

United States Department of Agriculture  
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

# WS Directive

2.501 07/30/03

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TRANSLOCATION OF WILDLIFE

1. PURPOSE

To establish guidelines on the translocation of wildlife by WS personnel.

2. REPLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

This directive replaces ADC Directive 2.501 dated 3/26/93.

3. POLICY

Translocation of wildlife from one geographic area to another may be conducted by WS personnel as a wildlife damage management activity when:

a. Such activities are in accordance with the policies of regulating State and/or Federal wildlife management agencies.

b. Such activities are in accordance with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws and regulations.

c. Translocation is determined to be a practical management approach based on considerations in Section 4.

4. BACKGROUND

In some situations, it is beneficial to translocate wildlife. Decisions to translocate wildlife should be made based on biological, ecological, economic, and social considerations. Primary factors influencing translocation include availability of suitable habitat, impact (competition, predation, etc.) on the animal(s) to be moved as well as other species, the likelihood of the animal returning, public attitudes, and potential for creating a damage/conflict situation at the new location.

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Translocation of wild mammals is not a biologically sound practice in many situations. Considerable stress can be placed on relocated animals during handling and transportation. Difficulty in adapting to new locations or habitats may also reduce survival rates. Studies indicate that surviving animals seldom remain at the release location. There may also be problems associated with liability to the WS program if the translocated animal causes future damage or transmits a zoonotic disease.

The American Veterinary Medical Association, the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians, and the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists oppose relocation of mammals because of the risk of disease transmission among wild mammals (especially raccoons, skunks, foxes, and cervids).

Deputy Administrator