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Zoological Society of London Symposium on Health and disease in translocated wild animals on 14 and 15 May 2015

Organised by Tony Sainsbury (ZSL), Katherine Walsh (Natural England), Ian Carter (Natural England), John Ewen (ZSL) and Matt Hartley (RSPB).

Celebrating 25 years of the Zoological Society of London/Natural England Partnership in health surveillance for the Species Recovery Programme

Over the last 50 years, an increasing number of wild animal translocations have been undertaken for conservation purposes. Wild animal translocations alter host-parasite encounters in the destination environment because each translocated animal represents a biological package of the host and their parasites. Research and observational studies show that changes in host-parasite relations affect the risk of epidemic disease outbreaks in natural ecosystems. Stressors acting on wild animals during transport, or during captive rearing, influence the pathogenicity of commensal parasites through immune-suppression. In addition, non-infectious hazards, such as toxins, have detrimental effects on translocated populations post release. Difficulties in predicting the risks from disease stem from our poor understanding of the identity, number, distribution and pathogenicity of parasites, and inadequate knowledge of the degree of exposure to non-infectious hazards. Making decisions about disease risk management where there is poor knowledge often requires risk evaluation by experts to help inform decision makers in a transparent and defensible way.

This two-day symposium will review the impact of disease on species restoration through translocation, and consider lessons learned to guide effective planning and implementation of future translocation projects. Health management of conservation interventions will be discussed, including methods of disease-risk analysis, evaluation of disease management alternatives, use of molecular tools to unravel disease risks, mitigation of diseases and methods for post-release health monitoring.

Booking and enquiries:

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