Getting the go-ahead for a translocation

This information sheet introduces the Department of Conservation (DOC) Translocation Guide for Community Groups.

It gives a brief outline of the process you will need to follow if you plan to move native animals and, in some situations, plants:

» From the wild to captivity
» From captivity to the wild
» Between wild locations

What is translocation?
Translocation is the managed movement of live indigenous plants or animals (taonga) from one location to another; it covers the entire process, including planning, the transfer, release, monitoring and post-release management. A translocation can consist of one or more transfers.

Transfer is the part of the translocation that is the physical movement of the plants or animals from one location to another and their release or planting at the new site.

Why do translocations?
Translocations are carried out:

» As a short or long term way to increase a species’ chance of survival or recovery. A translocation enables new populations to be established, existing populations to be enhanced or locally extinct populations to be re-established.

» As part of a restoration programme.

» To establish a species for a specific purpose, such as advocacy, education or scientific study.

The Translocation guide … and why it is needed
The Translocation Guide is a 30-page document that was written for community groups, individuals and other organisations who want to carry out a translocation. It aims to ensure that translocations are done for the right reasons, to avoid unintended consequences, and to have the best chance of success.

Translocation is a complex process that can have important, long-lasting effects—not just on the animal or plant being moved, but often on its whole environment too. Consultation with tangata whenua and other stakeholders is important to ensure ongoing support and maintain strong working relationships. Failure to engage can put future translocations at risk. Translocations can also take a lot of time, effort and dollars, so it’s important that both you and DOC have thought through the translocation carefully before it goes ahead.

The Translocation Guide explains the entire translocation process, from the initial idea, to planning and preparation of a translocation proposal, to approval of the translocation, from doing the transfer, and monitoring and reporting.
When is a Translocation proposal needed?

DOC requires community groups and others to have an approved translocation proposal before carrying out some types of translocation, most commonly, translocations of protected wildlife. A translocation proposal provides in-depth information about the reasons for the translocation, the possible effects it may have, the proposed plan of action, and the consultation carried out.

DOC has to make sure it is making good decisions about moving animals and plants. That's why DOC staff are also required to prepare translocation proposals and have them approved before they can carry out translocations.

Flow diagrams one and two will help you to work out whether you need to prepare a translocation proposal for your translocation idea. If you are not sure, seek further advice from your local DOC Area Office.

When is a Translocation proposal not needed?

» Captive to captive transfers
» Injured or sick wildlife being treated under permits to temporarily hold injured wildlife
» Aquatic life (there is a separate process for these)
» Marine plants and animals (except for birds)
» Some situations where wildlife is relocated from sites affected by development under RMA consents
» Exotic animals
» Indigenous animal species that are game (Schedule 1 of the Wildlife Act) or that are not protected (Schedule 5 of the Wildlife Act)
» Exotic plant species
» Re-vegetation/restoration planting projects that have an approved restoration plan

If you don't need an approved translocation proposal for your translocation, you will probably still need permits from DOC. Permits are required for:

» Collecting or releasing animals or plants on land managed by DOC
» Translocation of wildlife (including marine species) covered by the Wildlife Act
» Translocation of aquatic life and marine mammals
» Contact your local DOC Area Office to find out about getting permits.
Flow diagram 1. Do I need an approved translocation proposal for my plant translocation?

1. Start here
2. Land plant
   - Is the source or release site DOC-managed land? (Yes/No)
   - No: Translocation proposal not needed—landowner permission required
   - Yes: Is the release site outside the species' previous range? (Yes/No)
     - No: Is the plant and release site part of a DOC-approved restoration plan? (Yes/No)
       - No: Approved translocation proposal and permits required
       - Yes: Is the release site of high ecological integrity? (Yes/No)
         - No: Is the plant being moved to a different ecological region, or a site outside its known varietal provenance? (Yes/No)
           - No: Translocation proposal not needed—landowner permission required
           - Yes: Aquatic Life Transfers Standard Operating Procedure applies
     - Yes: Does not require an approved translocation proposal—other DOC approvals may be needed
3. Freshwater plant
4. Marine plant
Flow diagram 2. Do I need an approved translocation proposal for my Animal\(^1\) translocation?

Start here

Is it a:
- Wild to wild translocation?
- Wild to captive translocation?
- Captive to wild?

No

No translocation proposal required—other DOC permits may be needed

Yes

Does it involve the treatment of sick or injured wildlife?

No

Yes

Find which column your species is listed in

Approved translocation proposal and DOC permits required for:
- Bats
- Absolutely protected native birds
- Native birds listed in Wildlife Act 1953 Schedules 2 (partially protected) or 3 (wildlife that may be hunted or killed subject to the Minister's notification)
- Native frogs
- Native lizards
- Tuatara
- Land invertebrates listed in Schedule 7 of Wildlife Act 1953
- Land invertebrates listed as 'Threatened' or 'At Risk' or 'Data Deficient' in NZ Threat Classification System Lists\(^6\)—if collected from or released onto land managed by DOC

If the species is not listed above and you are collecting it from or releasing it onto land managed by the Department, then DOC permits are required.

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1. Animal includes mammals, birds, reptiles, frogs and invertebrates.
2. Includes freshwater invertebrates listed on Schedule 7 Wildlife Act 1953 (terrestrial and freshwater invertebrates declared to be animals). Freshwater species defined as aquatic life are covered by the Aquatic Life Transfers Standard Operating Procedure.
3. Animal species that are not indigenous to New Zealand.
4. The purpose is to save individual animals (i.e. rescue individuals affected by the development. Establishment of a viable population is a secondary purpose).
5. Small distances—within a specified maximum distance appropriate to the species, e.g. 500 m for lizards.
6. NZ Threat Classification Lists can be found on the DOC website: [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz).
Translocation proposals take time

Proposing and planning a translocation takes considerable time and effort—often more than you initially anticipate. It can be daunting. That’s why we want to make it as clear as possible what lies ahead. Because DOC has to consider each translocation carefully, we require a formal proposal from any group that wants to carry one out—there is a lot of planning and paperwork in this stage. Before a translocation proposal is granted, you will need to have:

» Planned the translocation well and know that it will have a high chance of success
» Involved and consulted with tangata whenua and other stakeholders
» Sufficient funding or a plan to obtain it
» Sound ecological justification for moving the animals and plants
» Considered the foreseeable implications of moving them
» Considered disease risks and how to manage them
» Included features in the design that have worked in other translocations
» Included post-release management, to improve the chance of success

Key Factors for a Successful Translocation

1. Good planning and decision making
   • Have a good project team
   • Consult and seek appropriate advice
   • Be realistic about how long the planning and preparation will take

2. Showing that your proposal is ecologically sound
   • Consider the foreseeable implications of the translocation
   • Provide DOC with clear information in the proposal

3. Learning from what you do
   • Monitor the translocation and write it all down.
   • Analyse the results (What lessons did you learn? What needs to change?) and prepare reports.
   • Make the information available to others so they can make improvements in their projects. Sharing information will help to boost the success of future translocations.
How do I Get approval to carry out a translocation?
Refer to flow diagram three.

1. Getting Started

• Consider the questions in the ‘Outline of a Translocation Proposal’ later in this information sheet; and if you think your project might be feasible, prepare an outline of your proposal. Refer to our examples to check you’re on the right track.
• Give it to your DOC Area Office to consider. Area staff will need to discuss your outline with technical staff, tangata whenua and other stakeholders. Your DOC Area Office will assign one staff member as your DOC contact person.
• Meet and talk to DOC about the feasibility of your proposal. They’ll give you DOC’s assessment of the likely practicability of your proposal outline, and any aspects of the project DOC would look at closely if you decide to go ahead.

2. Planning and preparing the translocation

• The process of doing the paperwork, planning, consultation and getting approvals takes a lot of time, effort and resources—and so does the transfer, release, and the monitoring and management after the transfer. You will be required to cover the costs of processing your translocation proposal and permits (you can request costs be waived or reduced). Take this into account before you decide to make the commitment to proceed with your proposal.
• Let your DOC contact person know you want to proceed.
• Meet with DOC staff and get advice on the translocation procedure, any consultation you will need to do and relevant contacts. Get copies of the Translocation Guide and paperwork you need to use to prepare your proposal from the Area Office or the DOC website.
• Work through the Translocation Guide and the questions in the Translocation Proposal Form. This stage involves planning the translocation and preparing a translocation proposal.

From this point you need to follow the Translocation Guide for Community Groups
Flow diagram 3. The translocation approval process

Key:
- Applicant
- Appointed processor

You have an idea for a translocation

Is a permit or proposal needed? See flow diagrams 1 and 2. Unsure? Check with DOC.

Is the idea feasible? Do an outline of a proposal

Talk to DOC

DOC gets feedback on the outline and gives you feedback

You decide not to carry on

You decide to carry on and to find out what is required — talk to DOC

Plan your translocation and prepare your translocation proposal

Design your translocation
Seek resources

Consult tangata whenua and others
Keep stakeholders involved and informed

Seek land owner and Animal Ethics Committee approvals and marking permits

Submit your translocation proposal application to DOC for processing

Timeframe for DOC processing phase
minimum 70 days
maximum 90 days

DOC processes the proposal & may need additional information from you

Provide information within 15 working days

DOC drafts report and permit conditions and sends to you for comment

Comment within 10 working days

Proposal approved and permits issued

You decide not to carry on

Do not go ahead with the translocation

Carry out transfer

Obtain other permits and approvals

Yes

Next transfer approved

Do monitoring, research, post-release management

Evaluate and report

Inform others of the results

DOC provides feedback

Assess transfer

If there are multiple transfers

Next transfer approved

If required, request approval for next transfer and amendments to translocation proposal

If required, request approval for next transfer and amendments to translocation proposal

DOC processes request for next transfer and amendments to translocation proposal

Inform others of the results

Yes

No
Outline of a translocation proposal

For DOC to be able to assess the likely practicability of your proposal, we need the following from you.

1. **Title**  This needs to sum up what you want to move, from where to where, and when.

2. **Purpose**
   - What do you want to achieve through the translocation? What is your plan? What long-term benefit could the translocation have for the species or site?
   - Why do you want to do it? Explain the reasons for the translocation. What other alternatives to translocation have been considered or attempted? Why will the translocation help conservation goals? I.e., will it help support other species you want to introduce (e.g. burrowing seabirds help provide nutrients that benefit the plant/reptile communities on islands).

3. **Context**  How does your plan fit into any wider context, such as a restoration plan for the site, or connection to other transfers?

4. **Release site (destination)**  Describe the release site and its location and size. How does the release site meet the needs of the species being moved (for example, food, habitat, breeding requirements)? Will you end up with a self-sustaining population at this site (that is, you won’t have to release more of that animal or plant to maintain its population at the site)? (For example, is the habitat large enough? Will animals disperse from the release site?)

5. **History of the release site**  Was this species ever at this site before? If so, why did it die out (for example, predators, forest clearing, competition)? Could this happen again? If your planned site has never had this species before, why have you chosen it rather than a site where it was found before?

6. **Impact**  Will introducing this species limit other species that can be introduced in the future? What impacts could the translocation have on other species at the release site (for example, will there be significant competition for food, or significant predation on other species)? Will the translocation make it harder to manage problem weeds or animal pests at this site?

7. **Where** will the plants or animals come from? Are there enough?

8. **How** would you carry out the translocation? Describe your methods. Will you need more than one transfer to establish this population? If so, how many transfers might you need, and how many individuals in each transfer?

9. **Who** are you? Tell us the relevant skills and experience of you and your team.

10. **Captivity**  Does your proposal involve captive handling or breeding? Is there already a captive breeding population of this species? If not, what will you do with the captive population long term?

11. **Funding**  If your proposal is approved, what resources do you have to carry it out? (Include here volunteers and sponsorship).

Note: A Microsoft Word version of this outline is available from DOC. To help you with your answers, we’ve prepared examples of translocation proposal outlines.

They are available from your local DOC Area Office, and also available on the DOC website—www.doc.govt.nz/publications