

Conservation Assessment Project

Due Date: Tuesday October 31

Recommended Length: 1–2 pages, including any maps, tables, or figures.

Individual Project: complete one of two project options described below.

- (1) Wildlife reintroduction assessment
- (2) North Cascades Ecosystem, Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan, Draft EIS review

(1) Wildlife reintroduction assessment

Wildlife reintroductions and translocations are being used increasingly as conservation strategies to restore extirpated species and to augment populations at risk of extinction. Success depends in part on effective planning and preparation. Inadequate implementation risks high opportunity cost: failure may preclude future attempts. Unfortunately, many translocation decisions rely on luck: they are made without adequate of consideration of factors related to success or failure. Pérez et al. (2012) addressed this problem by developing a translocation decision framework to ensure that risks have been mitigated and essential preparations have been made. The framework includes ten criteria, arranged hierarchically into categories of translocation necessity, risk, and practical suitability (Table 1).

For this project option, select a wildlife reintroduction or translocation project conducted in the last ten years, and evaluate it relative to the ten criteria in Pérez et al. (2012; Table 1). Your assessment should consist of a one paragraph summary of the project and a yes/no/partial evaluation relative to each criterion. Your report should include a brief justification for each evaluation. It should conclude with an overall conclusion: was the project justified according to your assessment?

Table 1. Existing criteria for translocations		Perez et al. 2012
Level	Criteria	Guidelines
1st Necessity of the translocation	(1) Is the species or population under threat?	IUCN (1987, 1998)
	(2) Have the threatening factors been removed or controlled, or were they absent in the release area?	IUCN (1987, 1998); Kleiman (1989); Dodd and Seigel (1991); Kleiman et al. (1994); Miller et al. (1999)
	(3) Are translocations the best tool to mitigate conservation conflicts?	IUCN (1987, 1998); Kleiman (1989); Kleiman et al. (1994)
2nd Risk evaluation	(4) Are risks for the target species acceptable?	IUCN (1987, 1998); Williams et al. (1988); Kleiman (1989); Dodd and Seigel (1991); Stanley-Price (1991); Kleiman et al. (1994); Cunningham et al. (1996); Miller et al. (1999)
	(5) Are risks for other species or the ecosystem acceptable?	Williams et al. (1988); Stanley-Price (1991); Cunningham et al. (1996); IUCN (1998)
	(6) Are the possible effects of the translocation acceptable to local people?	IUCN (1987, 1998); Reading et al. (1991); Stanley-Price (1991); Kleiman et al. (1994)
3rd Technical and logistical suitability	(7) Does the project maximize the likelihood of establishing a viable population?	IUCN (1987, 1998); Williams et al. (1988); Griffith et al. (1989); Kleiman (1989); Dodd and Seigel (1991); Reading et al. (1991); Stanley-Price (1991); Short et al. (1992); Kleiman et al. (1994); Cunningham et al. (1996); Wolf et al. (1996); Miller et al. (1999)
	(8) Does the project include clear goals and monitoring?	IUCN (1987, 1998); Williams et al. (1988); Kleiman (1989); Dodd and Seigel (1991); Short et al. (1992); Cunningham et al. (1996); Miller et al. (1999)
	(9) Do enough economic and human resources exist?	IUCN (1987, 1998); Kleiman (1989); Reading et al. (1991); Stanley-Price (1991); Kleiman et al. (1994); Miller et al. (1999)
	(10) Do scientific, governmental, and stakeholder groups support the translocation?	Kleiman (1989); Reading et al. (1991); Kleiman et al. (1994); IUCN (1998)

Notes: Criteria are grouped into three levels within the Hierarchical Decision-making System for Translocations; these are obtained from recommendations and guidelines pertaining to translocations (see also WebPanel 1).

(2) North Cascades Ecosystem, Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan, Draft EIS review

A plan for restoring grizzly bears to the North Cascades ecosystem (NCE) was released for public review on Thursday 28 September 2023. The plan builds on aborted attempts during the two prior Presidential administrations. Each effort included a public scoping process, which drew extensive comments spanning wide ranges in perspectives, logical clarity, and relevance. The current plan is described, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act, in a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) available at the URL below. Public scoping comments can be accessed from the same URL, by selecting the "Document List" tab under the "PROJECT LINKS" column in the upper left portion of the website.

<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=327&projectID=112008&documentID=132104>

The DEIS outlines three restoration plan alternatives. The "No Action" alternative (A) would continue existing management practices, which exclude translocations but include educational programs, public outreach, research, and monitoring. Action alternative B would translocate 25 grizzly bears over a 5-10 year period, with subsequent reproduction anticipated to produce a restored grizzly population of 200 bears within 200 years. All bears in the NCE would retain Endangered Species Act protection as a threatened species. Action alternative C would translocate grizzly bears on the same schedule with the same anticipated population outcome, but grizzly bears in the NCE would receive lesser protection as a "nonessential experimental population" that allows greater management flexibility where conflicts occur. Similar nonessential experimental population designation was implemented during wolf reintroductions in greater Yellowstone and central Idaho.

For this assessment option, review the and evaluate the NCE grizzly bear DEIS relative to the ten criteria in Pérez et al. (2012; Table 1). Your assessment should consist of a one paragraph summary of the project and a yes/no/partial evaluation relative to each criterion. Your report should include a brief justification for each evaluation. It should conclude with an overall conclusion: was the project justified according to your assessment?

You will earn Extra Credit (10 points) if you submit your comments to NPS/USF&WS by the 13 November 2023 deadline. You may submit the same comments that you write for the assignment, described above, or revised versions more suitable for agency consideration. If you submit your comments please DO NOT identify them as part of a course assignment – such an association might risk lesser consideration of your comments. To receive extra credit, you must provide a copy of the agencies' confirmation of your comment submission. Comments may be submitted in hard copy via postal mail or online via the comment portal linked to the website listed above or directly via the URL below.

<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/commentForm.cfm?documentID=132104>

References

- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and National Park Service. 2023. Draft Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan / Environmental Impact Statement, North Cascades Ecosystem. North Cascades National Park Service Complex, Sedro-Woolley, WA. [online]
<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=327&projectID=112008&documentID=132104>
 (accessed 28 Sept. 2023)
- Pérez I, JD Anadoón, M Díaz, GG Nicola, JL Tella, A Giménez. 2012. What is wrong with current translocations? A review and a decision-making proposal. *Front.Ecol.Environ.* 10(9): 494-501. doi: 10.1890/110175

Evaluation: Maximum 100 points possible. A blank evaluation form is shown below.

ESCI 439/539 Conservation of Biological Diversity

Conservation Assessment Project Evaluation Sheet Name _____

Option (1) Wildlife reintroduction assessment

Project summary (10 pts) _____

Necessity criteria evaluations (10 pts) _____

Necessity criteria rationale statements (10 pts) _____

Risk criteria evaluations (10 pts) _____

Risk criteria rationale statements (10 pts) _____

Technical & logistical suitability criteria evaluations (10 pts) _____

Technical & logistical suitability rationale statements (10 pts) _____

Overall conclusion (20 pts) _____

Writing and Presentation (10 pts) _____

Total (100 pts) _____

Evaluation rubric: Descriptions that fully meet the following criteria will earn full credit.

Project summary: Description includes essential information about the project, including species, location(s), dates, number of animals released, source population(s), lead agency or organization, and basic logistical details.

Criteria evaluations (necessity, risk, technical & logistical suitability): ratings are appropriate, given project details and stated rationale.

Rationale statements (necessity, risk, technical & logistical suitability): statements are logical, well-reasoned, and appropriate to the project.

Overall conclusion: evaluation is appropriate and follows from criteria assessments and criteria priorities.