

Published in *Animal Housing and Human–Animal Relations: Politics, Practices and Infrastructures*, ed. Kristian Bjørkdahl and Tone Druglitrø, 100-114 (Routledge, 2016)

Muskox in a Box and Other Tales of Containers as Domesticating Mediators in Animal Relocation

Dolly Jørgensen

In 1929, the ship *Kap Flora I* and her captain Peder Andresen carried a precious cargo to Ålesund, Norway: 26 live muskox calves captured in East Greenland. Captain Andresen had a history of catching muskoxen. Back in 1922, he had successfully brought 11 calves to Norway, which were subsequently sold to American zoos, and in 1925, his crew brought home another eight. His 1929 cargo was the most calves ever captured by one expedition (Aftenposten 1929a). As they journeyed over the sea, the homes of the young captives were boxes. It was those boxes that made the relocation of the muskoxen from East Greenland to Norway possible, and in the process, would forever change the animals.

Animal relocation, which is the practice of bringing individuals of a species from their current location to populate another area, depends upon the ability to transport the individuals from point A to point B. Animal relocations may be organized to aid in species conservation (either the animal's original habitat is no longer suitable or the species is being returned to an area in which it used to live) or to benefit humans, which is the case with introductions of game animals and birds as well as fur-bearing animals for harvesting. The logistical and technological challenges of relocating a 200kg muskox across the ocean, or transporting a beaver that chews through wood in a wooden crate, are anything but simple. When scientists discuss animal relocation, they often focus on the ends – the animal released into a new habitat – yet acknowledge that transport stresses can increase mortality (IUCN/SSC 2013). In this chapter, I focus on the means – the boxes and other containers that make that eventual release possible, as well as their ascribed meanings. Unlike many other forms of animal housing, relocation containers are temporary – animals will be in them for hours or days or weeks, but not much longer. In spite of the limited time of containment, these temporary houses are crucial points of transformation in the relocation process.

More than just tools for moving the animals safely, containers change their contents. Rather than serving as an intermediary, a black box which transports meaning without transforming its contents, as defined by Latour (2005), I will argue that the relocation box creates and shapes the interactions between the animal, humans, and the surroundings, putting the container into the role of mediator. Mediators “transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry” (Latour 2005, 39). Crucially, the transformation, distortion or modification caused by

a mediator can affect both the content and the perception of the content in this definition.

I argue that the boxes used to transport the animals transform their contents on two levels. On the first level, the box makes the animal into a transportable object by *domesticating* it. This objectification process changes the perception of the animal from wild to domestic. During the period of relocation, human caretakers see the animal as a controllable object. From the animal's perspective, the container modifies their relationship to other animals, humans, and their environment. The animals themselves must modify their behavior in order to survive, becoming more controllable, which reinforces the human perception of their domesticity while containerized. On the second level, when the animal emerges from the crate, the human witnesses re-ascribe wildness to it and ascribe belongingness to the wild animal in its new surroundings. When the animal is released from the container, it must reassert its wild nature and fit in with its new surroundings to survive without human intervention. The container transforms the contents from an animal *from somewhere else* to an animal that *belongs here*.

Before exploring these transitions further, I want to acknowledge that the definitions of and boundaries between wild and domestic have long been debated (Russell 2002). In general, animal domestication is understood to involve both social and biological components (Clutton-Brock 2012, 3), although scholars tend to emphasize one or the other depending their perspective. Domestication has also typically been defined as a relationship with a population of animals rather than the relationship between a particular person and a particular animal, which has often been labeled “taming” (Russell 2002). I want to break with that scholarly position and return to the idea of domestication based on its Latin root *domus*. The *domus* is the house, so the Latin verb form *domesticāre* means to dwell in a house or become accustomed to it. The verb *domesticate* at its most simple means “to make, or settle as, a member of a household; to cause to be at home” and more specifically for animals it is “to accustom to live under the care and near the habitations of man” (OED 2014). This definition is apt in this context, because it means that when an animal is put into a house of whatever kind, it has been domesticated. Within the housing, the animal is living under the care of humans and is necessarily therefore near them. The housing itself as object is integral in animal domestication, even if that domestication is temporary.

How might this type of domestication apply in animal relocation cases? The point of the relocation is to move an animal from one place to another with the intent of releasing it into the wild. When this involves the capture of a wild animal, we might assume that the animal is wild throughout the process, that it began as wild and ends as wild, but I want to show how the box brings about a middle domesticated state which must be forced upon the animal and then is removed from it.

To examine the box as mediator, I am going to tell three short tales of animal relocation in Norway and Sweden from 1900 to 2013. I have labeled these as “tales” for a very specific reason. Environmental historians are committed to narrative as a form of analysis, as William Cronon so astutely observed over 20 years ago. His observations are worth quoting here: “We configure the events of the past into causal sequences – stories – that order and simplify those events to give them new meanings. We do so because narrative is the chief literary form that tries to find meaning in an overwhelmingly crowded and disordered chronological reality” (Cronon 1992, 1349) In the process of ordering the past into a plot, historians cannot help but judge the consequences of human actions. This has meaning for contemporary readers, not as recovery of “facts” from the past, but rather because in narrating “the dilemmas they faced we discover our own, and at the intersection of the two we locate the moral of the story” (Cronon 1992, 1370). This is what I am trying to do with these tales. It is a very specific form of analysis where I want the reader to open the lid of the box with me to observe its contents, and perhaps even imagine herself inside the box during the relocation process. In telling the tales, we can experience them.

Using examples varied in time and space, I hope to show that container mediation is an inherent part of the relocation process rather than one unique to any given case study. Unlike the other chapters in this volume, the time in this house is limited – it is never intended as a permanent home – yet the container still modifies the relationship between animal and human. In focusing on the container as mediator, I do not want to suggest that other aspects of human-animal relationships, including power relations, naming strategies, concepts of nativeness, and the like are unimportant in relocation. But I believe that by zooming in on the container and the processes immediately surrounding it, we can begin to understand the ways that even temporary housing modifies both human and animal behaviors and thoughts. In my first two tales, human caretakers treat the animals as if they occupy roles in the household: in the first one as a pet, in the second as a child. In the third tale, I explore how an animal which has been born and raised in captivity can be transformed into a wild inhabitant through the relocation crate.

Muskox in a Box

Andresen’s cargo of muskox calves in 1929 had all been caught in the Norwegian territory of East Greenland, where Norwegian seal trappers had been active since the late 1800s. The muskox (*Ovibos moschatus*) is a strange looking creature, something like a cross between a mountain goat and an ox. It is indeed related to sheep and goats, but its specialized horns and propensity to charge when threatened are reminiscent of oxen.

The first muskox calves taken from Greenland had been captured in 1900 under the leadership of zoologist Gustaf Kolthoff. The previous year, the Swedish geologist Alfred Gabriel Nathorst had observed wild muskox herds in Greenland during an expedition and came to the conclusion that the Swedes should try to import

and domesticate the animals (Nathorst 1900). The main purpose of such an endeavor would be to corner the market in muskox wool, considered one of the highest quality wools available. Nathorst believed that the muskox would acclimatize perfectly to Sweden and be even more productive than reindeer, since the animal was more tolerant of mosquitos, less prone to wolf predation, and did not require long-distance migrations over the year to new feeding grounds. On the recommendation of Nathorst, Kolthoff's expedition had first tried capturing adults, but after little success, decided to capture calves. Since the calves were well-protected by the herd adults, the only way to capture the calves was to kill the adults in the herd first (Kolthoff 1901).

Kolthoff offered a justification for the decision: "Surely two muskox calves in Sweden are much more valuable than six in Greenland" (1901, 178). The value of the animal according to Kolthoff depended on its geographical location. Moving a muskox from one place to another was understood as changing its value – it would be worth more in Sweden than it was in Greenland because it could be directly used by humans. The box that transferred the calf from one locale to another thus modified its value.

Eventually the expedition successfully captured a male calf, which was given the name Hjalmar. Kolthoff described the scene when the calf was brought onboard:

He was put into the crate built for a muskox cow and his bands [around his feet] were loosened. At the beginning he was very angry, running toward whoever came near to him and took out his wrath on a hay sack, which he like a ram ran incessantly against so that the sack took an enormous shock from his forehead. Very soon, however, he became calmer, and after a few hours he started to eat. (Kolthoff 1901, 193)

After the caging and taming process, Kolthoff claimed that Hjalmar was "as a tame as a dog. He followed after us over the whole deck and liked it best in the kitchen" (1901, 203). This comparison of muskox and dog is key. Hjalmar had been brought onto the ship and put into the crate. When that happened, he was moved into the domestic sphere – he was completely dependent upon his human caretakers. In spite of Hjalmar's initial objection, he learned to fit into the household and took the role of pet, "as a dog."

Andresen's later experience with capturing and crating muskoxen over the sea was similar to Kolthoff's. When he was asked if the muskox calves were difficult cargo, he replied:

Oh no, they are very decent, muskoxen, – you only have to become familiar with them. We have them in spacious, sturdy crates made of wooden planks. To start with the animals try their strength on the containers, but when after a while they realize that the crate is stronger than themselves and then they take it easy. After one or two days of course they begin to take food. ... Muskoxen soon become friends with humans. After they have been in their crates on deck for 8 days, they recognize the goodies that they get when the boys approach them with grass or moss. The youngest among the animals are easiest to acclimate – we therefore capture the youngest animals possible. (*Aftenposten* 1929a, 2)

The calves in Andresen's description are similar to Hjalmar. They become "friends with humans" and recognize treats. These are characteristics that would generally be ascribed to pets.

Photographs from another expedition in 1929 show the crating process in action (Figure 1). The *Veslekari* was commissioned for scientific expedition to East Greenland by Docent Adolf Hoel of the *Norges Svalbard- og Ishavsundersøkelser*, which later became the Norwegian Polar Institute. Hoel combined the eight calves captured by the *Veslekari* crew in 1929 with 10 bought from Andresen's 1929 expedition and then released them together as a herd on Svalbard, an Arctic archipelago under Norwegian sovereignty. Hoel intended the muskox herd to grow and become an economic force on Svalbard as a source of meat and wool (*Aftenposten* 1929b). Although the muskoxen would be free-roaming wild animals, the vision was that they could be hunted for meat and their wool could still be collected. When the calves were released on Svalbard, they emerged from their wooden crates but instead of the calves running away into the wild, they approached the man standing in front of the crates, probably looking for a treat to eat like the ones they had received while inside the container.

< **Figure 1** >

Crew member Luncke feeds muskox calves onboard the Veslekari on 26 August 1929.
Photo by Andres Kristian Orvin, Norsk Polarinstitut archive, NP041421.

The narratives of the captains and the photographs stress the placement of the muskoxen into the crates as the first step in their transformation. The container mediated the relationship between human and animal on the voyage. The calves adjusted their behavior after entering the crate, eventually calming as they became resigned to their fate in captivity. After some time crated, the calves would allow more and more human interaction, eventually even desiring it. The humans understood the crate as the instrument of domestication during the relocation process. The crate turned the muskox from wild creature into domesticated pet.

In the narrative of relocating muskoxen from Greenland to Scandinavia, the crating process is a domestication process. The calves abused the sturdy wooden crates as they tried to escape back to the wild, but upon realizing the futility of their wild behavior, they became tame. As a strategy for relocating animals that will eventually be released back into the wild, the domestication process could have proved counterproductive. This possibility was even recognized at the time by Hoel, who was worried that the animals might make their way to the nearest village for food in the winter since "they have become so used to people now" (*Aftenposten* 1929c). Yet it does not appear that Hoel's warnings came true, as wandering muskoxen on Svalbard did not become an urban nuisance until the 1950s. This means that after the animals were released from their crates and the men left the scene, the muskoxen reverted to their wild behaviors.

From the point of view of the animal, the transformation of the containers contents had only been temporary.

From the point of view of the humans, however, the container transformed a wild animal in Greenland with little value into a potential resource on Svalbard. It turns out that the resource was never actually harvested – muskoxen were always a protected species on Svalbard, so it was illegal to hunt them and wool was never collected in any great amount given the terrain and the muskox's propensity to range far and wide. Those later developments were not, however, known to those involved in the transplanted process in the years around 1929. To them, moving a muskox in a box changed its meaning and value.

Boxed-In Beavers

When the first reintroduced European beavers (*Castor fiber*) came to Sweden, they had to take a long and arduous journey to their new home. First, they had to be moved from their capture site near Åmli, Norway, to the train station in Oslo then onward via train to Stockholm in the autumn of 1921. After wintering in Skansen zoological garden in Stockholm, they travelled north on the overnight train on 2 July 1922. In Östersund, they had a break and got on another train to Strömsund. After a steam boat, a horse carriage, car trip, motor boat, horse sled, and boat again, the little beavers were finally at the release site – a whopping four days after leaving Skansen in Stockholm (Arbman 1922; Festin 1922). The difficulties of getting the beavers from their original home in southern Norway to a release site in mid-Sweden made transportation technologies absolutely critical to the success of the project. On 6 July 1922, they reached their destination of Bjurälvdalen in Jämtland and were released into the wild. They were the first beavers in Sweden since 1871, when the last Swedish beaver had been seen.

During the relocation, the beavers were crated in a wooden box. The same box was used for the entire journey, from the time they left their original home in southern Norway to their new home in mid-Sweden (Arbman 1922). Nils Thomasson, a professional photographer, documented the trip from Strömsund to the release point, a mode of recording the reintroduction history for the future. In the process of documenting the beavers' journey, Thomasson's photos, which are kept at the Jamtli archive in Östersund, almost exclusively show the beaver box rather than the beavers themselves: the box is shown on a horse cart (Figure 2), being carried on poles, in a boat, and being pulled on a horse sled.

<Figure 2>

During the journey of the first beavers bound for reintroduction in Sweden, the box containing the beavers was put on top of hay bales to try to cushion the ride. Photograph by Nils Thomasson, 1922, Jamtli archive NTh621.

There is only one extant picture of the beavers themselves. In that photograph, the beavers are being examined by Sven Arbman, a zoologist who was responsible for the beavers' health during the journey (Figure 3). Even in this case, the beavers are contained within the box, which takes up much of the image. As Eric Festin (1922, 90), who had organized the relocation project noted: "For 3 ½ days, the beavers had stayed in their crate." The box in the photos essentially takes the place of the beavers. Viewers see the box, but they are intended to think about its contents.

<Figure 3>

Sven Arbman checking the condition of the beavers on the last day of their journey. Photograph by Nils Thomasson, 1922, Jamtli bildarkiv, NTh626.

The box, however, was more than transportation – it was transformation. The relationship between human and beaver in this episode is founded on the *domus*, the house/household. The box transformed the beavers temporarily into domesticated wards, just as it had with the muskoxen. Arbman recorded how the box had to be moved from one train to another by strong railroad workers. The beaver pair had to be temporarily removed from the box so it could be cleaned after the first overnight train. When the lid was lifted, they rolled into balls and buried their heads together in a corner and let out a faint whimpering like little children, the only sounds their vocal organs could produce. They seem to me good-natured, phlegmatic without strong emotions. The Norwegian trapper's depiction of a wild animal that sits on its hind legs and gnashes his teeth so that one "cannot come near" does not fit with the animals he delivered us (Arbman 1922, 274).

In Arbman's description, the beaver are portrayed as children. Arbman interpreted the beaver behavior while in the box as docile and childlike. They did not behave like wild animals that would bite people who came too near.

The crate transformed the beaver from wild animal into a domesticated one. This animal needed care and attention. Fresh water, bark, and twigs were given to the beavers in the box along the way. Arbman (1922) was concerned about the beavers' condition and regularly monitored the beavers' temperature by touching their noses to determine if they were too hot, and checked their general health condition (as in Figure 3). When Festin (1922) reported on the reintroduction, he commented on the difficult journey and that some of the choices, like putting the beaver box on top of hay sacks for cushioning, would not be repeated. The bumpy journey by horse had given these first beavers "a fever", luckily cured by the tranquil boat ride that followed. The beavers in the box had to be taken care of like sick children.

When the beaver in the box took on the role of child, humans became like parents. The beavers carried in the box to Sweden had originally been caught by Peder M. Jensen-Tveit of Aamli, Norway, which featured the last holdout population of beavers in the

country. According to his obituary many years later, Jensen had familial feelings about the Norwegian beavers he captured and released in far away places:

Typical for his attitude to animals, to all animals, he followed the beaver transport to the release location. “They must have the last goodbye in Norwegian when they are set free a long way from home,” he said and patted the animal like a father on the neck. This laying on of the hands would have resulted in one hand less had it been anyone other than Beaver-Jensen, but he and the freshly caught beavers understood each other. (Tjomsland 1963, 11)

In this passage, Jensen, who caught the beavers in the wild and then facilitated their relocation and release, is a father, which makes the beavers his children. On some of Jensen’s business letterhead, a series of pictures of his operations includes one of him feeding a baby beaver with a bottle. The image places Jensen as parent and beaver as child. Those beavers needed those last words whispered in Norwegian to them to remind them of whom they were and where they were from – what family they belonged to – because now they would take on a new identity and leave the family.

The same kind of integration of beaver into the domestic sphere occurred in the second beaver reintroduction in Sweden, which took place in 1924 in the northern country of Västerbotten where a county hunting association took the lead in bringing beavers back. In texts published in the association’s yearbook, the relationship between the hunters and beavers is not described in terms of conquest or domination, but rather of co-citizens and family. One photograph shows a member of the reintroduction group with a beaver captioned as “State forester Johansson cheering up one of his new ‘countrymen’ ” (Anderson 1925). A long article on the reintroduction of beavers begins by listing the “baptism officiant” (*dopförrättare*) and “godparents” or “sponsors” (*faddrar*) for the reintroduced beavers (Wahlberg 1925). The use of these titles signals that these were more than people who observed the reintroduction – they are the people who became responsible for the beaver’s success. Just as a baptismal sponsor agrees to raise a child to know God and the church, these individuals were agreeing to ensure the beavers’ integration into the landscape. Sponsors are not in a position of domination, but rather facilitation and guidance. In fact, an article in 1930 refers to the beavers as the “wards” of Lennart Wahlberg, who was listed as the “officiant” in the release of the four beavers on 20 July 1924 (van Post 1930).

This wardship was, however, temporary. After the beavers were released, there was no invasive management of them. There were regular “beaver reports” on a monthly or quarterly basis to document the beavers’ success in their new homes, but there was no direct conservation intervention such as relocation or supplemental feeding. The children grew up quickly.

The box also served as a second type of mediator in the reintroduction process: the beavers, which were captured in the wild *in Norway*, were reconfigured into wild beavers *in Sweden*, with a brief respite as domesticated in between. According to the

sentiments of those involved in the relocations, when the beavers entered the box they had been Norwegian, but when they left it, they were Swedish. At that moment in which the beavers were “lifted gently out of the box and set on the shore” they were “reincorporated into the Swedish fauna” (Arbman 1922). The box served to transform the beaver from outsider to insider in the Swedish landscape. To bring beavers back to Sweden was nothing short of a revolution, according to Arbman:

We celebrate the solemn moment at 3.30 am when the beaver was reincorporated into the Swedish fauna, when we got to feel with our hands the revolution in which we participate, the prank which seems to turn everything upside down, the “order of nature,” the “march of progress” and all that it entails, that mankind goes forth and multiplies and takes possession of the earth and self-evidently eradicates all other creatures if they are not good enough as slaves. (Arbman 1922, 278)

The box, as a tool in the hand of humans, had reordered the relationship between people and nature through its ability to transform the beaver from Norwegian-other to Swedish-native. This was a transformation in the way that humans understood the animal rather than a modification of the animal itself. The box transformed the relationship between human and animal by making the beaver that exited the box into a Swedish resident at home here rather than a Norwegian resident that belonged there. The temporary container resulted in only a temporary domestication, but a critical one for making the relationship between human and animal during relocation work. The container mediated the animal housed within it, causing the animal’s temporary transformation into a child to be cared for. The beaver within the box existed in a liminal state between being wild and being wild again. In fact, in order to succeed and reproduce, the relocated beavers *needed* to become wild and embrace their new homes. They could not stay in a domestic state. When the animal left the container for good upon its release, it was de-domesticated – it became wild again in its new home.

A Flying Muskox

While the muskox can catch an onlooker off-guard with quick bursts of speed, it cannot fly, except with the help of humans. On 4 April 2013, a two-year-old muskox named Idun, who was born and raised at the Myskoxcentrum breeding center in Tännäs, Sweden, was drugged and then put into a crate only slightly bigger than herself. The crate was subsequently attached to a helicopter and flown up into the mountains near where the small Swedish muskox herd of six individuals had been spotted. The doors on either end were opened up and Idun took her first steps as a free-range muskox in the Swedish mountains.

This chain of events was documented in both video and still photography, made available for public consumption on the internet, including news broadcasts up to one month later (e.g. SVT 2013, NRK 2013). Myskoxcentrum announced Idun’s release

with a group of photographs posted 5 April 2013 on its Facebook page.¹ The set of eight images is striking in its presentation of the transportation box in six images, while only four show the muskox itself. The first three photos show the helicopter with a box hanging beneath it. In these, the muskox is not directly visible, but the muskox is not missing from the images. Instead, the box acts as a replacement for the muskox – when the viewer sees the box, she is supposed to see the muskox. This becomes more readily apparent when the helicopter images are seen in conjunction with the next two images of Idun leaving the box. Here, the muskox emerges from the box physically. After a glimpse of Idun scurrying away, the box is shown to the viewer empty in photo 7, followed by a view of Idun in the distance in photo 8.

In the photographic series, the box not only transports, but also transforms its contents. When the muskox is in the box, it is in a liminal state. Idun entered the box as a domestic muskox who had daily contact with humans who fed her hay and managed her enclosure. She was on display at the Center like a zoo animal that visitors come to photograph. During her transport, she disappears, being replaced by the box. Then finally the box stands empty as the muskox has been transformed from domesticated animal to wild one. Idun had never been wild like muskoxen taken in boxes across the ocean from East Greenland to Svalbard, yet like them she became wild when she was released on the mountain.

Idun's transformation into wild muskox is a small part of a larger story about how muskoxen came to be in Sweden and how people would respond to their presence. Muskoxen had not been in the mountains of Härjedalen, Sweden, for thousands of years before a small flock of 6 animals moved there in 1971 from the Dovre mountains of Norway, where muskoxen had been reintroduced earlier in the twentieth century. The flock established themselves as border-crossers who migrated between Norway and Sweden through the mountains of Femundsmarka and Rogen. The group reached a high point of 34 animals in the mid-1980s, but the population went sharply down afterward (Lundh 1992).

The population crash prompted some concern. Four representatives of the Green Party (*Miljöpartiet*) in the Swedish parliament proposed a motion in 1991 that the government should work toward saving the muskox herd (Riksdag Motion 1990/91:Jo759). The motion suggested that wild muskoxen might be given supplemental food, more animals to reinforce the population could be purchased and released, and muskox conservation could be started in cooperation with Norway. The motion was subsequently dismissed because the committee handling the environmental plan under which the motion was made felt that muskoxen, while important to the tourism industry, were not natural in Sweden: Muskoxen have been extinct so long time in Scandinavia that they can no longer be considered as part of our natural fauna. ... A strengthening of the herd would according to the experts become costly and

¹ <https://www.facebook.com/myskocentrum>.

cumbersome and take a disproportionate share of the available conservation funds (Riksdag Motion 1990/91:JoU30).

Not to be dissuaded, three Green Party representatives filed a motion again in 1999/2000 requesting an official statement from the government on the protection on the muskox population (Riksdag Motion 1999/2000:MJ763). The answer from the environment minister Kjell Larsson once again reiterated the “newness” of the muskox in Sweden but pointed to current work by the Swedish EPA (*Naturvårdsverket*) on a muskox conservation plan (Riksdag Svar på skriftlig fråga 2000/01:1138). The conservation plan, however, was never approved because the muskox was not listed as a native species on the Swedish Red List.

The herd of muskox in Sweden thus stands at a fascinating junction of belonging/not belonging. The species does not have a conservation plan in force in Sweden and it is not recognized as eligible for listing as an endangered species in Sweden because it is classified as “introduced” (Gärdenfors 2010). In this sense, the official line is that muskox does not belong in Sweden. At the same time, there has been a concerted effort to establish a breeding center in Härjedalen with the express intent of strengthening the wild muskox population within the country. Idun’s translocation from the breeding center to the Swedish mountains was the first time a muskox was intentionally released to the wild in Sweden.

Seen in this light, the box that transported Idun to the snow-covered mountain becomes all the more transformative as a Latourian mediator. Before the box was flown by helicopter onto the mountain, the muskox herd’s right to be there might have been questionable. The human hand helping the muskoxen was limited to a domestic herd on a few fenced-in acres in Tännäs. Upon leaving the box, Idun became part of a wild herd of muskox inhabiting the Swedish mountains with a presumed right to do so. She embodied the conservationists’ hopes and dreams of a healthy Swedish muskox population. As such Idun had to shed her domestic ways and become a part of the wild herd instantaneously upon leaving the box.

Telling Tales of Containerization

In each of these short tales of animal relocation, the container – the box which nominally takes the animal from its prior home to its new one – is more than a physical transport method. I have argued that the animal within the housing is *domesticated* – not in the sense of having been bred by humans for a purpose, but rather in the sense of being within a house under the care of people. It is the container itself which facilitates a change in the animal and its relationship with people. The box makes the animal dependent upon human caretakers. From the human perspective, this can place the containerized animal into the role of family member or pet. The container used in relocation acts as a mediator that transforms the animal into a domesticated member of the *domus*.

The containerization is, however, a temporary state. Because the container is not designed as permanent home, the domestication is also transitory. In each of these tales, the animal ends up in the wild. The route to wildness after relocation is always through domestication, whether the domestication had been existing since birth, as with Idun the muskox, or was a temporary condition like the muskox calves from Greenland and the beavers from Norway. In either case, the animal will eventually leave the box and its domestic state. The humans involved in the reintroduction consider the animal “wild” as soon as it leaves the box and assume that it “belongs” to its new surroundings.

The box is transformative, modifying its contents and the perception of them. On the first level, the box works because the animal inside is domesticated. If the animal continued to believe it was wild while it was in the box, it would kill itself by continuing to pound against the side of the crate. Instead, like the muskox calves transported from Greenland, the animal eventually gives in and resigns itself to its domesticated status. During crating, the humans have the responsibility to provide food, water, and protection for the animal. On the second level, the relocation would not work if the animal was not able to transform itself to be wild upon leaving the box. The people need to believe this too – the final ‘wild’ status of the animal is why we are doing it – and the humans have to accept that the animal belongs in the new place. Wildness in this sense is a counterpoint to domestication. A wild animal finds its own food and shelter and finds other animals with which to be in a herd or flock or pair. These are the criteria for success in the wild, since the animal will no longer be in direct human care within the *domus*. The muskox in a box must learn to live outside the box.

Peering into the containers in these tales allows us to see that the work performed by the crate as technological artifact in animal relocation reaches far beyond the logistical. The moral of these stories is that even a temporary housing structure modifies the relation between human and animal. The power of technologies of simple construction, like the wooden crates or wire boxes in these examples, to reorder relations should not be overlooked. As I have argued elsewhere, simplicity of design does not equate to lack of social complexity (Jørgensen 2008). These are simple wooden or metal crates that would not attract attention as design objects; yet, as objects that order relationships, they play a central role. More than moving the animal from point A to B, the box serves as the critical site of transformation through its ability to domesticate the animal contained within and its ability to wild the animal upon it leaving.

Acknowledgements

This research was funded by the Swedish research council Formas through a Young Researcher Grant to the author for the project “The Return of Native Nordic Fauna.”

Literature

Aftenposten (1929a) “Vil moskusoksen trives på Svalbard?,” August 27, morning edition, p. 2.

- Aftenposten* (1929b) “Moskusokser på Svalbard vil bety en verdifull forøkelse av ø-gruppens viltbestand,” August 27, evening edition, p. 1.
- Aftenposten* (1929c) “De første moskusokser til Svalbard,” September 11, p. 1.
- Anderson, A. (1925) “Då bävern återbördades till Västerbotten,” in *Västerbotten: Västerbottens Läns Hembygdsförenings Årsbok 1924-1925*, 282-286. Umeå: Aktiebolaget Nyheternas Tryckeri.
- Arbman, S. (1922) “När bäfvern återinfördes i Bjurälven,” in *Svenska Jägareförbundets Tidskrift*, 60: 274-280.
- Clutton-Brock, J. (2012). *Animals as Domesticates: A World View through History*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.
- Cronon, W. (1992) “A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative,” in *The Journal of American History*, 78: 1347-1376.
- Festin, E. (1922) “Bävern återinplantering,” in *Jämten*, 16: 84-91.
- Gärdenfors, U. (ed.) (2010) *Rödlistade arter i Sverige 2010 – The 2010 Red List of Swedish Species*. Uppsala: ArtDatabanken, SLU.
- IUCN/SSC (2013) *Guidelines for Reintroductions and Other Conservation Translocations*. Gland: IUCN Species Survival Commission.
- Jørgensen, D. (2008) “Cooperative Sanitation: Managing Streets and Gutters in Late Medieval England and Scandinavia,” in *Technology and Culture*, 49: 547-567.
- Kolthoff, G. (1901) *Till Spetsbergen och Nordöstra Grönland år 1900*. Stockholm: Fr. Skoglunds Förlag.
- Latour, B. (2005) *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lundh, N.G. (1992) *Muskoxe*. Östersund and Trondheim: Länsstyrelsen i Jämtlands Län / Flykesmannen i Sør-Trøndelag / Sør-Trøndelag Fylkeskommune.
- NRK (2013) “Svensk innsats for å redde moskusstammen,” Broadcast 29 April. http://www.nrk.no/video/svensk_innsats_for_a_redde_moskusstammen/68435B071C30437/
- Nathorst, A. (1900) *Två Somrar i Norra Ishafvet, Första delen: Kung Karls land, Spetsbergens kringsegling*. Stockholm: Beijers Bokförlagesaktiebolag.
- OED (Oxford English Dictionary Online). 2014 (March). “domesticate, v.” <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/56668>
- Russell, N. (2002) “The Wild Side of Animal Domestication,” in *Society & Animals*, 10(3): 285-302.
- SVT (2013) “Myskoxe på grönbete,” SVT Regional Västernorrland News, Broadcast 4 April.
- Tjomsland, A. (1963) “Dödsfall,” *Aftenposten*, 1 October, p. 11.
- von Post, G.H. (1930) “På besök hos Västerbottens bävvar,” in *Västerbottens Läns Jaktvårdsförenings Årsbok 1930*. Umeå: Västerbottens Läns Jaktvårdsförening, pp. 49-66.

Wahlberg, L. (1925) "Bäverns återbördande till Syd-Lappland," in *Västerbottens Läns Jaktvårdsförenings Årsbok 1925*. Umeå: Västerbottens Läns Jaktvårdsförening, pp. 6-23.