

Game issues

Each group heard an outline of context, and questioned and commented on that, before discussing three questions. Key points were then chosen.

Key points:

- Manager of game interests are seen as stuck in the mud but they can be good at new things therefore could be supportive of new things eg. otters are back all over the country
- Any economic change must be positive – landowners will not tolerate additional cost

Definitions

Introduced species = Could be lynx, wolf, boar but also a predatory bird such as Sea Eagle or a fish.

Game manager = a professional, in full or part-time employment as a gamekeeper, land agent, landowner, contractor.

Hunter = private individual who hunts for sport and food. Could be recreational stalker, fisher or shooter.

Predator introductions & game management context:

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduced species occupy higher trophic level & predate smaller predators with which we have a problem eg. lynx > fox goshawk > crow eagle owl > buzzard • Introduced species creates new & enhanced ecosystem services eg. boar in S W England. • It's been done before! eg. otter welcomed back on chalk streams. 	<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduced species is another game species to generate additional revenue & greater sporting opportunity eg. boar. • Land with low sporting value may become enhanced by new sporting opportunity eg. spruce plantations. • Game managers can deliver info; expertise; political support; local knowledge; resources.
<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landowner receives £support and makes decision, but hunter pays the price. • Landowner expects hunter to carry cost of impact & control of introduced species. • Requirement and cost of training of hunters & game managers to understand threats, opportunities & techniques regarding the introduced species. • Behavioural predictions for introduced species are always suspect. 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Another predator of game. • A predator of game that did not have a predator before eg. roe deer. • Conflict with wild game conservation & species conservation programmes on game land eg. grey partridge; red grouse; stone curlew? Lapwing? • Disease vector? Eg. ticks; internal parasites; pig disease. • If game managers not won over then they can scupper the whole release programme.

What factors will encourage game interests to embrace a reintroduction programme?

- Will land / sporting values increase or decrease with re-introductions?
- Economic benefits must accrue to game interests
- Add these species to the rifle licences (in England)
- Activities such as boar drives and client stalking

What can game interests and other stakeholders learn from each other, when considering potential re-introduction projects?

- Learn from success of otter coming back. Otter displace mink
- And pine marten displace grey squirrel

What can game interests contribute to reintroduction projects, and how can these benefits be harnessed?

- Contribute the innovation of land managers
- Contribute local knowledge and influence opinion formers
- Especially with understanding management of commons type problems eg. slash and burn; short let sporting rights without long term commitment; self-regulation