the Type 4 questions were fed into ChatGPT and Co-Pilot, which were then asked to collate and analyse the responses and draw out themes to address three questions:

- What key themes can be identified for each of the eleven free-text questions?

- What overarching themes can be identified from a collation of all eleven free-text questions?
- Do the survey participants think there a "need" for a CT Information Hub?

The AI tools were only given access to the free-text responses and not to any of the other survey responses, such as those including the personal information provided by participants. Chat GPT was also asked to provide recommendations arising from the analyses, which helped to inform the recommendations section of this report. Specific, non-leading questions were used for the AI exercises. A key benefit in using such AI tools is that, if directed appropriately, they remove human and potentially biased (including unconsciously biased) interpretations of the responses, therefore potentially providing a more objective analysis.

The pros and cons of using AI are discussed in Section 5.2. It was recognised that there are potential risks using AI for such exercises, including the possible inclusion of inaccuracies and AI "hallucinations". To avoid this, a second method was employed whereby two members of the project team manually went through all 1,353 free-text answers independently to identify themes. At the end of the exercise, the results of the two team members were compared to each other and the results of the AI exercise, and the consistency of all three sets of themes identified was checked. Broadly, the themes of the team members and the AI were found to be consistent. The final results presented in Section 4.1.2 are a combination of the AI responses and the team member responses, with the AI responses forming the broad structure and the team member analyses providing a human overview and quality assessment of the details.

As part of the analysis, participant quotes were identified by project team members and/or AI tools that illustrated particular themes. These have been included in anonymised form in the results section below.

3.2 Interviews with managers of conservation information hubs

There are several existing, or planned, online information and data hubs that deal with a range of conservation topics, some of them specifically on the topic of conservation translocation. It was felt important that any future CT Information Hub avoids inefficiencies, duplication and the reinvention of tools or resources already available on authoritative online websites. Opportunities to highlight and provide links to such resources were also examined.

A number of initial, unstructured online interviews were held with the managers of such online hubs to discuss opportunities and risks, and to learn from their experiences managing them. For this scoping study, the focus was on certain online hubs based in the UK. In addition, an interview was also held with the chair of the IUCN SSC CTSG since it has high relevance.

Managers of the following online hubs were interviewed, and summary information was recorded and is provided in Section 4.2 of this report:

- Applied Ecology Resources - Trinity King and Philip Dooner, British Ecological Society
- BSBI Distribution Database - Matt Harding, BSBI Scotland
- Conservation Evidence - Rebecca Smith, University of Cambridge
- UK Conservation Translocations Database (in development) - David Roy, UKCEH Wallingford
- Restoration Hub (in development) - Morag McCracken, UKCEH Wallingford
- IUCN SSC CTSG website - Axel Moehrenschlager and Pritpal Soorae, CTSG

3.3 Technical considerations associated with the building and management of an online hub

The design, construction and ongoing maintenance of an online hub requires technical expertise and resources. A short sub-project was therefore organised with specialist website construction and AI consultants based at Yellow Cherry Digital Limited. This was organised after the initial analyses of the online survey so that some of the key issues and themes highlighted by the survey participants could be used within the sub-project.

The overall aim of the sub-project was to provide succinct, preliminary information on some of the key considerations associated with setting up any future online, web-based conservation translocation hub. More specifically the objectives were:

- To describe what type of key issues need to be considered when designing, setting up and maintaining an online CT Information Hub
- To set out some options for how such an online CT Information Hub could be designed, set up and maintained, with associated advantages and disadvantages
- To provide an approximate indication of costs associated with the options and different stages of designing, setting up and maintaining an online CT Information Hub

The desk-based project began with an initial start-up meeting between Yellow Cherry Digital Limited and the project team. At this stage, it is uncertain what design features may be included in any future CT Information Hub, but the initial recommendations that arose from the online survey were shared, including issues such as accessibility, ease of use for readers and web managers, and long-term hub management. The types of potential information and facilities that could be made available through such an online hub were also shared. The specialist consultants were also asked to provide an assessment of possible roles and options for using AI tools in an online hub.

4 Results

4.1 Online Survey

A total of 123 survey responses were received following invitations to 534 individuals (23% response rate). Further analysis showed that 113 responses were from 534 invitees (21% response rate), with a further ten responses from others who had been sent links to the survey by their colleagues. This was felt to be a good sample size, taking into account the very short survey window of ten working days.

4.1.1 Quantitative analyses

Figures 1 – 7 show graphical breakdowns of the answers given by the participants to the Type 3 questions. These provide a picture of the expertise and backgrounds of the participants, and their roles in conservation translocation.

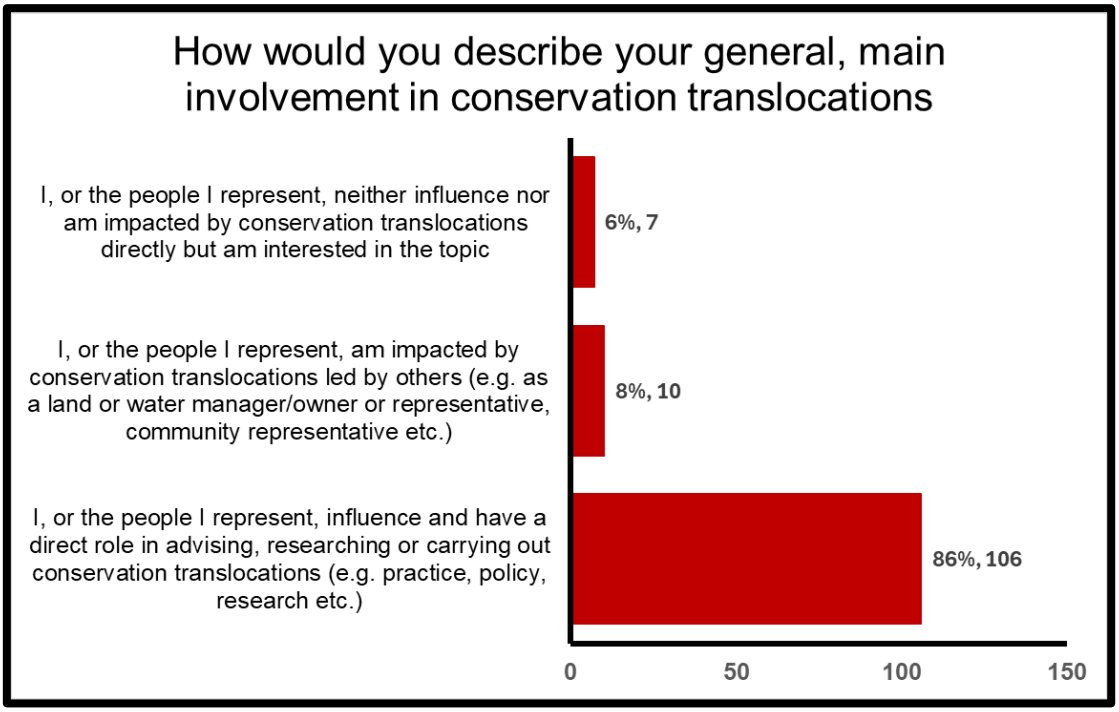

Figure 1. Breakdown of results for online survey question 7: *"How would you describe your general, main involvement in conservation translocations?"*

Fig. 1 shows the large majority of participants (86%) had a role in advising, researching or carrying out conservation translocations (e.g. practice, policy, research etc.). Participants impacted by, or representing people impacted by, such interventions also contributed to the survey but were a minority (8%).

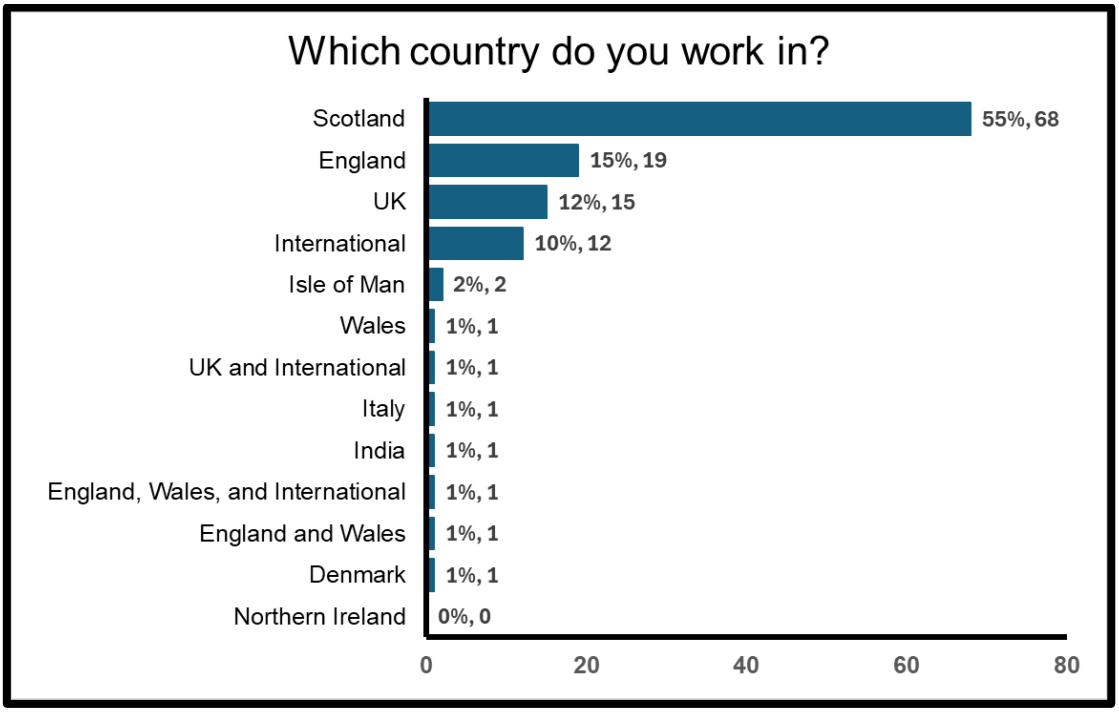

Figure 2. Breakdown of results for online survey question 21: *"Which country do you work in?"*

Scotland provided the bulk of participant responses for the survey (Fig. 2, 55%) with England second (17%). Out of the 21 respondents from England, eight were members of the ESRT (including two NE secretariat members). The rest of the UK was poorly represented with one participant from Wales and none from Northern Ireland, plus two participants from the Isle of Man (not part of the UK).

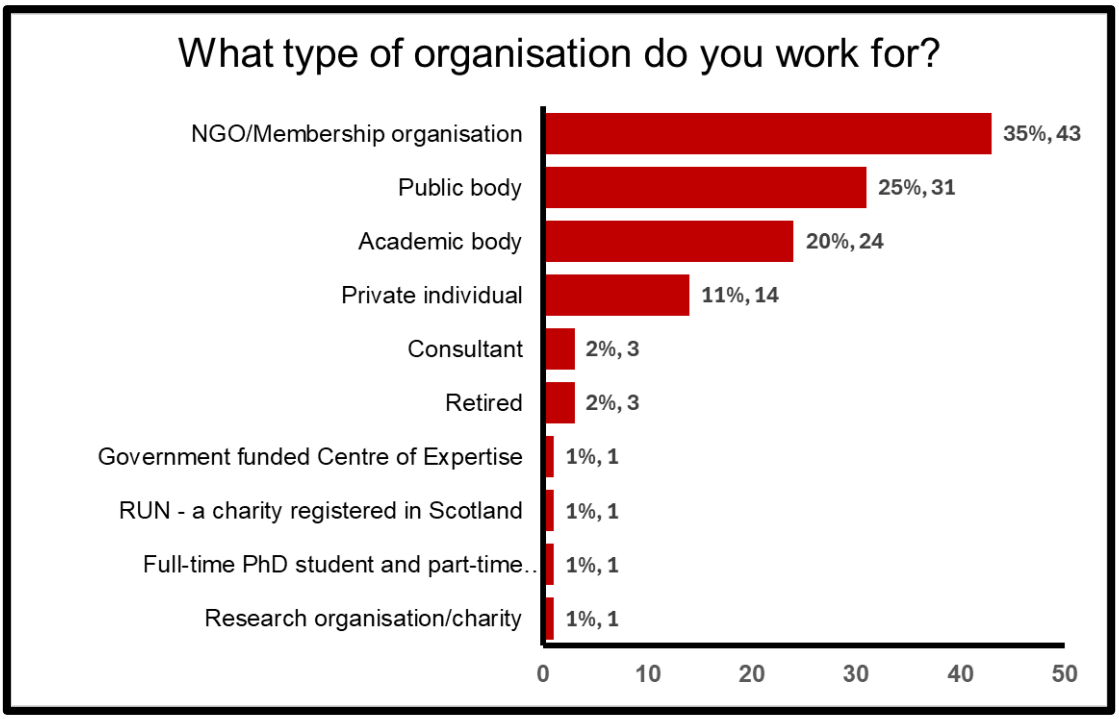

Figure 3. Breakdown of results for online survey question 22: *"What type of organisation do you work for?"*

There was a reasonable mix of backgrounds across the participants, with a small majority coming from NGOs and membership organisations (Fig. 3, 35%).

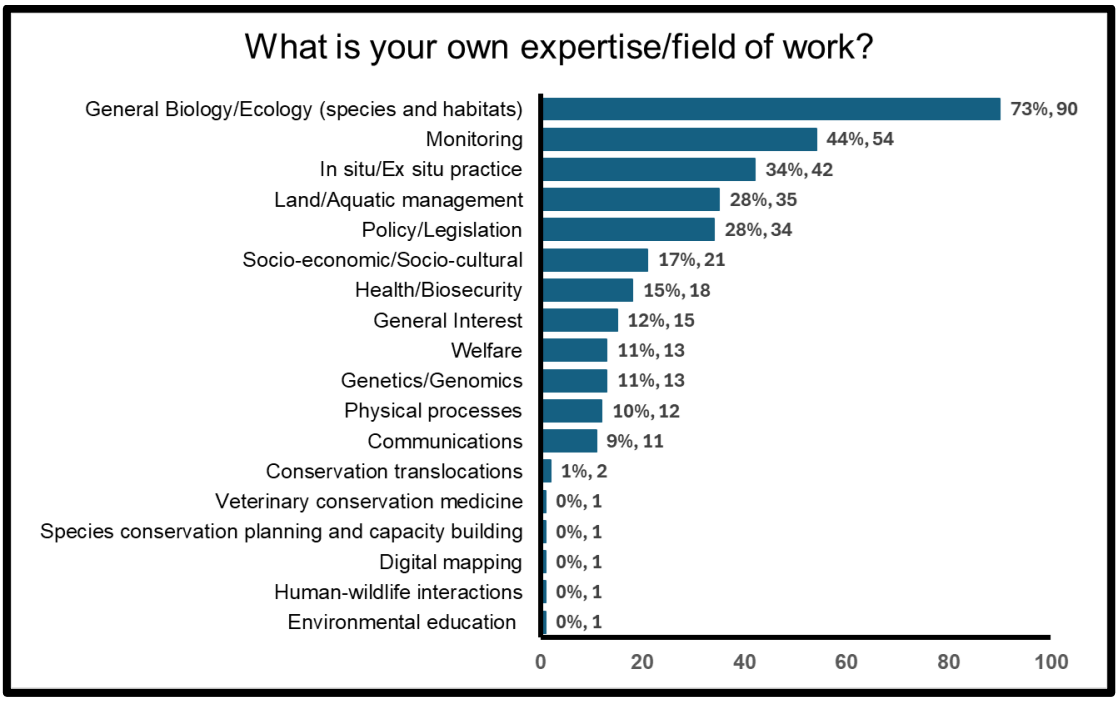

Figure 4. Breakdown of results for online survey question 23: *"What is your own expertise/field of work?"* Multiple answers were possible for each participant.

Fig. 4 shows a majority (73%) of respondents with biological and ecological specialisms, with a high number (44%) highlighting their involvement in monitoring – more than those involved in conservation translocation practice (34%) and policy/legislation (28%). Over a quarter of respondents highlighted their involvement in land/aquatic management (28%). A wide range of other specialisms were also represented.

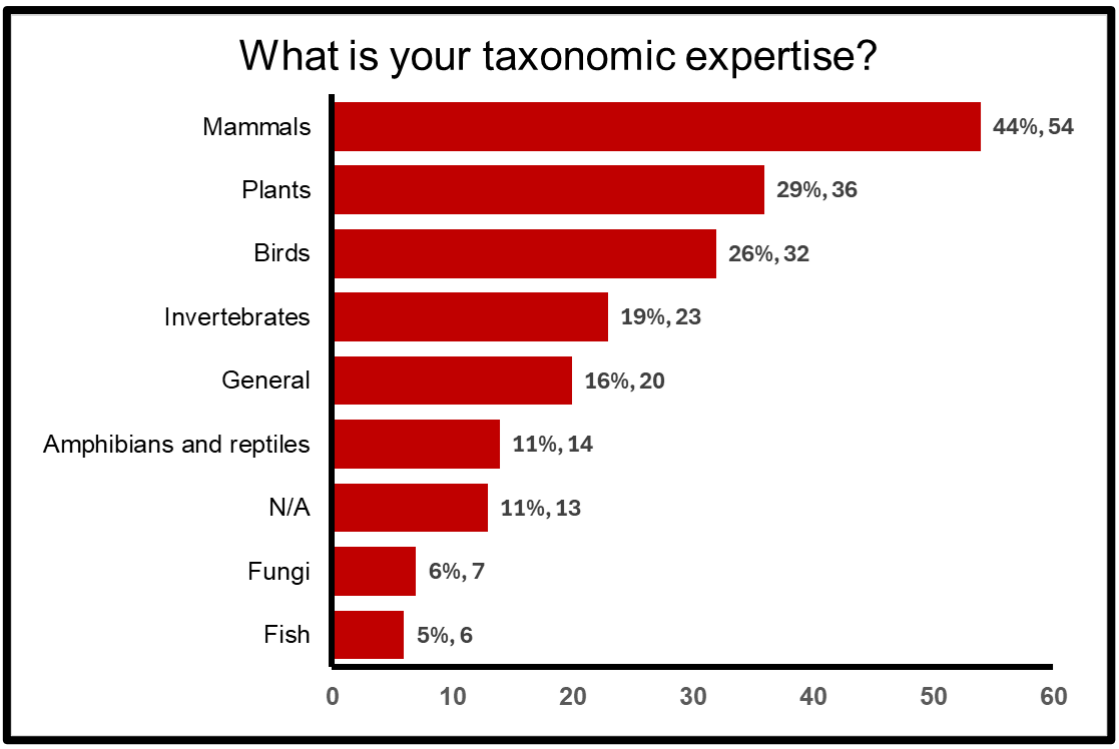

Figure 5. Breakdown of results for online survey question 24: *"What is your taxonomic expertise if applicable?"* Multiple answers were possible for each participant.

Only 11% of respondents noted that they had no particular taxonomic specialism (Fig. 5), reflecting those who are not directly involved in specific or general species issues. However large numbers are involved with vertebrates such as mammals (44%) and birds (26%). Plants represented the second biggest category with almost a third of respondents with this specialism (29%).

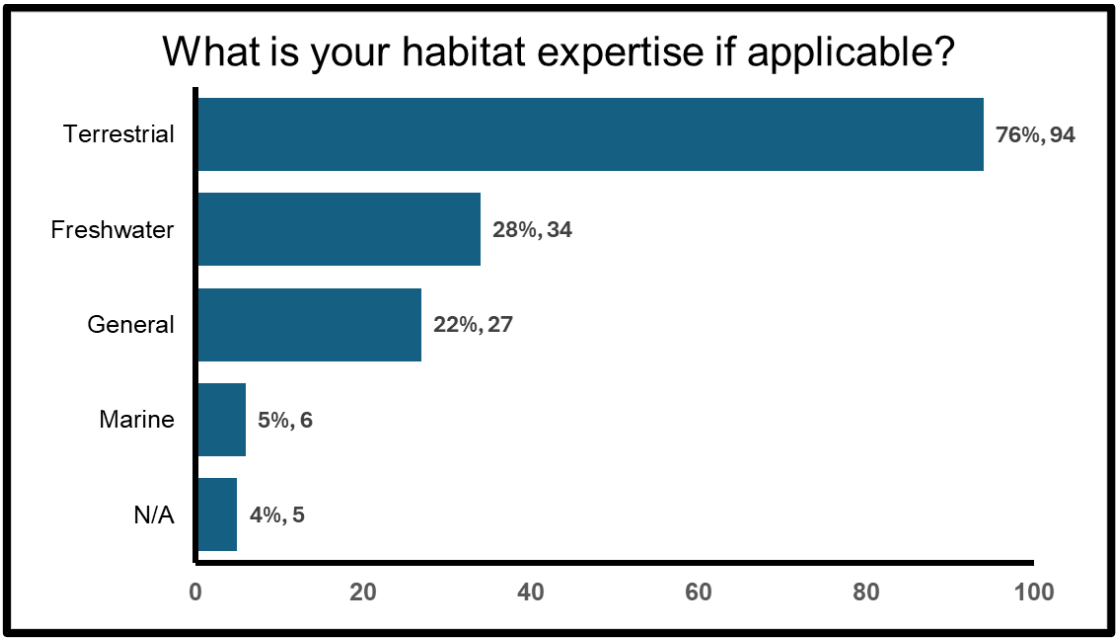

Figure 6. Breakdown of results for online survey question 25: *"What is your habitat expertise, if applicable?"* Multiple answers were possible for each participant.

Expertise in terrestrial habitats was by far the largest category reported by participants (Fig.6, 76%), but there was a reasonable representation of freshwater expertise (28%) and a small number of marine experts (5%).

These patterns should be borne in mind when interpreting the survey findings; this is discussed further in section 5.1.

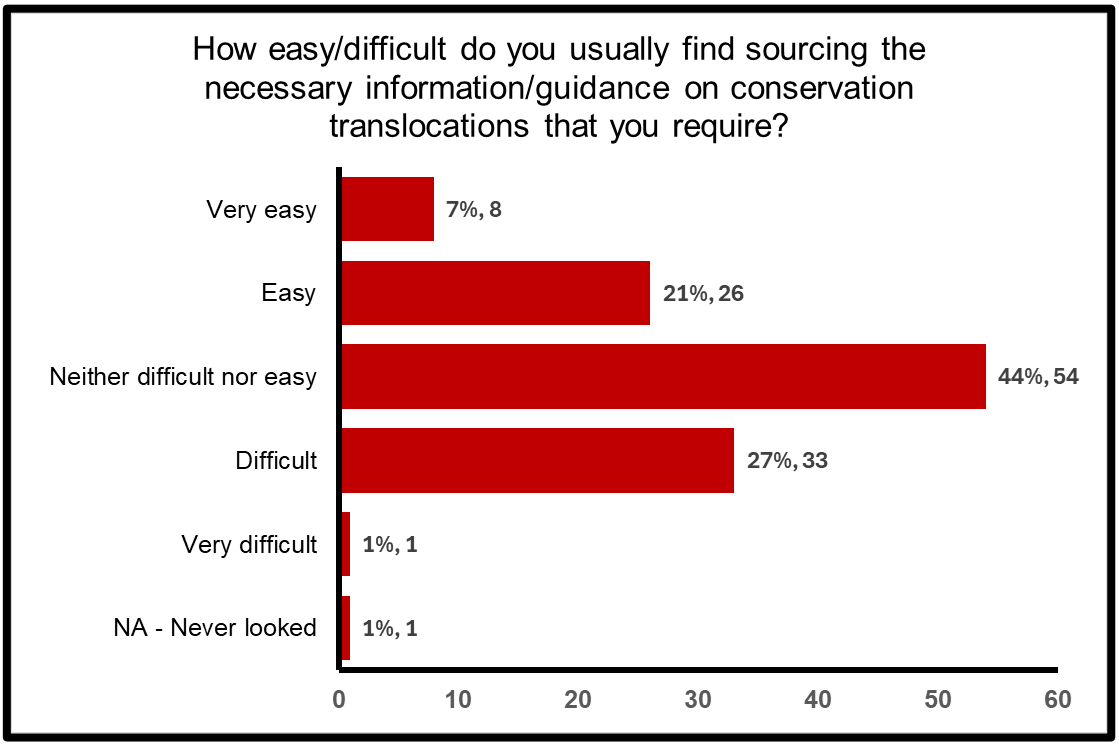

Figure 7. Breakdown of results for online survey question 11: *"How easy/difficult do you usually find sourcing the necessary information/guidance on conservation translocations that you require?"*

The final Type 3 question for which quantitative data was available did not focus on the background of the participant but involved a simple assessment of the ease/difficulty participants had sourcing information on conservation translocations (Fig.7). The results were evenly balanced with 2% finding it difficult or very difficult, 28% easy or very easy, and a middle 44% noting they found it neither difficult nor easy.

4.1.2 Qualitative analyses

The eleven free-text 'Type 4' questions formed the core part of the survey. The questions were answered by 123 participants, meaning there were 1,353 individual free-text answers to collate and analyse.

The following three Sections (4.1.2.1 to 4.1.2.2) provide the results of the independent analyses carried out by the two project team members and AI to address the following three project questions:

- What key themes can be identified for each of the eleven free-text questions?

- What overarching themes can be identified from a collation of all eleven free-text questions?
- Is there a “need” for a CT Information Hub?

There was a strong level of agreement between the two project team members regarding the key themes they identified, with only occasional differences with less common but potentially significant themes. The same was true when comparing the project team member analyses and the ChatGPT analyses. Indeed, the outputs of the AI tool far surpassed the expectations of the team members in its comprehensiveness and ability to accurately identify themes and summarise results objectively, strongly reflecting the thematic patterns recorded by the two team members.

4.1.2.1 What key themes can be identified for each of the free-text questions?

The first thematic analysis was carried out for each of the eleven individual free-text questions. The project team member and AI results were combined for the purposes of this study, with the AI analysis providing the main framework to reduce potential human bias. The AI analysis was produced using the question: *"The spreadsheet contains responses from a survey for which we had 123 responses. It contains 11 questions for which people had a free text option. Summarise the results by a) pulling out key themes and b) use key quotations for the subsequent report to illustrate key points."*

These themes were considered the most important by the AI analysis. The analysis summarised the respondents' answers and grouped them by commonality. The summaries below show the most common responses to each of the eleven free-text questions. The AI categorised these as key themes because at least 40% of respondents gave equivalent answers to the question being asked. In most cases (10/11 questions), at least one of the themes reflects the opinion of more than 50% of the respondents. Roughly half the questions (7/11) resulted in a theme reflecting the opinion of more than 60% of the respondents. While approximately a third (4/11) of the questions resulted in a theme reflecting the opinion of more than 70% of the respondents.

Q8. Why have you looked for information on conservation translocations?

1. **To understand and apply best practice** – c. 70%
   Most respondents wanted to ensure their work follows established, evidence-based practice and relevant codes/guidelines.
2. **To inform specific projects and decisions** – c. 60%
   Many were directly involved in planning, licensing, delivering or monitoring CTs and needed information for feasibility, methodology, risk assessment or monitoring design.
3. **To learn from past experience (successes and failures)** – c. 45%
   People sought case studies and outcome data from other projects (UK and international) to avoid repeating mistakes and to understand what worked where, and why.
4. **For research and policy work** – c. 25%
   Academics, PhD students and policy advisers used CT information to conduct literature reviews, frame research questions, and provide advice to governments or NGOs.

Illustrative quotations from participants included:

- "*To gather case studies that inform the advice that I give on CT, to understand best practice and what has worked and what has not*."
- "*To understand best practice. To ensuring following proven, evidenced ways of working to maximise success*."

Q9. What sources of information have you used during your involvement with conservation translocations?

1. **Formal guidance and codes** – c. 60%
   Very frequent references to IUCN Guidelines, Scottish and English Codes, NatureScot/Natural England web pages and taxon-specific codes (e.g. wood ant guidance).
2. **Peer-reviewed and grey literature** – c. 55%
   Academic journal articles, books, PhD theses, government reports, NGO reports and technical guidance were widely used, often via Google Scholar/Web of Science.

3. **Expert opinion and peer networks** – c. 50%
   Species experts, colleagues, statutory agency staff, zoos, NGOs and long-standing practitioners were important sources, especially where literature is sparse.
4. **Meetings, conferences and site visits** – c. 25%
   Workshops, conferences, specialist groups, field visits and informal conversations were cited as valuable for tacit knowledge and lessons not written up.

Illustrative quotations from participants included:

- "*IUCN conservation translocations guidelines, Scottish code for conservation translocations, English code for conservation translocations, species experts…*"
- "*Published academic literature, grey literature, expert opinion… My own data gathered through my research (social science data such as surveys and interviews, mostly)*."

Q10. Why have you used those sources of information?

1. **Perceived reliability and authority** – c. 50%
   Respondents stressed the importance of peer-review, statutory status, or recognised expert authorship; codes and guidelines were trusted as "benchmarks".
2. **Accessibility and relevance to their role** – c. 35%
   Many chose sources that were easiest to access (open access journals, internal documents, colleagues) and directly relevant to their species, system or jurisdiction.
3. **Depth and practicality** – c. 25%
   People valued sources that combine high-level principles with detailed, practical methods and real-world experiences (including welfare, social and legal aspects).

Illustrative quotations from participants included:

- "*Trusted sources and best practice guidance refined over several iterations with input from experienced practitioners*."
- "*They draw on real life experience from people who have previously pioneered these translocations*."

Q12. Can you provide an example of information/guidance you found easy AND an example you found difficult to locate?

1. **Easy to find** – c. 70%
   - Generic CT guidance (IUCN Guidelines, Scottish/English Codes).
   - Basic species ecology and high-level policy/strategy (e.g. Beaver Management Framework, Scottish Beaver Strategy).
   - Well-known or recent high-profile projects (e.g. beavers, wildcats, eagles, some plants and butterflies).
2. **Difficult to find** – c. 60%
   - Project-level details and outcomes (especially older or less "charismatic" species).
   - Grey literature, unpublished reports, consultancy outputs and internal documents.
   - Information on failed or abandoned projects, and on negative impacts.
   - Detailed social data and examples of stakeholder engagement in practice.
   - Plant health/biosecurity and disease risk guidance for plants and invertebrates.
3. **Barriers**
   - Paywalls and subscription-only journals for those outside academia.
   - Poor signposting, scattered information across multiple websites.

- Inconsistent terminology and keywords, making literature searches harder.
- Sensitive or "under the radar" projects where locations or details are withheld.

Illustrative quotations from participants included:

- "*IUCN guidelines, Scottish and English codes… easy to find. Some grey literature is more difficult to track down*."
- "*Information on outcomes of translocations and definitions of success are harder to locate*."

Q13. Do you have any general comments on issues you've experienced sourcing information and guidance on conservation translocations?

1. **Inconsistent documentation and data gaps** – c. 50%
   Strong concern about variability in what is recorded across projects, lack of standardisation, and scarcity of long term monitoring data.
2. **Under-reporting of failures and negative outcomes** – c. 40%
   Many noted a systematic bias toward publishing success stories and positive ecological outcomes, with little on failures, conflict or welfare problems.
3. **Fragmentation and inaccessibility** – c. 35%
   Information is dispersed across agencies, NGOs, journals and informal networks; grey literature and internal reports are often hard to locate or obtain.
4. **Under-representation of some taxa and disciplines** – c. 30%
   Plants, invertebrates, lichens, bryophytes; social science and human-dimensions work; plant-health risks.
5. **Perceived bias and lack of balance** – c. 15–20%
   Some feel pro-translocation/environmental perspectives dominate; farmer/land-manager views and critical analysis less visible.

Illustrative quotations from participants included:

- "*The amount of information available between different CT projects varies wildly… there is not enough long term data collected/recorded*."
- "*There is also a lack of recording of CTs that did not work out/fail*."
- "*It is easy to find information produced by pro-translocation sources… much more difficult to find sources from anti-translocation sources, or neutral/ambivalent*."

Q14. What do you think would be the main challenges associated with a conservation translocation hub?

1. **Maintenance, resourcing and updating** – c. 60%
   The most commonly raised challenge: a hub will require dedicated staff time and secure funding to keep information current and relevant.
2. **Populating the hub and data quality** – c. 30%
   Getting busy practitioners and organisations to submit robust, standardised information (including from failed or controversial projects) is seen as difficult.
3. **Governance, bias and representativeness** – c. 25%
   Concerns that the hub could be perceived as owned by or biased toward particular interests (e.g. pro-rewilding NGOs) unless governance is broad and transparent.
4. **Scope, complexity and usability** – c. 20%
   Covering different taxa, habitats, jurisdictions and disciplines (ecology, social science, welfare, law) without becoming unwieldy or confusing is recognised as a major design challenge.

5. **Sensitive information and confidentiality** – c. 15
   Need to manage sensitive location data (e.g. raptors, rare plants), commercial confidentiality, and ethical issues around social data and unpublished work.

Illustrative quotations from participants included:

- "*Maintaining it as up to date as possible would be a lot of work*."
- "*Awareness and keeping it up to date… someone would need a committed portion of their time to be focussed on updating/managing the hub*."

Q15. What do you think would be the main opportunities associated with a conservation translocation hub?

1. **Centralised, accessible information ("one-stop shop")** – c. 70%
   A single, well-organised entry point for CT guidance, case studies and data is widely viewed as the main opportunity.
2. **Knowledge exchange and learning (including failures)** – c. 55%
   The hub is seen as a way to share lessons learned across taxa and regions, particularly on what has not worked, to avoid repeating mistakes.
3. **Raising standards and consistency** – c. 40%
   By making good practice visible and accessible, respondents hope a hub could improve the design, monitoring and reporting of CTs and make poor practice less excusable.
4. **Networking and community of practice** – c. 30%
   Potential to connect practitioners, researchers, regulators and stakeholders; support mentoring; and break down silos between projects, sectors and countries.
5. **Transparency, trust and public understanding** – c. 25%
   Having accessible, authoritative information could help counter misinformation, support more constructive dialogue, and improve understanding of CT rationales and trade-offs.

Illustrative quotations from participants included:

- "*All info is in one place and access to species specialists*."
- "*It would be great to have a place where case studies can be deposited for easy access and evaluation*."
- "*Making poor practice inexcusable by presenting accessible data and best practice guidance*."

Q16. Who are the 'essential' audiences a conservation translocation hub should be designed for?

1. **Practitioners and project leads** – c. 75%
   Staff in NGOs, conservation charities, community groups, zoos, consultants and land managers directly planning and delivering CTs were overwhelmingly seen as core users.
2. **Statutory bodies and regulators** – c. 60%
   NatureScot, Natural England, other SNCBs, licensing authorities and relevant government departments are considered essential users and contributors.
3. **Landowners and land managers** – c. 40%
   Farmers, crofters, foresters, estate managers, infrastructure owners who host or are affected by CTs.
4. **Policy-makers and funders** – c. 25%
   Government policy teams, funding bodies, strategic programme managers.

Illustrative quotations from participants included:

- "*Conservation translocation practitioners… and especially those people who are designing a conservation translocation for the first time*."
- "*Given they have the power to authorise or prevent translocations, NE and DEFRA staff… universities, NGOs and ultimately the public*."
- "*Practitioners, landowners, managers that require the information to make projects successful and consider all relevant angles*."

Q17. Who are the 'desirable' audiences a conservation translocation hub should be designed for?

1. **General public and interested citizens** – c. 40%
   Often described as desirable rather than core, but important for transparency, education and reducing polarisation.
2. **Affected stakeholders beyond practitioners** – c. 35%
   Farmers, crofters, gamekeepers, anglers, local communities and user groups are sometimes classed as "desirable" in hub design terms, though many respondents argue they are essential to CT practice.
3. **Media and opinion-formers** – c. 15–20%
   Journalists, commentators and communications staff were seen as useful secondary audiences to improve accuracy of public debate.
4. **Students and early-career professionals** – c. 20%
   Schools, university students and trainees were seen as important for capacity-building and future practice.
5. **International practitioners and policy-makers** – c. 10–15%
   For comparative learning and collaboration.

Illustrative quotations from participants included:

- "*Everyone that is affect[ed] by translocation, leaving out any sector will only alienate them*."
- "*Children and other groups for educational purposes*."
- "*Media – to prevent unhelpful stories*."

Q18. What do you think would be most beneficial to include in any online hub?

1. **Structured case studies (including failures)** – c. 65%
   Standardised short accounts covering rationale, feasibility (ecological and social), methods, welfare/biosecurity, monitoring, outcomes (good and bad), lessons learned.
2. **Searchable project register and document library** – c. 55%
   - List/map of past, ongoing and planned CTs with basic metadata (species/taxon, location, dates, CT type, lead organisation, outcome status).
   - Searchable repository of key reports, guidance and references.
3. **Consolidated guidance and practical tools** – c. 50%
   - Signposting to IUCN and national codes, taxon-specific guidance.
   - Step-by-step overviews of feasibility, licensing, implementation, monitoring and exit.
   - Templates: DRAs, HRAs, stakeholder engagement plans, monitoring protocols, licence checklists, decision trees.
4. **Contacts and networking mechanisms** – c. 30–35%
   - Directories of experts and practitioners.
   - Moderated Q&A, webinars, "teach-ins", practice notes, mentoring.

5. **Thematic resources beyond ecology** – c. 30%
    - Social/human dimensions (conflict, coexistence, engagement, governance).
    - Animal welfare frameworks and species-specific guidance.
    - Plant health and broader biosecurity guidance.
    - Clear legal/policy summaries per jurisdiction.

Illustrative quotations from participants included:

- "*Case studies of what works (and doesn't work) in conservation translocations*."
- "*A map showing location of translocation efforts/species… a list of all organisations involved in translocations*."
- "*Easy to understand information on how to carry out a biosecurity risk assessment for a translocation project*."
- "*Guidance on how to design, undertake, report on and monitor*."

Q19. What would help reassure you that any online hub contained appropriate and trusted information/guidance on conservation translocations?

1. **Credible governance and broad endorsement** – c. 50%
   Respondents want the hub hosted or clearly endorsed by trusted, plural bodies (e.g. SNCOs, IUCN specialist groups, reputable universities and NGOs), with a visible multi-organisation steering group.
2. **Transparent quality assurance and peer review** – c. 45%
   Clear information on how content is selected, reviewed and updated; labelling of content type (peer-reviewed, expert-reviewed, practitioner case report) and full referencing/attribution.
3. **Evidence of regular updates and version control** – c. 35–40%
   Visible "last updated" dates, scheduled reviews of key materials, and archiving of superseded guidance were all mentioned as important for trust.
4. **Balance and inclusion of diverse perspectives** – c. 30%
   Trust would be increased by:
    - Including failures and controversial cases.
    - Reflecting views of farmers, land managers, sceptical or critical voices as well as advocates.
    - Avoiding "propaganda" or overly positive messaging.
5. **Honesty about uncertainty and gaps** – c. 20%
   Respondents emphasised that acknowledging knowledge gaps and contested issues would increase, not reduce, trust.

Illustrative quotations from participants included:

- "*Hosted by a reputable organisation… produced by a partnership of highly trusted organisations*."
- "*Some form of quality control/validation process is needed to ensure all material on the hub has been checked for accuracy*."
- "*Cutting through the propaganda of translocations – real clear data. No political spin*."
- "*An active and updated set of 'data gaps', effectively showing what we need to study or write up*."

4.1.2.2 What overarching themes can be identified from a collation of all free-text questions?

The second thematic analysis involved an assessment of all responses across the eleven free-text questions. The project team member's and AI results were combined for the purposes of this study, with the AI analysis providing the main framework to reduce potential human bias. The AI analysis was produced using the question: *"Pick out broad major, middle, minor themes from the overall survey, including critical voices"*.

The major themes are those that the team considered to occur across a clear majority of responses, almost to the point of ubiquity. The middle-level themes were those that were threaded through the responses but typically reflected fewer than half of the respondents – e.g. the responses regarding welfare and/or biosecurity were consistently present across questions but reflected the concerns of a fairly clearly defined subset of respondents.

Finally, the minor themes reflect instances where only a few respondents (in some instances, just one or two respondents with particularly strongly held views) gave consistent responses across questions. However, the opinions in these responses were felt to be important enough that they needed to be recorded – e.g. it is in this category that almost all the negative opinions towards conservation translocations and those advocating for them were recorded. Meaning that ignoring these low frequency, but insistent, voices would have lost key information vital to making any potential CT Information Hub appealing to these stakeholders, as well as those who advocate for conservation translocations as a conservation tool.

Major Themes (strong, recurring across many responses)

1. Need for accessible, centralised, evidence-based information

Across roles (practitioners, regulators, academics, land managers), people report that CT information is:

- **Scattered** across guidelines, papers, grey literature, project websites and informal networks.
- **Highly variable** in depth and quality between projects and taxa.
- Often **hard to find**, especially older work, grey literature and project-level details.

There is broad support for some form of **central, searchable hub** or "one-stop shop" that:

- Brings together **IUCN and national guidance**.
- Hosts or signposts **project case studies** and outcomes.
- Provides **practical tools** (templates, decision trees, checklists, monitoring protocols).

This is consistently framed as a way to **raise standards**, **avoid reinventing the wheel**, and **save time**.

2. Desire to learn from *real* practice – especially failures

A very strong theme is frustration with the **bias towards success stories**:

- Respondents say failures, difficulties and "what went wrong" are:
    - Rarely written up.
    - Sometimes actively suppressed (e.g. reputational, funding or political concerns).
- Yet these are seen as **crucial** for:
    - Improving future design.
    - Avoiding repeated mistakes.
    - Being honest with regulators, funders and the public.

Many explicitly ask that any hub:

- Require or at least strongly encourage **reporting of negative outcomes**, not just "flagship" success.
- Provide **worked examples**:
    - Failed or mixed projects.
    - CTs that were not approved or did not proceed (and why).
    - Cases where social conflict, welfare issues or biosecurity problems arose.

This is tied directly to **trust**: a hub that only shows successes would be seen as **biased and untrustworthy**.

3. Consistent standards, but better practical support

Most respondents are broadly aligned around **existing standards**:

- IUCN Guidelines.
- Scottish and English Codes.
- Taxon-specific guidance (e.g. wood ants, water voles).

But they report:

- **Inconsistent application** in practice.
- Variable understanding of:
    - When CT is appropriate vs other interventions.
    - How to do social feasibility and stakeholder engagement properly.
    - What constitutes adequate monitoring and reporting.

The message is not "write new codes", but:

- **Clarify and operationalise** existing guidance.
- Provide **practical tools** that map directly to the steps in IUCN/national codes:
    - Decision trees (should we do CT at all? what type?).
    - Templates (DRA, engagement plans, monitoring).
    - Examples of **good and poor practice** linked to each step.

4. Social licence, conflict and the human dimensions are under-served

A major cross-cutting theme: CTs are **not just technical ecological exercises**.

Respondents emphasise:

- Social conflict and coexistence (beavers, large carnivores, raptors).
- Power dynamics and perceived arrogance of some conservation actors.
- Deep-rooted values, livelihoods and cultural issues for land managers and communities.
- The limits of "more data will fix it" narratives.

Many say:

- CT discourse still **over-privileges ecological/biological data**.
- Social science is growing but remains **harder to find** and less integrated into guidance.
- Many practitioners feel **under-equipped** on engagement, listening, co-design and conflict management.

Critical voices here include:

- Farmers and land managers frustrated at being **consulted late** or feeling **talked at**, not listened to.
- Social scientists warning against **"deficit model"** approaches (assuming resistance stems from ignorance).

There is strong demand for a hub to:

- Give equal weight to **social/human-dimensions resources**.

- Show **real examples** of engagement and conflict management (including when it went badly).
- Provide practical **coexistence and governance tools**, not just ecological feasibility checklists.

Middle-Level Themes (frequent, but more specific or nuanced)

5. Animal welfare and plant/biosecurity are unevenly treated
Respondents point to:

- **Animal welfare**:
  - Some guidance alludes to welfare, but **few projects report on welfare outcomes** explicitly.
  - Desire for minimum welfare standards and species-specific guidance (e.g. handling, release methods, post-release monitoring of stress/mortality).
- **Plant and pathogen risks**:
  - Plant health and inadvertent pathogen introduction are **often overlooked**, even in guidance.
  - Plant pathologists stress that poorly considered planting/translocation can **undermine entire conservation aims** by moving diseases.

This group wants the hub to:

- Explicitly integrate **welfare and biosecurity** into standard practice, not as afterthoughts.
- Offer **risk-assessment templates**, examples and links to plant-health best practice.

6. Documentation of small, cryptic or "uncharismatic" taxa is especially poor
Multiple respondents working on:

- Plants (trees, arable weeds, montane flora, cryptogams).
- Invertebrates (insects, freshwater mussels).
- Lichens, bryophytes and fungi.

report that:

- Historical and contemporary translocations are **poorly documented**.
- Many actions are **experimental or local**, sometimes done by individuals or small groups with minimal reporting.
- Guidance and case studies **focus on charismatic vertebrates**.

They see a hub as a chance to:

- Capture **small, "niche" translocations**.
- Build a **shared evidence base** for group-specific methods (plants, inverts, lichens, etc.).
- Avoid "accidental" poor practice by well-meaning practitioners or volunteers.

Critical nuance: some lichen/bryophyte experts explicitly argue that:

- For certain species, **translocation is physically impossible or ecologically inappropriate**, and should **not** be promoted as a default conservation tool.

7. Large variance in project quality, monitoring and follow-up
Respondents describe:

- Some projects with **excellent documentation and long-term monitoring** (e.g. some beaver, eagle, crane and butterfly projects).
- Many others with:

    - Short or non-existent monitoring.
    - Limited or no written outputs.
    - Poorly defined success criteria.

Concerns include:

- CT being used as a **"quick win"** without adequate resourcing for long-term follow-up.
- Funders and organisations preferring **good-news stories**, while monitoring is under-funded.

A hub is seen as a way to:

- Normalise expectations for **monitoring duration and quality**.
- Encourage **transparent reporting** of methods, costs, and outcomes.

8. Central role for statutory agencies – but also sources of frustration

Country agencies (NatureScot, NE and equivalents) are:

- Seen as **essential audiences and partners**: they licence CTs and set many expectations.
- Regularly used as information sources (web guidance, policy, licensing advice).

But several respondents also express frustration:

- **Slow, opaque or inconsistent licensing** decisions.
- Perceived **under-resourcing** of agencies.
- Concerns that agencies sometimes:
    - Are **too cautious** and block needed actions.
    - Or conversely, **under-enforce requirements** when politically high-profile projects are involved.

There is appetite for:

- Clearer, more accessible **summaries of legal frameworks and licensing routes**.
- More **transparent criteria** for what is acceptable and proportionate for different taxa and contexts.

Minor but Important Themes (less frequent, but significant for design and legitimacy)

9. Scepticism about CT as a conservation tool

A minority – but important – set of respondents are **sceptical of CT itself**:

- Some botanists and ecologists emphasise:
    - **Habitat restoration and protection** should be the **first priority**; CT risks becoming a distraction or "shortcut".
    - There is a risk that CT **attracts funding and attention** that might better go to fixing underlying habitat issues.
- Others highlight:
    - CTs can create **"bio-novelty"** with unknown ecosystem impacts.
    - There is a danger of **romanticised rewilding rhetoric** overshadowing careful risk assessment.

They are not necessarily anti-CT in all cases, but want:

- **Stronger tests of necessity** ("why CT here, not just habitat recovery?").
- The hub to **stress context and limits**, not promote CT as a panacea.

10. Concern about propaganda, spin and institutional bias

A clearly articulated critical thread:

- Some land managers and researchers feel:

    - CT narratives are often **unbalanced**, with:
        - Over-claiming benefits.
        - Downplaying costs, negative impacts and uncertainties.
    - Organisations with vested interests in CT may:
        - Control data.
        - Suppress uncomfortable evidence (e.g. predation events, local damage).
- This is particularly noted in relation to:
    - Beavers (e.g. impacts on rare epiphytes, flooding).
    - Large carnivores.
    - High-profile reintroductions used as **branding or fundraising tools**.

For a hub, they argue:

- It must **"cut through propaganda"**, present "real, clear data".
- It must **not** be seen as a marketing platform for any one agenda.
- It should provide **balanced accounts** and surface **difficult evidence**.

11. Risk of exclusion and trust breakdown if some voices are missing

Some respondents warn that:

- Many land managers, local stakeholders, or sceptical voices:
    - Don't read academic papers.
    - May still feel **shut out** even if information is technically "available".
    - Will not trust a hub **unless they see themselves represented** in its governance and content.
- There is also a risk that:
    - People most in need of social science insights **don't read** that literature.
    - The hub could become "just another site" used mainly by the already-engaged.

Hence, there is a call for:

- **Inclusive governance** (farmers, land managers, communities on steering groups).
- **Accessible formats** (plain language, case-study stories, visuals).
- Opportunities for **two-way exchange**, not just one-way dissemination.

12. Unease about a hub becoming a de facto "licensing" or gatekeeping tool

A few contributors caution that:

- A hub should **support**, not **replace or duplicate**, formal licensing and statutory roles.
- It should not become:
    - A **hidden gatekeeping mechanism** where inclusion/exclusion signals unofficial approval.
    - A way to **centralise control** over CT agendas in a small group.

They suggest:

- Clear separation between:
    - **Information and tools** (hub).
    - **Decision-making and regulation** (statutory authorities).
- Transparency about:
    - What the hub **does and does not** do.
    - That hub inclusion is **not equivalent** to regulatory approval.

Overall

- **Broad convergence**: There is strong, cross-sector support for a CT Information Hub that centralises information, improves transparency, and raises standards – *if* it is well-governed, balanced and resourced.
- **Critical conditions**: Trust hinges on:
    - Inclusion of **failures and contested cases**.
    - **Plural governance** and visible QA.
    - Serious treatment of **social, welfare and biosecurity** issues.
    - Space for **critical and sceptical voices**, not just champions.
- **Underlying tension**: Many want CT to be **more effective, transparent and evidence-based**, while a vocal minority warn against **CT as a fashionable fix**, and against information ecosystems that drift toward **advocacy and PR** rather than balanced, critical learning.

Designing the CT Information Hub to **hold that tension honestly**, rather than smoothing it away, is central to its perceived legitimacy.

4.1.2.3 Do the survey participants think there is a "need" for a Conservation Translocations Information Hub?

The third thematic analysis also involved the assessment of all responses across the eleven free-text questions. The project team member and AI results were combined for the purposes of this study, with the AI analysis providing the main framework to reduce potential human bias. The Chat GPT analysis was produced using the question: *"Do you think a CT hub is required following these responses?"* to which the first sentence of the response from ChatGPT stated *"On balance, yes"*.

1. Arguments in favour

Across respondents there is:

- **Strong perceived benefit**
  - ~70% explicitly want a **central "one-stop shop"** for guidance, case studies and project data.
  - ~55% emphasise the value of shared **lessons learned, including failures**.
  - Many link a hub directly to **raising standards, avoiding repeated mistakes, and improving consistency** across the UK.
- **Clear evidence of current problems the hub could address**
  - Information is **fragmented and hard to find**, especially grey literature, older projects and negative outcomes.
  - Documentation and monitoring are **inconsistent**, with major gaps for many taxa and social, welfare and plant-health issues.
  - Stakeholders (including land managers) perceive **bias and partial information**, undermining trust in some CT debates.

Given this, respondents are not just neutral; a majority are actively asking for a well-designed hub.

2. Are there arguments against or cautions?

There is very little opposition to the *idea* of a hub, but there are strong cautions about *how* it is done:

- **Resourcing and maintenance**
  Many warn that an under-resourced hub that quickly goes out of date could become **irrelevant or misleading**. A hub is only justified if there is a realistic plan for ongoing staffing and funding.
- **Governance and trust**
  Several respondents worry about:
  - Perceived **bias** (e.g. a hub seen as "by and for" pro-rewilding or environmental NGOs).
  - A hub being used to **justify** marginal or poorly designed projects. They emphasise the need for **multi-party governance and transparent QA**.
- **Scope creep and complexity**
  Trying to do everything for everyone from day one is seen as a risk; respondents implicitly argue for a **phased, prioritised approach**.
- **"Another website" risk**
  A few note that unless the hub adds something beyond existing sites (IUCN, SNCO pages, Conservation Evidence, taxon-specific portals), it could simply add noise.

3. Conclusion

Based on the responses, a CT Information Hub is **warranted and wanted**, provided that:

1. **It solves real, identified problems**
    - Centralises and signposts existing guidance.
    - Provides a **project register and honest case studies** (including failures).
    - Improves access to under-reported areas (social, welfare, plant health, small taxa).
2. **It is governed and curated credibly**
    - Led by a **broad partnership** (SNCOs, IUCN groups, academic and NGO partners, land-management interests).
    - Has clear quality control and visible updating.
3. **It is realistically resourced and phased**
    - Starts with a **focused core** (guidance signposting, basic register, small set of good case studies).
    - Expands only as data, governance and funding allow.

If those conditions cannot be met, the safer course would be to **strengthen and integrate existing platforms** rather than create a new hub. But if they can, the survey evidence points to a hub being a **useful and widely supported next step** for UK conservation translocations.

4.2 Interviews with managers of conservation information hubs

4.2.1 Applied Ecology Resources

Applied Ecology Resources (AER) **- Trinity King, Assistant Editor and Philip Dooner, Head of Development, British Ecological Society**

This resource is managed by the British Ecological Society (BES) and its archived material is open to members and non-members. The AER website states that it "makes sharing and discovering information on the management of biodiversity and the environment easier for everyone in the ecological community – whether you work in research, policy or practice. We promote evidence-based decision-making by curating an ever-growing collection of information sources such as open access journal articles, research summaries and grey literature that can help progress our understanding and management of the natural world." There are 8907 documents on AER as of 23 March 2026.

It complements the Conservation Evidence web resource (see below). AER serves to publish material, Conservation Evidence uses published material and provides recommendations.

At the time of writing the AER archive works through organisations becoming 'members' which allows them to upload and share their work. AER membership is open to any organisation or group that produces evidence-based information on the management of biological resources. There are four tiers of membership with annual fees, with higher membership fees allowing the member organisation concerned to upload more of their documents in any one year (up to 200 documents per year for the highest tier of membership). The advantage of this system is that all users can access the archived material free. Once material is archived it is there permanently. However, the cost of membership fees means that not all organisations, or indeed individuals, are willing or able to upload their documents. Fifteen member organisations are listed on the AER website. This system is currently under review by BES.

A keyword search using the following terms pulled up the following numbers of documents in the AER archive:

- Conservation translocation – 57 results
- Translocation – 82 results
- Reintroduction – 116 results
- Reinforcement – 13 results

A preliminary scan of the 57 conservation translocation documents suggested that a high proportion of these were from BES-related journals and other publications.

There is no quality assurance or editorial checking of uploaded documents by AER, the assumption being that the member organisations concerned have performed that role (noting that many uploaded documents are from peer-reviewed journals). It is left to the member organisations to decide what material they wish to upload.

AER also has a mailing list with 5,712 subscribers, and runs training and events ('AER Live') for applied ecologists, practitioners and policy makers. In addition AER includes the following resources:

Evidence in Conservation Teaching – A web page that provides free educational materials to teach the core skills required for evidence-based conservation practice. It has been produced in collaboration with the Conservation Evidence team (see below).

Co-designed research – An online PDF document in the BES 'Better Science Guides' series that provides advice on how academics and practitioners can co-design projects that enable the better application of data to provide conservation and management benefits. This was discussed in relation to the topic of case studies.

Proposals to develop an archive of case studies on the CT Information Hub were discussed, and opportunities identified to coordinate activities and resources with AER.

The curation and day-to-day operations of AER is carried out by a BES staff member working half time. AER has an Advisory Board, and the editorial board of the related BES Ecological Solutions and Evidence journal also contribute to its development.

4.2.2 BSBI database

BSBI Distribution Database (DDb) **- Matt Harding, BSBI Scotland Officer**

The DDb is a long-running, high-resolution botanical recording system containing millions of records, supported by automated and expert validation and widely used for mapping and research. The potential synergy between the DDb and a future CT Information Hub was noted during the discussion, particularly through sharing conservation translocation case studies and integrating vascular plant translocation data so they appear alongside natural distribution records.

It was emphasised that a CT Information Hub should include national guidance, best-practice documentation, and clear project flow diagrams showing data and licensing pathways. Public visibility of information is important for transparency and engagement.

Drawing on BSBI's experience, challenges such as defining user roles and editing permissions were highlighted (since most data issues arise from user error). There are also potential opportunities to support conservation assessments like Red Listing.

Managing the DDb requires approximately one full-time staff member equivalent plus volunteer validation support. A CT Information Hub was thought likely to require less time, as it would handle information (e.g., case studies) rather than very large volumes of data.

Feedback was also provided on the UK Conservation Translocation Database (see section 4.2.5) and this was passed to the database developers.

4.2.3 Conservation Evidence

Conservation Evidence – Rebecca Smith, University of Cambridge

The purpose-built web platform is managed, created and edited by the Conservation Evidence team at the Department of Zoology, University of Cambridge, but with external website developers managing the software side. This extensive resource has been in existence for 22 years and is funded through a range of support.

Its website states the "…resource is designed to support anyone making decisions about how to maintain and restore biodiversity". It provides a number of tools including:

Studies – Short summaries of scientific studies testing the effectiveness of conservation actions, providing background context, the conservation actions taken and their consequences

(9441 studies listed as of 23 March 2026 – the keyword 'translocation' pulls up 494 studies each with an associated short summary, and these can be filtered using the 'Refine' menu))

Actions – A summary of evidence from the scientific literature about the effects of each action to conserve species groups and habitats (4099 actions listed as of 23 March 2026, the keyword 'translocation' pulls up 254 actions with associated assessments of effectiveness etc., and these can be filtered using the 'Refine' menu).

Synopses – These synopses of evidence provide reviews of the effectiveness of all actions that can be taken to conserve a species group or habitat or to tackle a particular issue (29 synopses listed as of 23 March 2026 – each synopsis, for example 'coral conservation' or 'bat conservation' is comprised of all actions that could be taken for the subject (which may include translocation) with assessments of effectiveness)). Synopses tend to be focussed on broad species groups or habitat types, rather than particular conservation methods/tools – although there have been some exceptions where specific funding has become available.

Evidence-to-Decision tool – The web description states "The tool is structured to help you consider and combine several forms of evidence (e.g., scientific evidence, tacit knowledge, values, costs) to reach a transparent decision, documenting each stage of the process so that the logic and reasoning behind decisions can be open and traceable."

This evidence-based, objective and authoritative resource provides a range of information and tools of relevance to conservation translocation (see also the Evidence Toolkit). The issue of case studies was discussed, a topic of high interest amongst respondents of the CT Information Hub online survey. Conservation Evidence has started working on and is also interested in developing case study-based resources in a 'Practitioner Insights' database, in particular those which report on experimental/trial tests of actions, using methods described in Ockendon et al. (2021) and which could be incorporated in their published evidence-based guidance. There is the potential to coordinate this process with any collation of case studies via a CT Information Hub. Linkages with the site from any CT Information Hub would be highly recommended.

4.2.4 Restoration Hub

Restoration Hub (in development) - Morag McCracken, UKCEH Wallingford

A two-year project is currently underway to investigate the feasibility and desirability of setting up an online hub on nature restoration, and to develop an initial online hub, by March 2027. This project has been largely driven by the increasing interest in the rewilding movement, and the potential to develop tools that may support those working in that community. Any final hub would be designed to serve those involved in restoration and rewilding work.

To date the work has involved online workshops with about 120 people (one of the authors, MG, took part in one of these workshops in November 2025). Establishing the scope of any future restoration hub has been a key issue, recognising that definitions of restoration and rewilding vary greatly, and can involve activities at a wide range of scales and with an associated wide range of information and data that could be made available. At this stage it is anticipated that the collation of, and access to, key sources of data will be a core element of the hub. It is anticipated the restoration hub will aim to bring in new data (as opposed to using existing data held by other UKCEH datasets) and provide tools to use the data. This fits with the expertise and experience of the UKCEH managers and provide opportunities to develop appropriate geospatial/mapping tools. GIS expertise is included within the UKCEH restoration hub team.

Discussions included opportunities for coordination of effort and resources. It was agreed that efforts should be made to avoid duplication of effort. However, the likelihood that the restoration hub will eventually focus on data, and the CT Information Hub on information, means that the risk of duplication was limited but opportunities exist to benefit both resources through coordination. Liaison is also taking place with the UKCEH leads of the UK Conservation Translocation Database (see below), meaning that conservation translocation data will not need to be included in the restoration hub datasets.

The restoration hub work has been resourced through the National Capability for UK Challenges (NC-UK) programme enabling nature recovery through robust data and monitoring. A core requirement of such funding is that the developed datasets have research value. To date the initial feasibility work has involved four UKCEH team members.

4.2.5 UK Conservation Translocations Database

UK Conservation Translocations Database (in development) - David Roy, Head of the Biological Records Centre, UKCEH Wallingford

In 2024 resources were made available through the ESRT to start initial work on a database for conservation translocations. NatureScot subsequently contributed further funds, recognising the value of extending this to include the whole of the UK. An initial structure for the database was built by March 2025 for the first phase of work. A second phase of work up to the end of March 2026 involved user testing, consultations and the refinement of datasets. The consultation work started with one-to-one interviews with key potential users. This was followed by a wider survey and user testing with about 60 individuals. At the time of writing it is anticipated that some final refinements will be required during a third phase of work, and that a working version could be ready to go live in late 2026 subject to resourcing.

The tool will enable data on conservation translocations to be made accessible in the public domain (with limitations for certain types of environmentally sensitive data). Project managers will upload the data directly themselves. There will be a small amount of 'essential' data that managers will be asked to provide, with options to add additional, 'desirable' data.

To date the focus of this work has been on the database design, structure and function. There have not yet been substantial discussions or decisions on how the database will be managed, where it might be located and how it might be resourced in the longer term. UKCEH have significant expertise and experience in database management, although open source software was deliberately used in the database design so that it could, theoretically, sit in other locations. It is possible the database could sit on the BRC web pages (Biological Records Centre, which is managed by UKCEH) and be curated by BRC staff as part of its wider data-management remit.

There are currently no plans to quality control the uploaded records e.g. to check whether they describe projects that are in line with IUCN and national best practice and adhere to legislation etc. but this is also open to further review.

Any CT Information Hub would need to be designed in close coordination with the UK Conservation Translocations Database. Effort to avoids duplication would be needed, but there are also good opportunities to link the two resources and for each to promote the presence and value of the other. A key issue will be encouraging practitioners to populate the database, and the CT Information Hub would be in a good position to highlight the value of data, evidence and transparency. In particular there is scope to link a repository of case studies on the CT Information Hub to the database.

4.2.6 The IUCN SSC Conservation Translocation Specialist Group website

IUCN SSC Conservation Translocation Specialist Group (CTSG) **– Axel Moehrenschlager, Panthera and Chair of CTSG and Pritpal Soorae, Environment Agency-Abu Dhabi and Co-Chair of CTSG** [Declaration - the report author who organised this interview (MG) is a member of the CTSG].

The CTSG has the vision of "A world where courageous action repairs nature's past damage and guards against threats of the future" and the mission "To empower responsible conservation translocations that save species, strengthen ecosystems, and benefit humanity". It has a published plan to 2030 available online, which includes the action to "Continually engage government agencies, funding organizations, and other conservation groups to support capacity building and responsible conservation translocations of motivated practitioners locally and globally."

Its website includes a number of resources, not least the IUCN Guidelines for Reintroductions and Other Conservation Translocations (IUCN/CTSG 2013) which form the framework of the Scottish and English Codes. It also provides more specific themed guidelines and training videos.

Case studies - The CTSG and its predecessor group (The Reintroduction Specialist Group) have been collating case studies in the "Perspectives" series since 2008. Seven volumes of case studies have been published and made available on the CTSG website, the most recent one in 2025. To date 349 case studies from five of the "Perspectives" series (the 2008, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 and 2018 volumes) have also been added to a database which can be searched by the year of publication, broad species taxonomic group, country and keywords. Thirteen case studies from the UK are available, plus one from the Channel Islands.

Much of the discussion surrounded the experience of the CTSG collating and hosting the international case studies, and the potential opportunities for coordination and synergy if a case study resource is set up for the UK CT Information Hub. A simple, succinct template is used for the production of the short CTSG case studies for the "Perspectives" series, thereby encouraging wider practitioner involvement. These case studies are not peer-reviewed and each one is limited to listing five references, making the submission process simpler and less formal. CTSG case studies can be defined as grey literature and so academic authors of CTSG case studies can also publish in the peer-reviewed scientific literature (this would probably not be permitted by scientific journals if the CTSG case studies were peer-reviewed). However, there is an increased risk of the non-peer reviewed case studies being more vulnerable to criticism (e.g. if the project is judged to have involved poor practice) but this situation has only arisen with the CTSG occasionally.

Since the online survey of this scoping study has only just highlighted the substantial interest in a case study resource on a UK CT Information Hub, no details have been developed. However, it is envisaged that the hub might use a similar and compatible template to the CTSG (potentially with a small number of added fields that could provide added value to AER and Conservation Evidence resources), with a simple online recording process to make it as simple as possible for the user. The hub would host the UK case studies but could also be made available to the CTSG for review and possible use in any future "Perspectives" volume. The hub could also alert users to calls for contributions of case studies that could be used in future CTSG "Perspectives" volumes. The value of case studies that describe unsuccessful projects was agreed – although it was also noted that measures of success should be based on individual

project objectives, and therefore the ambition and practical realism of objectives defined by project managers at the start will affect how likely they are met.

In summary, the CTSG representatives saw the potential for alignment and coordination with any CT Information Hub, including case studies, and that a UK resource could be a valuable "evolution" of such resources at the domestic level. Once established it may also have value in encouraging other countries to emulate the development of similar online resources.

4.3 Technical considerations associated with the building and management of an online Conservation Translocations Information Hub

The full report produced by the technical advisers (Yellow Cherry Digital Limited) is provided in Appendix 4. A summary of the key considerations they identified are provided here. This takes into account the steer given by the project team authors that the CT Information Hub should serve two types of users: technical users such as practitioners, NGOs, regulators, land/water managers, and researchers; and non-technical users such as school students, journalists, and the general public. Technical users will rely on detailed guidance, tools, and case studies, while non-technical users will need simplified summaries and accessible explanations.

Platform requirements: A flexible, open-source Content Management System (CMS) such as WordPress is recommended to ensure long-term control, scalability, and cost-effectiveness. Non-technical staff should be able to create pages, upload resources, manage submissions, and use drag-and-drop page builders. Version control, permissions management, and a staging environment are desirable to support safe updates and content oversight. Third-party hosted platforms (e.g., Wix, Squarespace) are not recommended due to the risks around ownership and long-term costs.

Key functional components: Several core features, identified in discussion with the authors following the results of the online survey, are proposed for the CT Information Hub at its launch:

- **Guidance library** that signposts authoritative external resources using link-style posts, RSS feeds, APIs (Application Programming Interface, e.g., Crossref), or potential AI-driven automated curation in later phases.
- **Practitioner directory** with user profiles, private messaging capability, and privacy controls, but without open public forums due to moderation burdens.
- **Case study library** with structured templates, media uploads, tagging, and filtering options (such as species, location, habitat). External submissions will need to go through a moderated, quality assurance process.
- **Project register** offering a searchable, filterable list of UK conservation translocation projects, with potential for future integration with the planned UK Conservation Translocation Database. Map-based visualisations produced via the UK Conservation Translocations Database could be added in later phases.
- **Practitioner tools**, such as risk assessments, monitoring templates, welfare and biosecurity tools, decision-making aids etc.
- **News and events**, **contact functionality**, and **email subscription options** to support communication, updates, and outreach.

Accessibility, security and performance: The hub must comply with WCAG 2.2 AA accessibility standards and include an accessibility statement at launch. Security considerations include secure hosting, SSL, authentication, monthly backups, and malware scanning. Performance expectations involve fast loading, mobile optimisation, and search engine optimisation-readiness. Cookie-consent mechanisms must be GDPR-compliant.

Phasing and delivery: A phased development approach is recommended (this does not include the recommended stakeholder engagement and co-design that will be required first):

- **Phase 1 (Launch):** Core site, CMS, resource library, case studies, basic project register, public explainer pages, search, analytics, mobile responsiveness, accessibility.
- **Phase 2:** User registration, practitioner directory, practice notes, events information system, advanced search filters, map-based project register (latter possibly linked to the UK Conservation Translocations Database).

- **Phase 3:** Integration with external databases and automated/AI content feeds.

Governance, budget and timeline: Governance should be overseen by a multi-organisation steering group responsible for content quality and neutrality, with clear expectations for reporting.

The suggested initial technical development time for an online hub would be around four months, covering discovery, design, development, testing, and launch. This excludes the time required by the CT Information Hub team members to populate the resource and to manage it thereafter.

Costs for full implementation would need to take into account branding, discovery, design, development, testing, launch, year-one hosting and security. Costs may vary substantially by supplier type.

5 Discussion and recommendations

5.1 Methods - Participant representation in the online survey

The most important element in considering, designing and establishing any CT Information Hub is the engagement of the wide range of stakeholders who have an interest in the topic. The ten-week life of the current scoping project meant that an online survey approach was judged to be most feasible, practical and pragmatic approach to use in the time available.

During the same short period, there were also at least two other conservation translocation projects running (the Conservation Introductions Framework, the Conservation Translocation Database), both linked to the ESRT, NE and NatureScot and involving requests for consultation with a proportion of those contacted for the purposes of this project. Some feedback was received from a few people asking for clarification over the various consultations and surveys that took place during January to March, suggesting there may have been a level of 'consultation fatigue' that affected our survey response numbers, and indeed the contributions to the other projects. However, the contribution of 123 participants over just ten working days for the online survey was judged a highly successful response. This might be explained in part by the increasingly high interest in conservation translocations, and the view that this was an opportunity to try and influence the value and development of a tool to inform such projects.

The project team were able to pull together an extensive UK mailing list drawn from their experiences with various working networks. Inevitably, this was weighted towards those working in the nature conservation and wider environmental sectors, in particular those involved in the practice, policy or research associated with conservation translocation. There was a smaller proportion of individuals from sectors that historically have tended to be more opposed to conservation translocation, or at least the translocation of certain species, for example from some land and water management sectors. Although they formed a smaller proportion of the participants, these latter sectors are often missed out in the development of conservation policy and guidance, so their perspectives provided a welcome and valuable contribution to the process. Any next phase of work will need to continue to ensure ongoing and wide stakeholder involvement. To that end, participant recommendations of key individuals to include were collected and, through a snowball sampling methodology, will be added to the participants of any subsequent phases of this project.

Scotland provided the highest number of contributors, followed by England. This might be explained in part by Scottish participants responding to the location of the main project team members, but also by the ongoing efforts to develop a culture of stakeholder engagement activities in this topic area, for example through the National Species Reintroduction Forum since 2009, the co-production of the Scottish Code in 2014 and Scotland's Beaver Strategy (IUCN/CPSG 2022) in 2022. It was not possible to research and identify the national location of every invitee on the mailing list, but efforts were made to try to include as many individuals across the UK as possible. Scotland is likely to have been the most highly represented nation in the mailing list, but almost certainly not as much as it was represented in the received responses. It was more difficult to identify a comprehensive list of Wales and Northern Ireland invitees, and such gaps will need to be addressed in future phases of engagement.

In terms of specialisms and expertise, it was perhaps unsurprising that the participants described themselves as having biological/ecological backgrounds, with taxonomic specialisms in vertebrate species and working primarily on terrestrial habitats. That pattern broadly reflects a lot of UK conservation activities in general. However, a wide range of topics

(including more specialist biological/ecological topics), taxa and habitat specialisms were also represented. In particular, it was noteworthy that 17% of participants described themselves as having socio-cultural/socio-economic expertise, reflecting the growing recognition of this important component of conservation translocation and wider conservation activities. Marine conservation translocations are often missed or given little consideration in this field, so it was encouraging that a few marine specialists (and those working in the marine sector as well as freshwater and terrestrial sectors) were able to contribute to the survey.

5.2 Methods - The use of AI for collation and synthesis of online survey results

It was important to ensure that the thematic analyses were evidence-based and objective. The development of AI tools is now at such a level that it was decided that these tools could help meet our analytical requirements, and so they were employed in the current study. Both Chat GPT and Co-Pilot were used and gave similar results, with Chat GPT providing more detail in the analyses of the free-text questions. However, AI served in an assistant role during these analyses with all themes checked and, when necessary, revised by members of the project team. No access was given to personal identifying information.

The UK Government has published a comparative study of AI-assisted evidence reviews and human-led approaches (Department for Science, Innovation and Technology 2025). It concluded that the main strength of AI "...is their ability to quickly analyse and synthesize vast amounts of information – typically the most time-consuming portions of evidence reviews. They are also very effective tutors, in that they can help researchers quickly interrogate the details of particular studies, probe their strengths and weaknesses, and clarify points of potential misunderstanding."

The extent to which such tools are used in research, and how they are used, still varies considerably. Naddaf (2025) reported a survey of 1043 researchers in which 60% believed that AI can perform a better task than humans with the specific task of "Automated processing of unstructured data", the type of exercise run for this project. However, a range of concerns were also noted. For example, 51% of respondents saw "Concerns about potential inaccuracies/hallucinations" as a barrier or obstacle preventing them from using generative AI in their work to the extent they would like. AI hallucination is a phenomenon where, in large language models such as generative AI chatbots, it perceives patterns or objects that are non-existent or imperceptible to human observers, creating outputs that are nonsensical or altogether inaccurate (IBM n.d.).

Our own experience in the use of ChatGPT and Co-Pilot for this project was very positive. There was a strong correlation between the AI and human thematic analyses. There were a few examples where AI had picked out some minor observations that did not appear to match the participant responses received. The human oversight proved important in providing reassurance in the quality of the AI outputs, and in identifying any specific inaccuracies. AI was also used to provide assessments as to whether the survey suggested there was support for establishing a hub, and to provide recommendations on its design. The role of the authors was to take this information and frame it within the wider subject context, which was outside the remit given to the AI. This reflects the approach the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (2025) highlights and the "...value in the ability of human experts to take the findings of [an AI] review and use these to clarify the 'so what' – i.e., create localised conclusions which take into account the political and operational constraints of a particular policy making landscape."

5.3 General discussion

5.3.1 A resource for practitioners, policy makers, researchers and key stakeholders

Section 4.1.2 provides a comprehensive analysis of the online survey, and the associated major and other significant themes highlighted by participants. One of the overarching questions that this scoping study wanted to address was whether there would be value and support in establishing an online CT Information Hub for the UK. Overall, the answer was yes, but with a range of caveats. Strong cross-sectoral support was given for a hub, with clear conditions on governance, scope and resourcing.

Accessibility and a one-stop shop: A prime reason for establishing an online hub included the perceived value having a single, trusted 'one-stop shop' for a range of information types. It was recognised by many that having such a resource that was relevant to the whole of UK made practical and pragmatic sense, although it would need to ensure information on variations in policy and legislation across the devolved nations was provided. Many participants felt comfortable accessing certain types of existing information already, in particular academics/researchers with ready access to the scientific literature, but conversely others noted this was not always available to all (e.g. behind paywalls), and there were other information types with less centralised and accessible sources.

Sensitivities and perceptions on the reporting of conservation translocations: The topic of conservation translocation is one that creates wide interest and a range of views, often strongly held and reflecting wider debates about nature restoration, land and water management and conservation interventions in general. Although the survey suggested a tendency for those with a conservation background to be more supportive over the use of conservation translocations, and those stakeholders affected by translocations to be less supportive, there were variations within these broad groups. For example, some specialists of specific taxonomic groups were more critical of the role of conservation translocation and perceived an unbalanced lack of information on potential negative consequences, reflecting similar views of some land managers. In contrast some from the land manager sector also noted a cautious support of certain types of conservation translocation under certain circumstances. Such concerns were often linked to issues over objectivity, the lack of published information on unsuccessful and failed translocations, and trust. Ultimately it will be essential that a future CT Information Hub is designed to try and address such concerns through its governance and the quality control of content, and to build a resource that can be used by all sectors to inform policy, decision-making, practice, research and general knowledge.

The volume of information and gaps: Many survey participants highlighted the considerable and fast expanding quantity of information on conservation translocations, in particular within the published scientific literature. There is also an increasing volume of practitioner experience and expertise as the number of projects continue to rise but much of this is not accessible because it is not published. This might be for a number of reasons: A lack of time and resources for project personnel (especially when there are no academic partners able to lead on publishing); a perception that the project is too small or special interest to be of wider value; reticence to publicly share details of a project judged unsuccessful and/or containing negative results. There was a level of frustration over how the details of such projects were often unavailable, resulting in a loss of learning opportunities.

Clarity of scope, content: The sheer volume of material, and potential material, means that any online CT Information Hub would need to be very clear over its scope, aims and purpose, the type of information it should hold, and how it can most efficiently and effectively link to existing, appropriate sources. Duplication should be avoided and opportunities for synergy

encouraged. It should set out the role of conservation translocation within the wider context of nature restoration, reflecting the international and national government recognition of the interlinked nature and climate crises, and the need for transformative change (highlighted by the IPBES 2019), taking into account wider land, water and social policies and action.

Care will be needed over the hub design, ensuring a user friendly, searchable and clear approach. Some of the main types of information that the survey participants identified as important and useful included:

- National and international overarching guidance
- Specialist information and guidance on specific topics or taxa
- Publicly accessible literature, including grey literature
- Case studies, including those describing unsuccessful or mixed outcome projects, and projects with strong social elements and challenges
- Links and access to specialists to enable direct interactions and sharing of experiences
- Tools and templates to assist practitioners with stakeholder engagement, decision-making, planning etc.
- A register of historical and ongoing projects

Some of the above could be made easily accessible via an online CT Information Hub by storing the material online or providing links to other online sources, such as core and specialist guidance and some of the key literature. Particular attention could be given to material which tends to be harder to find or less accessible for wider audiences. Links could also be made, with associated guidance, to other key online resources where curated and quality-assured information on conservation translocation is searchable within wider repositories of information, for example Conservation Evidence and Applied Ecology Resources. Opportunities to share information using video and other media could be explored.

Case studies: A key gap at present is a comprehensive repository of UK case studies. A similar resource is currently held for an international audience by the IUCN SSC CTSG, although to date it has a limited number of UK examples. The CT Information Hub would therefore include a simple online case study template that could be quickly and easily completed by project leads. This could be designed in collaboration with Conservation Evidence, SNCO and CTSG parties to try and ensure an appropriate standardisation and simplicity of format, with the potential to promote it via SNCO Licensing teams. Efforts would be made to encourage practitioners to record projects of various types, including those judged unsuccessful or with mixed outcomes, and/or with complex human dimensions. As highlighted above, there was a very strong desire amongst online survey participants to understand how to navigate the legislation and licensing processes as well as what does and does not work in practice through the sharing of reports regarding successful, unsuccessful, mixed outcome, and contentious projects. These will not only provide valuable learning opportunities but will also help to ensure the objectivity of the hub, and the building of trust in the resource. Stakeholders felt a form of quality assurance process was necessary to ensuring published case studies had genuine values as well as being in line with national legislation and codes.

Access to experts: Opportunities to make contact and share experiences with practitioners, specialists and other stakeholders was identified as a key wish by many survey participants. Various options were proposed such as practitioner registers or discussion fora. GDPR issues would need to be considered carefully. Discussion fora would need moderation, and it would probably be more appropriate and practical for these to be established external to any CT Information Hub, for example on LinkedIn. The use of the hub to promote conservation

translocation-related events, workshops, training and other activities was also highlighted as a potentially useful resource, potentially extended to include other 'news' reported on the main media. Care would be needed with the latter over how such news items, written by external parties who may often have a particular strong viewpoint, might be presented on an online hub with an objective, evidence-focused remit.

Coordination with the UK Conservation Translocation Database: A number of participants also noted the value in having data available to inform practice, research and other purposes, and associated data mapping and analyses. However, this falls squarely within the remit of the UK Conservation Translocations Database, which is currently going through development at UKCEH, supported by NE, ESRT and NatureScot. The CT Information Hub will instead focus on information sources. The database and the information hub should therefore be designed to complement each other with clear linkages between the two. For example, case studies collated by the CT Information Hub could be linked to records on the database. There is some overlap with the suggestion by participants that some form of register of projects would be useful – this could be done but would need careful coordination with the database to identify opportunities for cross-working and to avoid duplication of effort.

A trusted and authoritative resource: An essential consideration for establishing any CT Information Hub is ensuring that the final product is judged authoritative, trustworthy, objective, up to date, referenced and accurate. This will first require a clear scope and terms of reference. An appropriate governance will need to be designed, involving appropriate individuals and organisations, and providing ways by which fora such as the NSRF and ESRT can engage. Key stakeholder groups from across sectors need to be involved, not only from the conservation and academic organisations. This scoping study is a first step in demonstrating the importance the authors see in ensuring that the views and experience of key stakeholders are brought into the design of a CT Information Hub, and the need to try and build a wide 'ownership' thereby increasing the likelihood of its wide acceptance and use. This engagement will need to continue in the next phase of work – including those key stakeholders who were unable to contribute during this short scoping study.

The material on the CT Information Hub therefore needs to be quality assured, up to date and in line with the legal and best practice approaches promoted by the SNCOs, NSRF, ESRT and relevant international bodies. This approach is in line with Defra's Environmental Improvement Plan 2025 (Commitment 15) which highlights the need for "evidence-led advice and guidance" for existing and potential conservation translocations. The CT Information Hub should aim for objective reporting of all types of projects, including those which have been unsuccessful or with no clear outcome, and where there have been negative as well as positive results.

These findings can be compared to the summary of discussions held at a workshop at the Zoological Society of London in February 2025 (Bavin & Bavin 2025). Twenty-nine participants from a range of organisations (some of which took part in the online survey of this project) discussed barriers and opportunities for conservation translocations. It was focussed on England but it was recognised that other UK parties should be involved in future discussions. Issues surrounding a potential 'hub' were raised – these were listed with no weighting to ensure all voices were recorded, rather than analysed to identify over-arching themes. There were some elements of the workshop discussions which did not come out as themes or recommendations during this scoping study, such as a hub providing a 'space for debate and discussion', an 'online database' and the potential need for a payment to join any hub. However overall there were a number of messages listed from the workshop similar to the themes identified in this scoping study, including the need for a hub to be a 'neutral and trusted

host', 'adequately resourced', 'diverse and multi-sectoral', 'functional and relevant', 'easy to use' and to have 'shared and inclusive governance', 'guiding principles' and 'joined up objectives'. It also referred to the value of a hub providing access to 'information on CTs', 'case study examples' (including what did not work), and a 'directory' of projects and practitioners.

5.3.2 A resource for the public

The Scottish Biodiversity Delivery Plan 2024-2030 (Scottish Government 2024) has a broad action to "Develop effective species reintroduction and reinforcement programmes". This includes Action 21.5 that sets out the need to "Raise public awareness of science and practice around conservation translocations through public engagement" by 2030. This is as an "overarching action" with NatureScot identified as a lead. The project team recognised that the creation of a CT Information Hub would be an opportunity to address this and the related Scottish Biodiversity actions, and be of wider public value throughout the UK. About 11% of participants referred to the general public or "all" people as an "essential" audience, and about 40% referring to them as a "desirable" audience. In Scotland it can be argued that the inclusion of action 21.5 means that the general public should be defined as an essential audience for any tool designed to increase awareness on the topic, and the relatively low figure from the survey may reflect the high numbers of practitioners, researchers and others amongst the participants who have a need for more specialist information to inform decision-making and action. Participants may also be unaware of the Scottish Biodiversity Plan requirements.

A public audience will require an appropriate and different approach to presenting information. This would include the use of non-technical, plain English, succinct and summarised information, with the creative use of graphics, visual aids and other tools. This might involve, for example, a separate part of the online hub designed specifically for the public audience, but with options and links to the more specialist parts of the hub for those who wish to investigate the subject in more detail. Opportunities for involvement in projects could be promoted, such as volunteering, citizen science or consultation and engagement exercises inviting public feedback, together with news on public events. This public part of a CT Information Hub would also be designed to be trusted and evidence-based, in line with the more specialist parts of the hub. It would not be a platform for campaigning or opposing conservation translocations but will focus on explanation and awareness, with sign-posting to engagement and consultation processes for projects.

5.4 Options for next phase of development

The following sets out some of the broad options to consider for providing information on conservation translocations.

1. **Do nothing**
   No further work is carried out to develop a central online hub of information. Key stakeholders continue to use a range of existing resources if and when required. The advantages are that no further costs are involved setting up and managing any hub, and no associated resources required to set up governance systems etc. The disadvantages include that the limitations, lack of accessibility and transparency for conservation translocation information will remain, especially for some audience types.

2. **Alternatives to an online resource**
   This would be the same as option 1 but with the provision of other opportunities that would enable key stakeholders, and/or the wider public, to share and exchange

information on conservation translocations. This might include dedicated in-person and online conferences held at different UK venues on a regular basis. The advantages are that it would not require the continual ongoing management required for an online hub, and might be seen as more accessible and engaging by some stakeholders, with better opportunities to network in person. The disadvantages are that organisation of such events still requires a level of dedicated staff and funding support, and event dates and locations may not always be accessible or attractive to some stakeholders. It would be a more immediate learning resource rather than enabling long-term archiving of conservation translocation information. [Note, this option could also be additional to any online hub option].

3. **Light touch approach - Encourage a range of conservation organisations to include more information on CTs on their own websites**
   Rather than having a single online repository of information, this would involve trying to promote the inclusion of overarching best practice and other 'core' information on the websites of various conservation, land and water management and other stakeholder organisations. Attempts would be made to try and agree the associated messaging used on the websites of the various stakeholders. The advantages would be that it would be relatively lower cost, use existing websites which are already visible to the members/users, and would help to promote best practice approaches within these audiences. The disadvantages are that this would still require a level of coordination and support, could only realistically be done for certain types of information, and a likelihood that there would be a range of mixed messaging that could result in confusion.

4. **Use an existing conservation online resource as a central repository for more information on conservation translocations**
   A number of online resources exist, nationally and internationally, that cover a wide range of conservation and nature restoration issues. These include websites on conservation science and applications (e.g. Conservation Evidence), websites owned by eNGOs and other organisations, and database sites (e.g. UK Conservation Translocation Database currently under development or BSBI). This option would require the identification of such a resource that would be able to and willing to host additional information on conservation translocations in particular on a dedicated part of the website. This might work best for certain types of information, for example overarching guidance and key literature. The advantages would be that such a resource could build onto an existing platform and utilise some of the staffing that already exists, and it may involve a platform which has existing high visibility. The disadvantages would be that there would still be a need for some dedicated and specialist staff with associated costs, less flexibility and opportunities for creativity to design a resource with a conservation translocation focus, and more difficulty addressing the image, broad governance and working principles that survey participants have identified as important to ensure trust, transparency and objectivity in any CT Information Hub.

5. **Establish new stand-alone online hubs for each of the devolved nations**
   This would involve each of the devolved nations establishing their own CT Information Hub from scratch, or potentially using one of the options set out above. The advantages of this are that the design and governance of any hub could be done in a way that better suits the specific domestic legal frameworks, conservation policies and priorities, and probably less complicated to set up and manage than a UK hub. For example, Scotland would probably also prioritise the inclusion of a public-facing resource to address the

requirements of the Scottish Biodiversity Delivery Plan. The disadvantages are that it would result in duplication and the potential for confusion for users accessing different national hubs, overall inefficiency of resourcing, a loss of expert input from across the UK and a loss of opportunity promoting joined up working and practice. More widely, there would be higher start-up and ongoing management costs than options 1-4 and option 6 overall.

6. **Establish a new stand-alone online CT Information Hub for all of the UK**
   This would be the same approach as option 5, but with one central UK or British Islands online hub. The advantages are that this could be designed and managed in such a way that it allows flexibility and creativity, and addresses the concerns and aspirations of stakeholders relating to content, governance, trust, ownership, transparency etc. The advantage over option 5 would be greater overall efficiency of resourcing, coordination of effort and opportunities for synergy. The disadvantages would be the challenges associated with establishing a suitable agreed governance and management of the hub, and the higher start-up and ongoing management costs compared to options 1-4 (although cheaper than option 5 overall).

Overall Recommendation – The authors recommend that **option 6** is progressed, taking into account the responses provided by the participants for the online survey, and the information derived from the one-to-one interviews and the technical considerations sub-project. This option will result in a comprehensive, adaptable, searchable, trusted and objective online hub with consistent messaging for key audiences across the different parts of the UK.
Further recommendations based on option 6, and a proposed way forward, are set out in the following section.

5.5 Recommendations and next steps

The following recommendations for a CT Information Hub have been developed based on project team and AI analyses of the online survey free text responses, together with the feedback received from the one-to-one interviews and the technical consultants. The AI analysis provided a partial framework of recommendations and were then heavily developed to take into account the wider context of the scoping study.

The recommendations, taken together, propose that the value of a CT Information Hub will lie less in generating new rules and approaches, and more in bringing existing knowledge, standards and experiences together in a usable, trustworthy and jointly owned platform that supports better decisions across the UK. The extent to which recommendations are taken forward will depend on the resourcing available. Potential timelines for the key tasks are set out in the final 'proposed next steps' section below.

Recommendation 1
Carry out a further phase of stakeholder engagement to finalise the co-design of the CT Information Hub. Stakeholders engaged with this scoping study, plus new primary stakeholders (i.e. primary stakeholders who did not have the opportunity to contribute to this scoping study), to be invited to take part in further engagement exercises to discuss and refine the proposals developed to date subject to resources being identified. This to cover topics and current recommendations raised in the scoping study, and with a view to informing the next phase of work involving the construction of an online CT Information Hub. All parts of the UK should be represented to ensure an agreed approach across nations. Timeframe: 2026/27.

Recommendation 2
Clarify the scope of the CT Information Hub and audiences - Adopt a "two-layer" model:

- A practitioner/regulator/key stakeholder core (more technical content and tools)
- A public-facing front end (plain-language information, FAQs, basic case-study summaries)

Recommendation 3
Plan for sustainability and phased delivery - Align the scope of the CT Information Hub with realistic funding and staffing, prioritising a few high-value functions at launch, then building out.

- Secure dedicated staff time (and/or a small secretariat) for:
    - Liaison with the selected governance/steering group
    - Content management and updates.
    - User support and engagement.
    - Monitoring use and impact.
- Use a phased development approach, for example in line with the technical details set out in section 4.3:
    - Final stakeholder engagement exercise (Recommendation 1), 2026/27.
    - Phase 1: Core guidance signposting, small initial case-study set, basic register, 2027/28.
    - Phase 2: Expanded register and case studies; tools/templates; thematic sections (e.g., social, welfare, biosecurity), 2027/28 – ongoing.
    - Phase 3: Networking features; integration with external databases (e.g., UK Conservation Translocation Database, Conservation Evidence); formal gap-analysis, 2027/28 - ongoing.

Recommendation 4
Establish robust governance and quality assurance approaches visibly and early - Formalise governance and QA before launch and make both processes visible on the site (e.g. "About the hub" and "How content is reviewed"). To be developed through the stakeholder engagement exercise, 2026/27.

- Create some form of UK-relevant steering group that might include representatives from:
    - SNCOs
    - NSRF, ESRT etc.
    - Key NGOs and land/water management interests.
    - Relevant specialist groups.
    - Relevant academic partners with CT expertise.
- Publish:
    - Content selection and review criteria.
    - Labelling for different content types.
    - Review cycles for core pages.

Recommendation 5
Curate guidance and provide practical tools - Position the CT Information Hub as the primary orientation and implementation support tool for existing guidance, not as a new "code" or policy in its own right.

- Curate, don't duplicate: Summarise and link to IUCN guidance, the Scottish and English Codes and other national guidance, clarifying how they fit together for different project types.

- Link to, and if necessary store, other key, quality assured conservation translocations material
- Provide practitioner-ready tools, for example:
    - Template DRAs, HRAs, welfare assessments etc.
    - Stakeholder engagement and communication plans.
    - Monitoring protocols (with minimum data standards).
    - Decision trees indicating when CT is appropriate, what CT category applies, and which licences/consents and consultations are needed.

Recommendation 6
Begin with a small cohort of high-quality, illustrative case studies across taxa and expand iteratively, plus establish a modest register (linked to the UK Conservation Translocation Database). Put case studies and a national project register at the centre.

- Develop a simple and standard case-study template aligned with the IUCN CTSG case studies and national codes, in collaboration with other case study resources (AER, Conservation Evidence). Share case studies with successful, unsuccessful and mixed outcomes – there is a particularly strong desire to be able to learn from unsuccessful projects that are not usually reported. These to be published online after appropriate QA.
- Establish an associated national register of CT projects, with a minimal but consistent dataset and filters for species/taxon, geography, CT type and outcome status which should be closely linked to any UK Conservation Translocation Database (thereby encouraging and promoting the submission of data to the latter).

Recommendation 7
Embed key specialist biological, social and legal considerations as core components. Ensure these topics have equal status in navigation and design to other guidance, signalling that they are integral to good CT practice and licence applications. For example, develop dedicated sections for:

- Social/human dimensions – including case examples of conflict and coexistence, and guidance on engagement and governance.
- Animal welfare – minimum standards and species-specific issues, particularly for high-profile vertebrates.
- Plant health and biosecurity – assessment and mitigation of pathogen and invasive species risks, across taxa.
- Legal and policy overviews – for all the individual components of the UK/British Islands.

These are not exclusive, but reflect some of the gaps identified by stakeholders to date.

Recommendation 8
Support networking and a community of practice. Frame the CT Information Hub as a UK community of practice, with NSRF, ESRT, the SNCOs and others jointly encouraging contributions and use.

- Provide an opt-in directory of experts and practitioners, searchable by species/taxon, habitat, role (e.g. project lead, welfare specialist, social scientist, land manager etc.) etc.
- Offer light-touch networking.
    - Webinars and short “teach-ins” on specialist topics.
    - A space for short “practice notes” from under-documented taxa and projects, subject to quality assurance.

- It is not recommended that public fora are set up as this would require a heavy moderation burden, but users could be directed to purpose-built fora on other platforms e.g. LinkedIn.

Recommendation 9
Commit to transparency on evidence gaps and contested issues. Make it part of the hub's remit to highlight uncertainty and controversy constructively, rather than present an artificially neat picture of CT practice.

- Maintain an "evidence gaps and priorities" section, updated periodically, to guide research and funding.
- Where views diverge (e.g. assisted colonisation, some beaver and large carnivore contexts), provide balanced summaries of different positions with references.

Proposed next steps
The results and recommendations of this scoping study will be shared with key stakeholders. This will include all those invited to take part in the online survey (including all members of the ESRT and NSRF) and in the one-to-one interviews. Feedback will be invited and collated.

Opportunities to progress option 6 and the above recommendations, through the further involvement of the relevant partners and key stakeholders, will be identified. A key element of this will be setting out the cost options and resources required, both in the short-term to support the initial, one-off development and construction of the CT Information Hub, and its longer term management and hosting. The latter would require some form of dedicated, part-time project officer (supervised by suitably qualified staff and working within the agreed governance structure and principles) hosted by a suitable organisation.

The suitability of the organisation that hosts/manages the CT Information Hub on behalf of the stakeholders should be assessed taking into account the following:

- Its long-term security and viability (financial and otherwise).
- Its links with a wide range of government and non-government organisations, member and volunteer organisations, academia, the NSRF/ESRT, the IUCN and its specialist groups etc.
- Its domestic and international reputation as an evidence-led organisation trusted to manage/provide objective information.
- Its experience and expertise in conservation across a wide range of scientific, policy, technical, practical (*in situ*, *ex situ*), communication and other fields – and more specifically conservation translocation.
- Its experience and expertise in working with a wide range of relevant stakeholder groups, and multi-partner projects.
- Its location in the UK, taking into account how new tools/resources being developed for UK audiences are being established elsewhere.
- Its professional reputation that would help attract funding.

Following interviews with managers of other online resources, it is clear that dedicated staff time will be required to manage any CT Information Hub if it is to provide the resources, and remain current and updated in the ways highlighted by the online survey participants. The following key elements would require resources that would ensure the recommendations above could be progressed and a working hub realised:

One-off development and construction elements:

- Management and resourcing of a further stakeholder engagement and co-design exercise (one-off element, 2026/27)
- Project conservation translocation specialists/supervisors:
    - to finalise design of CT Information Hub using results of final stakeholder engagement exercise (2026/27)
    - to manage initial phase 1 development including supervising the population of the hub (2027/28)
- Project officer, working half-time, from period after the final stakeholder engagement exercise - to populate the hub (2027/28)
- Web technical specialists - initial phase 1 development (2027/28)

Long-term, ongoing management and hosting elements:

- Project conservation translocation specialists/supervisors - ongoing supervision of project officer plus potential new phases of development if resources available (ongoing from 2027/28)
- Project officer, working half-time, from period after the final stakeholder engagement exercise - ongoing management (ongoing from 2027/28)
- Web technical specialists - ongoing routine web maintenance (ongoing from 2027/28)

There are therefore one-off costs associated with the stakeholder engagement exercise and co-design, and the phase 1 development of the hub leading to the launch. Thereafter there will be ongoing costs associated with the management of the hub. There are a range of potential funding options for both the one-off and ongoing elements which will require assessment and discussion.

It is anticipated there would be additional input of individuals from appropriate organisations involved in the governance structure and to help steer activities. Opportunities to involve supervised postgraduate students/placements in populating the CT Information Hub could be investigated.

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Appendix 1. Online Survey - Participant Information

Conservation Translocations Hub for the UK: Scoping Study

We would like to invite you to take part in this scoping study.

What is the project about?

Conservation translocation involves moving species for conservation purposes to restore individual species or help restore whole ecosystems. The number of proposals is increasing rapidly, and can involve different types of species, in terrestrial and/or aquatic habitats, led by a diverse range of people with different motivations, levels of expertise and resources. The projects are often complex and resource-intensive. Most are biologically challenging, some are particularly challenging socio-economically.

Information and guidance are currently scattered, often confusing and sometimes misleading. The project seeks to investigate how a new online hub of trusted resources could be developed, in line with international and national policy and legislation, to help people make good decisions and design projects that succeed for nature and people.

This is a collaborative project, involving UHI Inverness, the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) and Natural England (acting on behalf of the England Species Reintroduction Taskforce (ESRT)) as partners. It will be a preliminary assessment of the feasibility and desirability of establishing a hub, the potential risks and opportunities, and the practical considerations. It will involve engaging with specialists who have national and international experience of working with the policy, practice, and science around conservation translocations, stakeholders who represent those living with translocated species, and a range of other key participants. This includes yourself.

What are the aims of this project

The overall aim is to carry out a scoping exercise examining the issues surrounding the development of a new, online hub of conservation translocation guidance and information. Part of this exercise involves carrying out a preliminary survey of specific stakeholders to gain an understanding of their aspirations, reasons, and requirements for undertaking conservation translocations. We would wish any conservation translocation hub to be designed with the help of practitioners, decision-makers, and communities to inform good practice, explain approaches to conservation translocation, and thereby contribute to the restoration of our biodiversity and thereby provide benefits to people.
There is also the option that a hub could include a public-facing, outreach elements to help explain the importance of conservation translocations, including the practical issues of how and why they are done.

Finally, we also intend to identify some of the practical challenges associated with the production and longer-term management of such a hub.

How you can help?

We would be grateful if you could complete our online survey. We will send you a link. It's simple and shouldn't take much more than 10 minutes to do.

We may also approach some stakeholders for one-to-one interviews or meetings.

Are there any risks in taking part?

Not really. We will anonymise all the information and data we share in our final report. You are under no obligation to take part or share any information or take part in any activities you are not comfortable with. You are free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason until the final analysis of results has been completed on 10 March 2026.

What is going to happen with the information you share?

We will write a report which we intend to make available publicly. The final version is due for submission on 31 March 2026, although wide publication may be a bit after this date to allow final copy editing etc. We will then look at developing a further phase of work that will involve further stakeholder input, and the actual hub development.

Any information you share through the online surveys will be kept anonymous and it will not be possible to identify you as an individual in anything created as part of the project.

For those of you asked to do one-to-one interviews or meetings, you will be given the option as to how we report the information you provide. You can opt for your statements to be anonymous, or for your statements to be attributed to the type of organization you work for (i.e. a public body, an environmental NGO/membership organization, a land/water management NGO/membership organization, an academic body, a manager/developer of an information hub, other) or for you to be named.

What are benefits of participating?

You will help influence the development of the conservation translocation hub including the type of information and guidance it will hold and how it will operate. Ultimately, you will be helping provide effective tools to help people work towards addressing the nature and climate crises.

Further information

We hope this information sheet was helpful for you to understand what the project is about and what the implications of participation are. However, we would be very happy to answer any questions regarding the project, or the approaches involved, or anything related to the project. Please feel free to get in touch with us (contact information below).

We will send you a link to our online survey in the near future. However, if you do not wish to take part then please let us know. The research activities will be conducted between December 2025 and March 2026.

Contact details

If you have any questions/concerns, during or after the research project please contact a member of the project team:

Main Project Contact:
Dr Matthew Curran, Institute of Biodiversity and Freshwater Conservation, UHI Inverness
Email: Matthew.Curran.ic@uhi.ac.uk
Tel: 01463 273305

Project Managers:
Martin Gaywood, Institute of Biodiversity and Freshwater Conservation, UHI Inverness (Martin.Gaywood.ic@uhi.ac.uk)
Aline Finger, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (afinger@rbge.org.uk)

This collaborative project is funded through Natural England working on behalf of the England Species Reintroduction Taskforce with additional contributions from UHI Inverness and the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

This project was granted ethical approval by the University of Highlands and Islands Research Ethics Committee on 5 January 2026.

Data protection

Identity of the Data Controller and Data Protection Officer

The data controller is the University of the Highlands and Islands, UHI House, Old Perth Road, Inverness, IV2 3J. The Data Protection Officer can be contacted at: dataprotectionofficer@uhi.ac.uk.

Lawful basis for processing personal data

The lawful basis for processing personal data is use is necessary for the performance a task in the public interest (with a basis in law) or under official authority vested in us (public task). In this case the undertaking of education or research by the University or its students in keeping with the University's public task. This public task including the planning, delivery, and communication of research. Research includes conducting the research and the taking all required steps to ensure the safety, validity and academic integrity of the research. It may also include re-use of the research data for further research, storage for later inspection, auditing and archiving.

Appendix 2. Online Survey - Questionnaire

CONSENT

1. I confirm that I have read the information on the previous pages and have had the opportunity to consider the information before agreeing to continue.

- Agree
- Disagree

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason until the final analysis of results has been completed on 10 March 2026 prior to publication.

- Agree
- Disagree

3. I understand that the information collected about me will be used to support possible future phases of work to develop a conservation translocation hub and shared anonymously with the lead partners managing the study (UHI Inverness and the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh).

- Agree
- Disagree

4. I consent to my data, including textualised quotes and excerpts, being used (in anonymised form) for the specific research outlined under the Project Aims and for any possible future phases of work to develop a conservation translocation hub.

- Agree
- Disagree

5. I understand that I have the option as to how any quotes and excerpts will be attributed in the final report. I request that the option that should apply to my quotes and excerpts be as follows (please select one of these three options):

- I should be anonymised
- The type of organisation I work for can be identified but I should not be named (i.e. a public body, an environmental NGO/membership organisation, a land/water management NGO/membership organisation, an academic body, a manager/developer of an information hub, other)
- I, and my organisation, can be named

6. I waive any rights to intellectual property over the data generated through my participation and understand that I will not benefit commercially or financially.

- Agree
- Disagree

MAIN SURVEY QUESTIONS

7. How would you describe your general, main involvement in conservation translocations (select one):

- I, or the people I represent, influence and have a direct role in advising, researching or carrying out conservation translocations (e.g. practice, policy, research etc.)
- I, or the people I represent, am impacted by conservation translocations led by others (e.g. as a land or water manager/owner or representative, community representative etc.)
- I, or the people I represent, neither influence nor am impacted by conservation translocations directly but am interested in the topic

8. Why have you looked for information on conservation translocations?

9. What sources of information have you used during your involvement with conservation translocations?

10. Why have you used those sources of information?

11. How easy/difficult do you usually find sourcing the necessary information/guidance on conservation translocations that you require?

- NA - Never looked
- Very difficult
- Difficult
- Neither difficult nor easy
- Easy
- Very easy

12. Can you provide an example of information/guidance you found **easy** AND an example you found **difficult** to locate?

13. Do you have any general comments on issues you've experienced sourcing information and guidance on conservation translocations?

14. What do you think would be the main challenges associated with a conservation translocation hub?

15. What do you think would be the main opportunities associated with a conservation translocation hub?

16. Who are the 'essential' audiences a conservation translocation hub should be designed for?

17. Who are the 'desirable' audiences a conservation translocation hub should be designed for?

18. What do you think would be most beneficial to include in any online hub?

19. What would help reassure you that any online hub contained appropriate and trusted information/guidance on conservation translocations?

20. Name of your organisation if applicable (this will be anonymised in project outputs unless you request otherwise)

21. Which country do you work in (select one)?

- England
- International
- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- UK
- Wales
- Other (please specify)

22. What type of organisation do you work for (select one)?

- Academic body
- NGO/Membership organisation
- Private individual
- Public body
- Other (please specify)

23. What is your own expertise/field of work (you can select more than one)?

- Communications
- General Biology/Ecology (species and habitats)
- General Interest
- Genetics/Genomics
- Health/Biosecurity
- In situ/Ex situ practice
- Land/Aquatic management
- Monitoring
- Physical processes
- Policy/Legislation
- Socio-economic/Socio-cultural
- Welfare
- Other (please specify)

24. What is your taxonomic expertise if applicable (you can select more than one)?

- Amphibians and reptiles
- Birds
- Fish
- Fungi
- General
- Invertebrates
- Mammals
- Plants
- N/A

25. What is your habitat expertise if applicable (you can select more than one)?

- Freshwater

- General
- Marine
- Terrestrial
- N/A

26. Can you please provide the names and organisations of anyone based in the UK you believe has important views on the development of a conservation translocation hub we should consider.

27. Would you be willing to contribute to future phases of research aimed at the development of a conservation translocation hub, or for us to contact you to seek further clarification of your answers in this survey? Please provide an email address to allow us to **include** or **exclude** you from future contact lists.

- Yes
- No

28. Email address:

Appendix 3. Online Survey - Cover email sent 20 January 2026

From: University of the Highlands and Islands Inverness and the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh <no-reply@app.onlinesurveys.jisc.ac.uk>
Sent: 20 January 2026 11:11
To:
Subject: Conservation Translocations Hub for the UK: Scoping Study

Online Surveys

University of the Highlands and Islands has invited you to respond to their survey:
Conservation Translocations Hub for the UK: Scoping Study

Hello,

My name is Matthew Curran. I am emailing you on behalf of our project team, Dr Martin Gaywood (Institute of Biodiversity and Freshwater Conservation at UHI Inverness) and Dr Aline Finger (Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh), who both have significant experience of conservation translocation policy & practice.

I want to invite you to participate in a collaborative research project involving UHI Inverness, the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, & Natural England acting on behalf of the England Species Reintroduction Taskforce.

The project is a preliminary assessment of the feasibility & desirability of creating a hub to provide accessible, quality-assured conservation translocation information & guidance to the UK. The project will engage with specialists who have national & international experience of working with the policy, practice, & science surrounding conservation translocations, stakeholders representing those living with translocated species, & many other participants. We are keen to get your views & provide you with an opportunity to influence the work.

You will be asked to answer a short online questionnaire that will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. If you're willing to participate, please click "Respond to this survey" below & complete the survey **before midday on Monday 2 February**.

Your participation is voluntary. You can withdraw from the study at anytime before **10 March 2026** by exiting the questionnaire or once the survey is complete by contacting me at Matthew.Curran.ic@uhi.ac.uk & requesting your data be deleted. After **10 March 2026** the analysis will be complete & published.

Your answers will only be used as part of this study & possible further project phases that will follow once the first phase is complete. During the survey, we ask you if you wish to be anonymised or whether you or your organisation are comfortable being named.

This research project was approved by the UHI Research Ethics Committee.

Thank you for your help and participation.

Respond to this survey

If the above link does not work, copy and paste the following into your browser:

https://app.onlinesurveys.jisc.ac.uk/s/uhi/ct-hub-scoping-study?email=martin.gaywood%40nature.scot&token=XrEQstgK5A

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Appendix 4. Development of an online Conservation Translocations Information Hub: An assessment of key technical issues

yellowcherry

Development of an Online Conservation Translocations Hub: An Assessment of Key Technical Issues

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March 2026

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1. Project Background

UHI Inverness and the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE), in collaboration with Natural England and the England Species Reintroduction Taskforce, are carrying out a scoping study on the feasibility and desirability of setting up a Conservation Translocations Hub (CTH). This would be a UK-based digital platform designed to support knowledge exchange, guidance access, and collaboration around conservation translocation practice. The authors were asked by UHI Inverness and the RBGE to provide expert information on some of the technical, design and management considerations setting up such an online hub. This report summarises those considerations.

The hub will act as a central point for practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders, bringing together guidance, case studies, tools, and networks relevant to conservation translocations. In addition the hub will provide a resource for the general public to "raise public awareness of science and practice around conservation translocations through public engagement" as required under the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy.

The platform will curate and signpost existing resources rather than duplicating them, and will include both technical practitioner resources and accessible public-facing content.

The project is currently in the scoping phase with a view to source resourcing and the distribution of possible tenders, ultimately to seek a supplier to design, build, and launch the initial version of the hub. Some of headline themes derived from the online survey organised by UHI Inverness and RBGE were shared with the authors. These were used to inform this project.

2. Project Objectives

The overall aim of this project was to provide UHI Inverness and the RBGE with succinct, preliminary information on some of the key considerations associated with setting up any future online, web-based Conservation Translocations Hub. Its objectives were:

- To describe what type of key issues need to be considered when designing, setting up and maintaining an online information hub
- To set out some options for how such an information online hub could be designed, set up and maintained, with associated advantages and disadvantages
- To provide an approximate indication of costs associated with the options and different stages designing, setting up and maintaining an online hub

The Conservation Translocations Hub should:

- Provide a trusted and neutral source of information on conservation translocations.
- Support practitioners and regulators in project planning and implementation.
- Create a central repository of case studies and project information.
- Support a UK-wide community of practice.
- Improve public understanding of conservation translocations.

3. Target Users

The platform could support several user groups.

3.1 Primary Users

- Conservation practitioners
- Environmental NGOs
- Government agencies and statutory regulators Researchers and academic institutions
- Stakeholders and communities influenced by conservation translocations (including land and water managers)
- Members of the public

These users require technical resources, tools, and case studies.

3.2 Secondary Users

NGOs and other stakeholder groups

Students and educators

Journalists and media

These users require clear explanations and simplified summaries.

4. Project Scope

The selected supplier (i.e. the consultant or agency contracted to carry out the work) would be responsible for:

- Website design and user experience
- Platform development
- Content management implementation
- Core functionality implementation
- Initial deployment and content population (See sitemap)
- Analytics & optimisation
- Testing and launch

- Training
- Documentation

The client would be responsible for:

- Content sourcing
- Governance arrangements
- Editorial oversight
- Ongoing content management after the launch

5. Platform Requirement

5.1 Content Management

It is recommended that the hub be built on a Content Management System (CMS) and must allow non-technical staff to:

- Create pages
- Upload resources
- Add case studies
- Manage submissions
- Update news and events

A CMS is tool that allows an average computer user to edit the content of a website without needing to use code or programming languages. The ability to manage content and layout within a Content Management System future-proofs the project, providing flexibility and ultimate control.

Often a CMS uses drag and drop functionality and formatting tools similar to word processing software so they are familiar to the average computer user and intuitive to use.

Ideally the CMS uses a page builder, so that the project team can create different layouts for different pages and pull through different content with ease. This will encourage website visitors to navigate to other sections of the website and stay engaged. Possible options include Elementor or Divi.

The CMS should be well supported by a large development community should additional features be required in the future.

Different user roles and permissions should be available. Version control of content, preview before publishing, and scheduled publishing is highly desirable. A staging server is also desirable so that staff can carry out large scale website updates safely in a test environment.

The platform should preferably use an open-source content management system. WordPress is recommended as a platform but other options can be explored if the supplier can evidence their reasoning. Open-source means that the source code is open to the public and any developer has the rights to modify it, build plugins for it and offer security recommendations. There is no purchase fee to use this software.
The CMS should not be licensed or third-party hosted e.g. Wix, IONOS, Squarespace. Purchasing a license or renting software from a third-party does not provide ownership of the website. Should the third-party increase cost significantly there is no ability to move the website away from them.

This ensures:

- Flexibility
- Lower long-term costs
- Availability of developers
- Extensibility through plugins (functionality that is not core to the CMS e.g. image galleries, forms, surveys, calculators etc.)

Content population for launch will be limited to a sitemap. A proposed, draft sitemap is provided in Annex 1. All written content, documents, attachments, external links and images will be provided to the supplier for population.

It would be expected that a page builder would be built in to the platform allowing the staff to have ultimate control over page layout. A page builder should be selected with a lifetime licence, and not have ongoing licence fees associated with it.

5.2 Content Submission System

External organisations could be able to submit:

- Case studies
- Practice notes
- Relevant resources

These would need to go through some form of moderation and quality assurance before publication.

Submission should include:
Structured forms
File upload capability
Moderation workflow

6. Functional Requirements

6.1 Website Structure

The website could support two main layers:

Practitioner Layer could include:

- Technical guidance
- Case studies
- Project register
- Tools and templates
- Password protected practitioner networking

Public Information Layer could include:

- Accessible explanations of conservation translocations
- Case study summaries
- Frequently asked questions
- Introductory material

The design should guide users into appropriate content based on their needs.

Examples of sites for reference:
https://www.conservationevidence.com/
https://www.mind.org.uk/

6.2 Case Study Library

The site could include a searchable case study repository (highlighted during the UHI Inverness and RBGE online survey). Case studies would be organised by the CTH project lead and could be limited to about ten for the initial launch (it would be advisable to request a set number within any technical specification to get comparable quotes for consideration).

Required features

- Structured case study template
- Media uploads (images, video, documents)
- Search and filtering
- Tagging system (E.g. by species, location – useful for users navigating the website).

Suggested filters

- Species/taxon

- Geographic region
- Habitat type
- CT type
- Project status or outcome

Examples of sites for reference:
https://cairngormstrust.org.uk/project/
https://cve-scotland.org.uk/resources/
https://www.conservationevidence.com/data/index
https://www.europarc.org/knowledge-hub/meadows-management/

Submission functionality
External contributors should be able to submit case studies through an online form.
Submissions must pass through moderation and quality assurance before publication. A maximum upload file size limit must be included on the submission as well as a limit on the number of images/documents to submit alongside text.

Examples of sites for reference:
https://foxiz.io/journal/submit-a-post/

6.3 National Project Register

The hub could include a simple registry of conservation translocation projects (it would be advisable to request a set number within the technical specification to get comparable quotes for consideration). However a 'UK Conservation Translocation Database' is also being developed, and will be closely interlinked to any hub. There are opportunities to link these two online resources, ensure coordination, and avoid duplication of effort.

Required features

- Searchable registry
- Map-based visualisation
- Filterable project listings
- Links to associated case studies where relevant.

Initial launch may include a limited registry (up to 10 projects), with expansion over time. Project details will be supplied by the CTH project team. There are various different ways that this Project Register could be built and look, so the CTH project team should invite examples of how this could be realised and with what software. Details of any ongoing software licences would need to be provided. The

examples below make use of WordPress plugins some of which carry an annual or one-off lifetime licence fee.

Examples of sites for reference:
https://www.ifaw.org/uk/projects
https://focusnorth.scot/focus-north-map/
http://climatehubs.scot/
https://cairngormstrust.org.uk/who-you-help/interactive-map/
https://somervalleyrediscovered.co.uk/map/
https://nbshub.naturebasedsolutionsinitiative.org/case-studies-tool/
https://www.mapbox.com/
https://www.google.com/maps/d/

6.4 Guidance Library

The site could include a curated resource library.

- Content types might include:
- Guidance documents
- Policy documents
- Best-practice guidelines
- External resource links

The hub should signpost existing authoritative resources rather than reproduce them. The CTH project team will consider the supplier's advice on how best to approach this. The outcome would be to create articles that signpost users with a weblink to other resources NOT to populate pages on the CTH with content scraped from other sources, therefore the posts could take the format as a 'Link Post' when being created within the CMS. This means that rather than lists which link to a page of content and contains a button or text link out to an external resource, the user is taken to that resource on first click.

Ideally the CTH would display the title, author, date and journal with a link/button to 'Read Paper'.

Options may include:

- RSS integration. RSS (Really Simple Syndication) is a website feed technology that allows users to receive automatic updates from websites, blogs, or news outlets without visiting them individually. If the source provides an RSS feed, this could be integrated in to an Open Source CMS site using a simple plugin. https://www.wprssaggregator.com/

- API to collect meta data. An API (Application Programming Interface) works like a messenger between different software applications. It allows them to communicate and share data making it possible for developers to build more complex integrations between systems. Instead of scraping websites, pull academic paper metadata from APIs e.g. Crossref https://www.crossref.org/ Elsevier https://www.elsevier.com WordPress REST API https://developer.wordpress.com/docs/api/

- Custom AI agent. It is now possible to build tools using AI (Artificial Intelligence) to carry out administrative tasks. It could be an option to build an agent to search the internet for articles (within the boundaries of a list of predetermined websites) and post the meta data into the CMS as link posts. E.g. https://www.make.com/en/ai-agents. Long term support for this would need to be considered/priced accordingly.

If content is curated automatically, it will need to be moderated before being published. Ideally the website administrator would be notified daily/weekly (or some other period judged suitable) of new resources that have been curated, and the administrator will then be able to log in and publish or reject these.

Suppliers could be asked to provide a price for manual entry as well as a price for automated curation of this information, in case this is delayed to a later phase due to the cost (it would be advisable to request a set number of sources to be included within the technical specification to get comparable quotes for consideration).

Examples of sites for reference:
https://www.conservationevidence.com/data/index
https://www.cepf.net/learning-hub
https://ndsfb.org/publications/

6.5 Practitioner Tools

The platform should support hosting or linking to:

- Risk assessment templates
- Decision trees
- Stakeholder engagement templates
- Monitoring protocols
- Welfare and biosecurity assessments

The hub could signpost existing authoritative resources rather than reproduce them but may include more explanatory text setting out why they are dependable/appropriate tools. Whereas the Registry would display in quite a compact way (maybe as lists of resources), this section would take up more space on the screen (it would be advisable to request a set number of tools within the technical specification to get comparable quotes for consideration).

Examples of sites for reference:
https://highlandcjp.org.uk/family/

6.6 Practitioner Directory

The site could include a voluntary practitioner directory. Registered members could search for other members by the following fields:

Profile information

- Name
- Organisation
- Geographic location
- Area of expertise
- Contact method

Requirements

- Member registration/password protection
- Privacy controls
- Searchable profiles
- Possibly map visualisation/grid/list view

The system should allow practitioners to direct messages but without hosting public discussion forums which would require extensive moderation.

Members could also be able to post a message openly to a message board or similar which would notify all registered users but can only be responded to privately.

For the launch the CTH project lead could be set up as a member, and new members would register themselves.

Examples of sites for reference:
https://www.hbw.scot/hbw-members

https://ultimatemember.com/
https://ultimatemember.com/features/
https://ultimatemember.com/extensions/private-messages/

6.7 News and Events

A dynamic section could allow administrators to post:

- Project updates
- Research developments
- Events (not ticketed or purchased)
- Workshops
- Conferences
- Training opportunities

These articles may include text, video, images, date, category and author.

Examples of sites for reference:
https://humberheadpeatlands.org.uk/news/
https://climatehubs.scot/category/news/

6.8 Contact Functionality

The website could include:

- A general enquiry form
- An option for multi-recipient email notifications

It is recommended that an email address is provided as well as the contact form in case of a technical failure. If a legal entity is set up, the registered office and company status is a legal requirement and is usually placed within the footer (bottom) of the website.

If an enquiry form is included on the website then a privacy policy will be required although is always recommended. E.g. https://climatehubs.scot/privacy-policy/ . A cookies policy will also be required as well as always being recommended. E.g. https://climatehubs.scot/cookie-policy/

Examples of sites for reference:
https://theactivewaybathnes.co.uk/get-involved/

6.9 Email subscription/notification

One option is to include an email newsletter sign-up form. This would add subscribers to a list who would be notified when new resources or articles were posted to the website.

The online hub could have a Practitioner Directory, with each practitioner created as a user profile on the website with a log in. If using a membership plugin (such as Ultimate Member) to create this functionality, there will be an option to automatically add users into an email list on Mailchimp (or equivalent) allowing CTH to have both a list of public and private subscribers to which they can send different content.

The management of this could be done using a third party tool such as Mailchimp, or handled within the website platform itself. Details should be proposed by the supplier.

Examples of sites for reference:
https://ndsfb.org/

6.10 Visitor Analytics

In order to understand engagement with the platform, Google Analytics or equivalent should be installed on the platform upon launch. The CTH project lead could then, report, as a minimum, on the following key performance indicators:

- Website visitors
- Traffic sources
- Top pages
- Number members
- Engagement rate per session
- Conversions (contact forms sent/downloads etc.)

The project lead would be provided with the administrator log in role.

6.11 Cookie consent

To comply with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (affecting the EU & UK) websites must obtain consent to track user activity via cookies on a website. Proposals would include a consent banner and cookie policy, compatible with Consent Mode v2, Google's updated model to allow website or app user tracking and engagement with advertising across it's platforms.

Website owners should implement a certified consent management platform, if they wish to use Google Analytics or other identifying tracking tools.

Users should be given the option to accept cookies or reject them, view the cookie policy and change their preferences at any time.

Examples of site for reference– see bottom of the website for pop-up:
https://rsfs.org.uk/cookie-policy/

7. Accessibility

The website should follow the accessibility regulations in the *Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018* meeting the WCAG 2.2 AA accessibility standard. Accessibility must play a major role in the whole project process from start to finish. The website must be audited and tested through various stages.

A compliance report should be provided back to the project lead. It is also important to publish a fully dated accessibility statement that explains how accessible the website is upon launch.

Accessibility tools should be installed where necessary to comply with the above standards, e.g colour contrast and text-sizing.

Examples of sites for reference:
https://cityofdesigndundee.com
https://investhighland.com/accessibility-statement/

8. Security

Whilst content management of the platform will be the responsibility of a CTH project team member, ongoing costs for security updates of the core CMS and plugins should be included, initially for a period of 12 months. Potential suppliers should be asked to provide pricing and details for at least the following:

- Secure hosting
- Secure Sockets layer (SSL) encryption (encrypts sensitive information, like passwords and card details, being transferred between a browser and a server – presents as https:// before a website address).
- User authentication
- Regular security updates
- Backup procedures (monthly ideally)
- Malware scanning
- Malicious log-in attempt notifications/stop

9. Mobile Responsiveness

Potential suppliers should be asked to ensure specific allowance is made for Mobile Device Development in any proposed costings and that the website is tested on a variety of devices. Testing should be done on at least the three most recent versions of the three most popular browsers on a variety of Android and iOS device models including, but not limited to:

- Microsoft Windows based browser Edge (desktop version)
- Google Chrome (desktop version)
- Mozilla Firefox (desktop version)
- Apple devices utilising Safari (iPhones, iPads)
- Android-based phones and tablets.

Suppliers should identify their approach to mobile testing, including details of any tools used and whether they will deal with bug fixing for a period after the launch to cover minor faults or changes.

10. Performance

The website should:

- Load quickly across devices
- Perform well under moderate traffic
- Function on modern browsers and mobile devices

Suppliers should be asked to provide details and pricing to address the above performance requirements, and their approach to ensuring page speed tests using Google Lighthouse or equivalent at launch.

Suppliers should also set out their approach to mobile device testing, detailing the tools they use and what browsers and devices they would commit to testing.

11. Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

The platform should support:

- Search engine indexing
- Metadata optimisation
- Structured page hierarchy

Potential suppliers should include in their proposals details of basic Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) that will be supported at the launch.

In the longer term the CTH project team member should be able to use any SEO plugins included in the build. It is not envisaged that long-term SEO by the supplier should be required. External linking from partner organisations will support visibility.

12. Branding and Visual Design

The hub should have its own visual identity.
This should include:

- Logo
- Colour palette
- Typography
- Consistent page layouts

Pricing should include the registration of an appropriate domain for 1 year.

The platform should appear independent and neutral, reflecting its multi-stakeholder governance model.

13. Phased Delivery

The project might best be planned as a phased development. However, suppliers should be invited to present alternative approaches with their reasoning.

A proposed option for phased delivery is presented below.

Phase 1 – Initial Launch
Core functionality:

- Website framework
- Resource library
- Case study section
- Project register
- Practitioner directory
- Public-facing information pages
- Thematic content sections
- Accessibility
- Training and documentation

Suggested Feature Priority Table

This table sets out what should be ready for the launch (Phase 1) and what could be done at later phases.

Feature	Priority	Phase
Core website and navigation	Must	Phase 1
Content management system	Must	Phase 1
Case study database	Must	Phase 1
Case study submission form	Must	Phase 1
Resource library	Must	Phase 1
Search functionality	Must	Phase 1
Basic project register	Must	Phase 1
Public-facing explainer pages	Must	Phase 1
Responsive mobile design	Must	Phase 1
Accessibility compliance (WCAG)	Must	Phase 1
Basic analytics	Must	Phase 1
User registration	Should	Phase 2
Practitioner directory	Should	Phase 2
Map-based project register	Should	Phase 2
Advanced search filters	Should	Phase 2
Community practice notes	Should	Phase 2
Events and webinars system	Should	Phase 2
Integration with external databases	Could	Phase 3
Automated/AI content feeds	Could	Phase 3

14. Governance and Editorial Oversight

The hub could be governed by some form of steering group representing multiple organisations.

Responsibilities might include:

- Content review
- Quality assurance
- Guidance selection
- Maintaining neutrality

Governance arrangements will be publicly described on the website.

It would be advisable to detail who will be the project lead and what the expectations would be in terms of reporting to the steering group or equivalent. For example, weekly project reports by email and monthly online/on-site meetings might be acceptable and reasonable to expect for a project of this scale, at least in the earlier phases.

15. Deliverables

The supplier could be expected to deliver:

- Discovery and design phase
- Website architecture and design of the user experience
- CMS setup
- Core feature development
- Testing and quality assurance
- Launch support
- Documentation and training
- Year one hosting and support

16. Budget and Pricing

When potential suppliers are approached to provide details and budgets for any approved CTH project they should address the following:

- Itemised pricing
- Breakdown by project phase and feature request
- Optional and mandatory ongoing support costs if relevant
- Typical components may include:
    - Design
    - Development
    - Functionality
    - Content population
    - Testing
    - Accessibility
    - Optimisation
    - Launch
    - Project management
- Training and documentation
- Hosting year 1

- Security, maintenance and support year 1

17. Timeline

Indicative project timeline:

Suggested Development Timeline

Phase	Deliverables	Timeline
Discovery	Requirements refinement, experience planning	2 weeks
Design	Wireframes*, visual design	4 weeks
Development	Staging site build and core functionality	6 weeks
Testing	Accessibility, usability on mobiles	2 weeks
Launch	Deployment, security and training	2 weeks

*Basic layout of what content is on the page

Estimated total: **4 months.**

18. Proposal Requirements

Potential suppliers should also be expected to include the following details in any proposal:

- Relevant project experience
- Proposed methodology
- Proposed technical approach (with examples if possible)
- Details of key personnel
- Development timeline
- Cost breakdown
- Support and maintenance options

19. Budget

The budget required to set up a CTH will vary largely on the type of supplier approached. A freelancer will have fewer overheads than an agency with employees but carries a higher risk in terms of reliability and security.

It would be advised to include a contingency based on scoping to be carried out at the start of the project, especially around the use of automating the curation of content (e.g. using AI-type approaches described in section 6.4).

An alternative option for a more streamlined project would be to amalgamate the case studies, guidance resources and news into one large resource area of the hub that can be categorised and tagged. If there was only one type of article format then the development portion of the project could be reduced by a number of days. It would however, be more difficult to signpost users to relevant content and less visually interesting for the user, potentially resulting in the audience not engaging.

Ideally potential suppliers will break costs down in to the following groups of activity.

Activity	**Deliverables**
Branding	Logo design and style guide
Discovery	Requirements refinement, UX planning
Design	Wireframes, visual design
Development	Staging site build and core functionality as well as content population
Testing	Accessibility, SEO, usability on mobiles
Launch	Deployment, security and training
Yr 1 fees	Hosting, support and security

Annex 1 - Proposed Website Sitemap for a Conservation Translocations Hub

The following provisional sitemap outlines a proposed structure of the Conservation Translocations Hub website. It reflects the recommended two-layer model separating practitioner resources from public-facing content. The aim is to provide an initial approach to inform further discussion and development.

Homepage

Purpose:

- Introduce the hub
- Direct users to relevant sections
- Highlight latest content

Key elements:

- Overview of the hub
- Quick navigation to main sections
- Featured case study
- Featured guidance/resource
- News or event highlights
- Search bar

About the Hub

Overview

- Purpose of the hub
- Scope of conservation translocations
- Why the hub was created

Governance

- Steering group or equivalent
- Partner organisations
- Decision-making structure

How Content is Reviewed

- Editorial process
- Quality assurance
- Review cycles

Transparency around governance and review processes builds credibility.

Guidance & Resources

This section curates existing guidance rather than duplicating it.

Core Guidance

Examples:

- International conservation translocation guidance
- National codes of practice
- Best-practice frameworks

Project Planning

Guidance on:

- Assessing whether conservation translocation is appropriate
- Planning projects
- Stakeholder engagement
- Monitoring design

Legal & Policy

Overview of legislation and regulatory frameworks across UK nations.

Tools & Templates

Downloadable resources such as:

- Risk assessment templates
- Monitoring frameworks

- Welfare assessment templates
- Stakeholder engagement plans

Case Studies
Case Study Library
Searchable database. Filters may include:
- Species/taxon
- Habitat
- Geography
- Conservation translocation type
- Project outcome

Individual Case Study Pages
Standardised format including:
- Project overview
- Location
- Species
- Objectives
- Methods
- Outcomes
- Lessons learned

Project Register
A national register of conservation translocation projects. Care needed to ensure this links well with the UK Conservation Translocation Database.
Features:
- List view
- Map view
- Filters by species, geography, and project status

Each project entry may include:
- Project name
- Lead organisation
- Species
- Project stage
- Links to related case studies
- Location if relevant

Key Themes
Dedicated knowledge sections highlighting cross-cutting issues. These might include, amongst other topics:
Social Dimensions
- Animal Welfare
- Plant Health & Biosecurity
- Evidence Gaps
- Etc.

Community
This section supports networking among practitioners.
Practitioner Directory
Searchable database of experts.
Search filters may include:
- Species expertise
- Habitat expertise
- Geographic region
- Professional role

Practice Notes

Short contributions describing:

- Emerging lessons
- Niche taxa
- New techniques

Events & Webinars

- Upcoming events
- Recordings of past webinars
- Workshops and training

News & Events

Regularly updated section including:

- Research highlights
- Policy developments
- Project announcements
- Hub updates

For the Public

Accessible content explaining conservation translocations.
What Are Conservation Translocations?

- Simple explanations
- Examples

Why Are They Used?

- Conservation benefits
- Ecosystem restoration

Common Questions

- FAQs
- Myths and misconceptions

Example Projects
Short summaries of case studies written in accessible language.

Get Involved

Encourages community participation.
Submit a Case Study - Submission form
Submit a Resource - Add useful documents or guidance
Suggest an Event - Add relevant events
(All submissions will be reviewed before publication).

Contact

Includes:

- General enquiry form
- Contact email
- Hub team details

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