

Evolution of the translocation approval process in Australia and New Zealand

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Summary

Worldwide, humans have intentionally translocated plants and animals wherever they have ventured, primarily for nourishment, cultural or economic objectives. Over the past 200 years, the majority of Australian and New Zealand translocations have been mainly introductions undertaken by governments for the development of agriculture. Approval processes have reflected the cultural norms of the era, but until recently were focused on relatively unfettered encouragement. Although probably commencing in the late 1800s, conservation translocation activities substantially increased in the 1960s in New Zealand and the 1990s in Australia, leading to the development of policies and protocols that form the basis for approval requirements. Informed by a body of practice, and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) guidelines, policies focused on improving the practice of translocation proliferated in the 1990s. Although they continue to be refined for conservation translocations, the increasing use of advocacy-driven and salvage translocations (which include 'mitigation translocations' as defined by the IUCN) provide new policy challenges. A smaller, more integrated set of policy layers may balance the users' needs and allow sufficient project specificity while encompassing the breadth of circumstances under which translocation is being used.

Early translocations in Australia and New Zealand

Translocations, following the IUCN definition of 'human-mediated movement of living organisms from one area, with release in another' (IUCN 2013), have been occurring in Australian and New Zealand for centuries and began with the first translocations of people themselves. The early Aborigines and Māori most likely brought with them vegetative propagules, commensal animals, and associated parasites and pathogens. Compared with Australia, New Zealand's

translocation history has been relatively short, but since Māori arrival (~1200AD) translocations have been undertaken for a variety of purposes. For example, weka (*Gallirallus australis*) were translocated to islands within Foveaux Strait by Māori muttonbirders as a source of food (Wilson 1973) and to control rodents (Miskelly 1987), and the freshwater crayfish koura (*Paranephrops* spp.) were transferred to numerous locations also for food (McDowall 2005).

Australia's Aborigines arrived tens of thousands of years ago. These Indigenous Australians actively