

Policy Support Statements of the Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe (LCIE).

Policy support statements are intended to provide a short indication of what the LCIE regards as being good management practice with respect to certain aspects of large carnivore conservation.

Translocation as a tool in large carnivore conservation.

Translocation is defined as the “deliberate and mediated movement of wild individuals or populations from one part of their range to another”. There are many circumstances where translocation is a potentially important tool in the conservation and management of large carnivores. However, there are also many circumstances where translocation is not applicable.

The circumstances where the LCIE regard translocation as an appropriate conservation tool include;

- When assisting critically small populations by augmenting their genetic variation and / or numbers.
- As part of a well planned reintroduction.
- As a non-lethal way to locally and temporarily reduce high population density in occasional cases where popular opinion does not permit other methods.

The LCIE regard it as being unacceptable to translocate large carnivores as;

- A way to routinely deal with individuals involved in undesirable behaviour (such as livestock depredation by bears, wolverines, wolves or Eurasian lynx or with bears who become habituated to human foods).

Exceptions to the above may exist if at least one of the following criteria is met;

- A very large destination area is available where no similar sources of potential conflict exist (unlikely in most parts of Europe).
- The individual is a member of a critically endangered species (Iberian lynx) or a very small population where all individuals are important.
- The individual is only moved within what can be regarded as its normal home range as a part of a structured aversive conditioning program.

Whenever a translocation is attempted it is imperative that the guidelines from the IUCN Reintroduction Specialist Group are followed, especially with respect to the following issues;

- The welfare of the animal and logistics involved with live capture and transportation of the animal.
- The fact that many translocated individuals attempt to return to their point of capture. These movements can extend over several hundred kilometres. Restraining the individual in a holding facility for a period of several weeks at the release site will partially reduce this homing behaviour but in turn involves a range of other logistical and welfare aspects.
- Careful evaluation of ecological suitability of the release site and consultation with the local population.