

Pest Animal Operational Plan 2026 – 2027 and Monitoring Report 2025-2026

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REGIONAL COUNCIL

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Front Cover Photo
Rook nest in a gum tree (Taihape), A Cowley

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1 INTRODUCTION

This **Pest Animal Operational Plan 2026-2027** outlines the nature and scope of activities Horizons intends to undertake for pest animal management and the implementation of Horizons Regional Pest Management Plan 2017-37 (the Plan) for the 2026-27 financial year.

It also includes a report on the 2025-26 activities and results in section seven **Monitoring Report 2025-2026**.

2 MANAGEMENT

The management and implementation of pest animal control programmes are managed by the Pest Animal Team Leader (Daniel Hurley), Senior Biosecurity Officers and the Regional Response Team.

The Possum Control Operations (PCO) work is carried out by the Regional Response Team (RRT) and five external contractors. Possum trend monitors are completed using a separate external contractor using the wax-tag method for monitoring possum populations.

The RRT has 15 field operators based out of offices in Taumarunui, Taihape, Whanganui, Marton, Kairanga, Woodville and Levin.

Other work includes the rook eradication programme, assisting several biodiversity programmes across the region, the pest monitoring and surveillance programme, and providing advice and support to ratepayers via the amenity pest programme.

3 REPORTING

Table 1: Biosecurity Pest Animals Reporting Requirements.

Report	Comment
Integrated Catchment Operations Committee Report quarterly.	Integrated Catchment Operations Committee reports will be prepared to report progress towards meeting annual plan targets.
Pest Animal Operational and Monitoring Plan	A review of the Operational Plan will be initiated in July of each year, and an updated Plan created for the new financial year.
Amenity Pest Database	The Frontline database will be kept current at all times, recording and reporting all animal pest enquiries.
Financial	Monthly performance against monthly phased budget will be reported to Council's Audit and Risk Committee as required.

4 FINANCIAL AND ACTIVITY OVERVIEW 2026 – 2027

4.1 Pest Animal Projects and Financial Summary

The projects and financial expenditure relating to the pest animal activity in the 2026-27 year are summarised into five project groups as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of the 2026-27 Annual Plan.

Projects	Revenue 2025-26	Revenue 2026-27	Difference
Possum Control Operations	$4,177,162	$4,513,230	$336,068
Rook Control and Management	$194,375	$198,214	$3,839
Statutory Pest Programmes (Amenity)	$202,739	$209,774	$7,035
Monitoring	$461,903	$478,193	$16,290
Pest Plan review project	$52,200	$52,750	$550
Total Annual Plan Budget	**$5,088,379**	**$5,452,161**	**$363,762**

4.2 Possum Control Operations

The PCO budget has been combined in the table above and the Long-term Plan budget below has the PCO budget broken into two sections - PCO external contractors and an RRT (internal) PCO.

Planned Maintenance of Existing Network

This year's maintenance programme involves work in 89 operational areas with an estimated 114,279 bait stations to be visited and refilled. The total area of the 89 maintenance PCO being worked this year is 870,762 hectares. There are also 2 PCOs (Makuri B and Pongaroa) nearing completion from last years' work plan that are not included in the 89 maintenance operational areas tally.

All existing maintenance operations (PCOs) that have been included are because they were deferred from control in the previous year, or they were at the higher end of the PosSim model. All maintenance PCOs exceeding 3.7% RTC will be worked this year.

Table 3: Summary of the PCO costs 2026-27.

Annual Plan expenditure 2026 - 2027	110111 External	110112 Internal
Revenue	$1,974,926	$2,538,304
Depreciation	$0.00	$100,458
Operating Expenses	$1,679,657	$572,320
Personnel Expenses	$281,249	$1,727,146
Interdepartmental Expenses	$14,020	$138,380
Total Expenditure	**$1,974,926**	**$2,538,304**

Planned Initial PCOs

At the beginning of the 2026-27 year the PCO program is comprised of 156 operational areas totalling 1,583,828 hectares. With additional funding this year we plan to establish three PCOs for inclusion into the PCO program. These are the ex-OSPRI operational areas of: Orautoha, Horopito, and West Ohakune, totalling approximately 21,067 hectares and an estimate of 3,950 new bait stations setups.

4.2.1 External (Contractor) PCO

Table 4: Summary of the external possum control and management costs 2026-27.

Accounts	Working LTP 26/27
Revenue	**$1,974,926**
Environmental Expenditure	$7,665
External Contractors & Service	$1,670,970
Travel & Conferences	$1,022
Operating Expenses	$1,679,657
Personnel Expenses	$281,249
Expenditure	$1,960,906
Interdepartmental Transfers	$14,020
Surplus / (Deficit)	$0

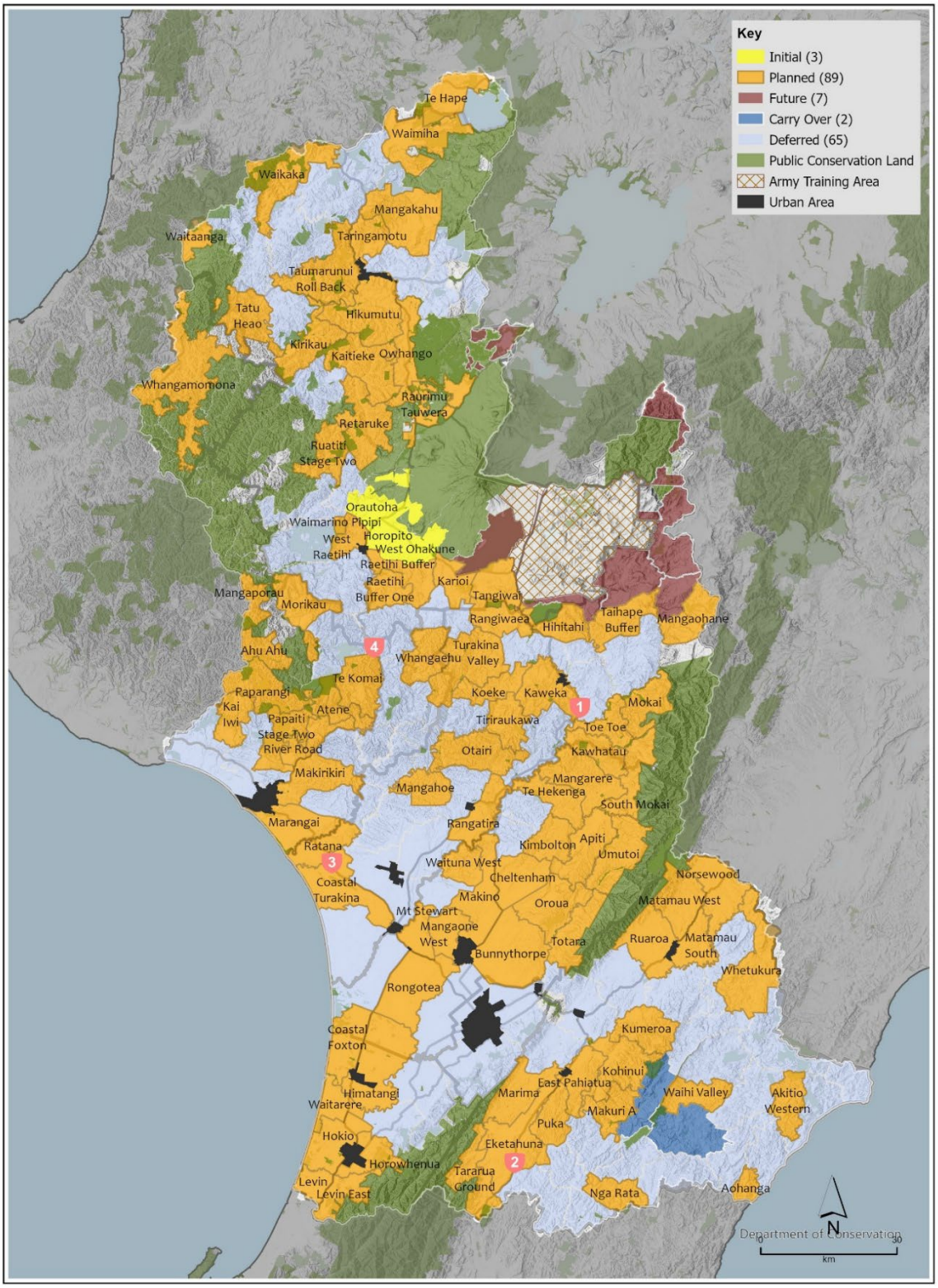
The external contractors are scheduled to undertake bait station work in 28 maintenance PCOs and 1 initial PCO (West Ohakune) for the 2026-2027 year. Approximately 43,476 bait station services will be undertaken over an area of 287,188 hectares. Map 1 and Table 6 provide a summary of the PCOs that will be worked this year by Team.

4.2.2 Regional Response Team PCO

Table 5: Summary of the internal possum control and management costs 2026-27.

Accounts	Working LTP 26/27
Revenue	**$2,538,304**
Environmental Expenditure	$362,810
External Contractors & Service	$194,180
Repairs & Maintenance	$15,330
Operating Expenses	$572,320
Depreciation	$100,458
Personnel Expenses	$1,727,146
Expenditure	$2,399,924
Interdepartmental Transfers	$138,380
Surplus / (Deficit)	$0

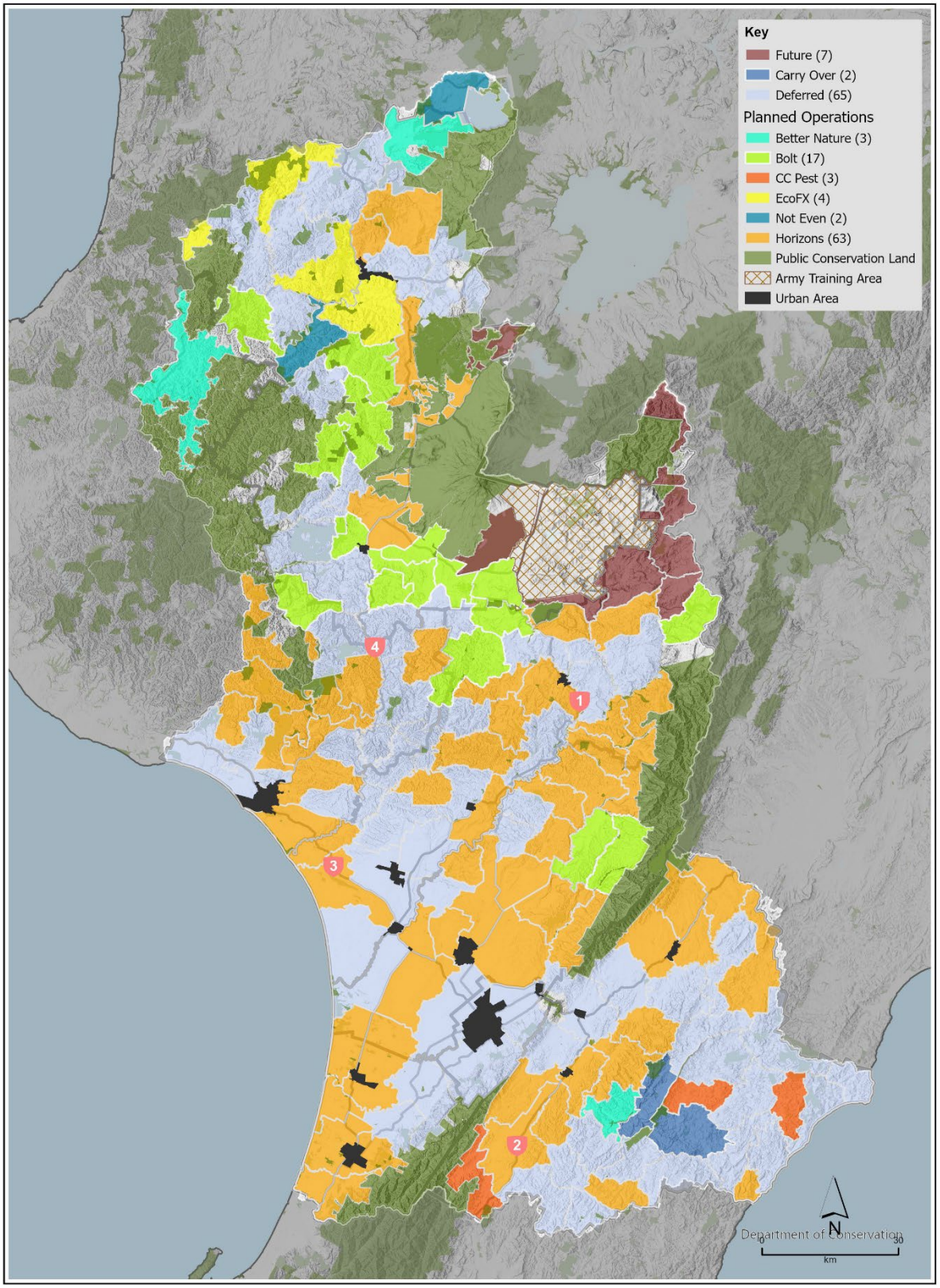
The Regional Response Team plans to undertake work in 61 maintenance PCOs and 2 initial PCO (Orautoha and Horopito), visiting and refilling approximately 74,753 bait stations. The total area to be worked by the RRT is 604,641 hectares. Map 1 and Table 6 provide a summary of the PCOs that will be worked this year by Team.



Possum Control Operations July 2026 - June 2027

Prepared by: Biosecurity Pest Animal Team on: 9/10/2026

Map 1: Planned Possum Control Operations.



Map 2: Planned Possum Control Operations by team.

Table 6: Operational areas by Team 2026-2027.

Contractor/Team	PCO Name	Hectares	Bait Stations
Better Nature	Makuri A	7594	1658
	Waimiha	14313	2405
	Whangamomona	26949	695
Bolt Contracting	Apiti	11921	2212
	Kaitieke	13067	2276
	Karioi	7464	1297
	Mangaohane	7602	1205
	Morikau	9467	1400
	Raetihi Buffer	8303	1640
	Raetihi Buffer One	5940	954
	Rangiwaea	7800	1135
	Retaruke	14074	1381
	Ruatiti Stage Two	9205	3222
	Tangiwai	6391	1212
	Tatu Heao	9681	1282
	Turakina Valley	16508	1092
	Umutoi	12109	1335
	Waimarino Pipipi	899	411
	West Ohakune (Initial)	**5627**	**750**
	West Raetihi	4417	1013
CC Pest Control	Akitio Western	7685	1207
	Tararua Ground	7367	910
	Waihi Valley	7962	859
Rentokil	Hikumutu	15939	3002
	Taumarunui Roll Back	15930	3102
	Waikaka	11007	1756
	Waitaanga	3232	596
Not Even	Kirikau	9861	2899
	Te Hape	8871	570
RRT Central	Bunnythorpe	19331	1266
	Cheltenham	10502	1385
	Coastal Foxton	11041	784
	Himatangi	19077	1134
	Hokio	9958	1111
	Horowhenua	7472	716
	Kimbolton	7666	1343
	Levin	4463	343
	Levin East	7170	600
	Makino	12767	1046
	Mangaone West	7078	552
	Mt Stewart	5728	582
	Oroua	13136	2372
	Rongotea	16500	731
	Totara	9219	2088
	Waitarere	5769	967
	Waituna West	6100	1231

Contractor/Team	PCO Name	Hectares	Bait Stations
RRT Taihape	Hihitahi	7048	1290
	Kaweka	11364	1542
	Kawhatau	7187	1708
	Koeke	7168	786
	Mangarere	13325	1529
	Mokai	8671	1162
	South Mokai	9028	1816
	Taihape Buffer	9469	501
	Te Hekenga	8593	1223
	Tiriraukawa	7887	590
	Toe Toe	6267	1243
RRT Taumarunui	**Horopito (Initial)**	**7344**	**1200**
	Mangakahu	16648	3518
	Orautoha (Initial)	**8096**	**2000**
	Owhango	9424	2391
	Raurimu Tauwera	6217	1442
	Taringamotu	6188	1524
RRT Whanganui	Ahu Ahu	7396	887
	Atene	5971	458
	Coastal Turakina	14786	1136
	Kai Iwi	7366	974
	Makirikiri	11234	1754
	Mangahoe	7626	1434
	Mangaporau	4255	557
	Marangai	10320	1105
	Otairi	13351	1521
	Papaiti Stage Two	8996	1652
	Paparangi	10179	1430
	Rangatira	8760	859
	Ratana	7025	541
	River Road	6616	1390
	Te Komai	10291	804
	Whangaehu	9354	716
RRT Woodville	Aohanga	3131	523
	East Pahiatua	6785	579
	Eketahuna	17744	1384
	Kohinui	12499	1019
	Kumeroa	10251	1182
	Marima	11214	1411
	Matamau South	6847	514
	Matamau West	10923	1332
	Nga Rata	7102	489
	Norsewood	12892	1886
	Puka	7640	814
	Ruaroa	12396	1037
	Whetukura	18793	1649
Total		**891,830**	**118,229**



Map 3: New Possum Control Operations 2026-2027

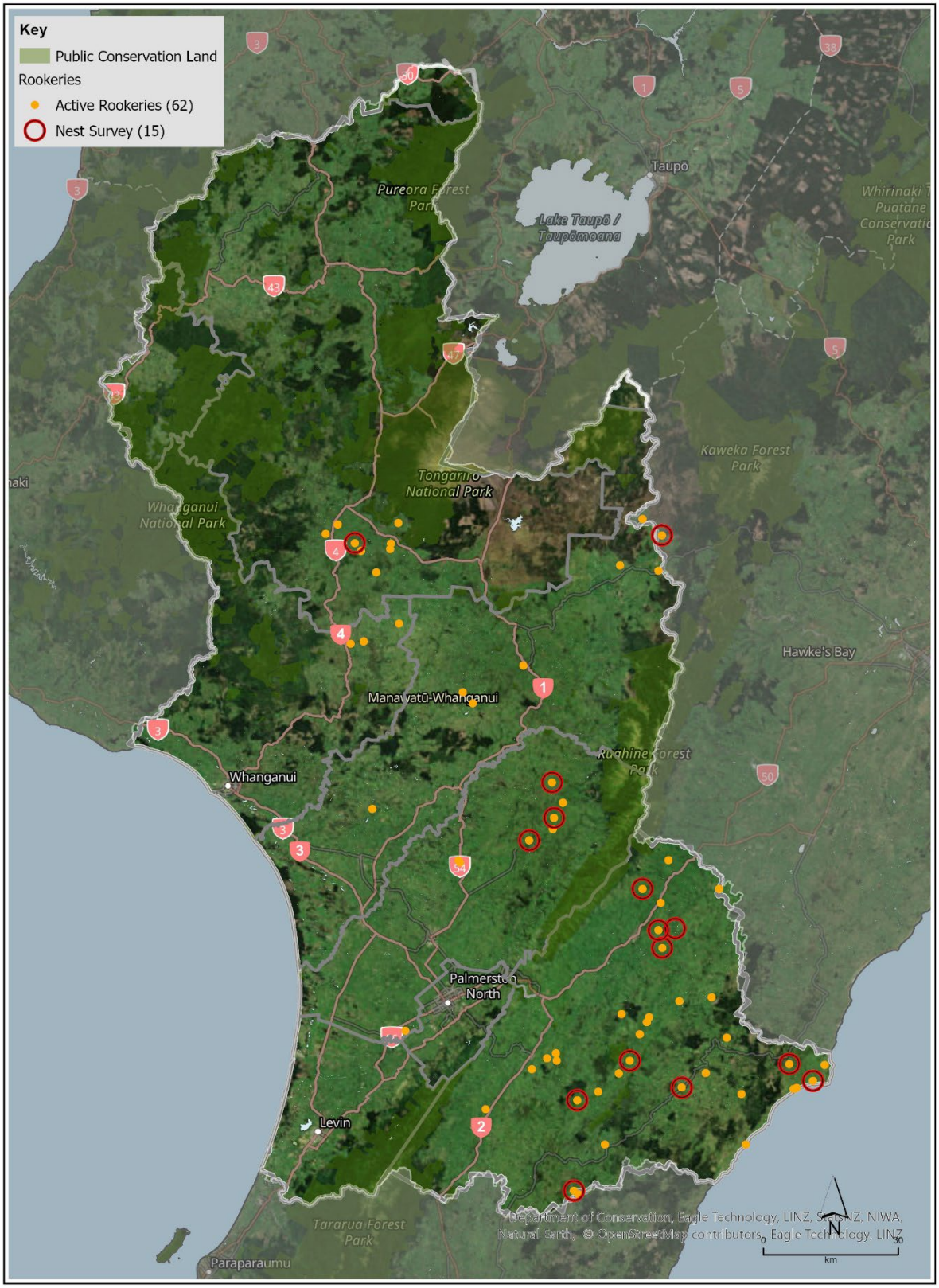
4.3 Rook Control and Management

Rooks are categorised as an eradication species in the Plan, and the region is surveyed annually for active rookeries.

The main control method will be aerial baiting of rook nests during the breeding season (October-November) targeting both chicks and adult birds. An experienced helicopter company will be contracted to undertake the aerial work. All active rookeries will be treated in October and revisited 3-5 weeks following the first visit to pick up any nests missed in the first time around and target birds that have laid a second round of eggs. Ground poisoning operations will also be carried out should the opportunity arise.

Table 7: Summary of the rook control and management costs 2026-27.

Accounts	Working LTP 26/27
Revenue	**$198,214**
Advertising & Promotions	$3,066
External Contractors & Service	$98,827
Repairs & Maintenance	$562
Operating Expenses	$102,456
Personnel Expenses	$92,052
Expenditure	$194,507
Interdepartmental Transfers	$3,707
Surplus / (Deficit)	$0



Map 4: Planned rookery survey 2026-27.

4.4 Amenity Pests

The amenity pest programme provides a pest animal advisory service for ratepayers with pest animal issues across the region. Horizons provides advice and in some cases loans traps and supplies bait to enable landowners to undertake their own control. Enquiries are responded to within two working days of being lodged and usually involve pests such as possums, rabbits, mustelids and magpies.

To avoid oversubscription to the amenity programme, changes were made to the programme relating to the supply of rabbit bait with bait only supplied to new customers on a limited basis, and this policy will continue. If landowners require more bait, they are advised to purchase from local stock and station agents.

Table 8: Summary of the amenity pests' costs 2026-27.

Accounts	Working LTP 26/27
Revenue	**$209,774**
Environmental Expenditure	$8,687
Operating Expenses	$8,687
Personnel Expenses	$173,673
Expenditure	$182,360
Interdepartmental Transfers	$27,414
Surplus / (Deficit)	$0

4.5 Monitoring

This year's monitoring will focus on trend monitoring of 40 maintenance Possum Control Operations using the wax-tag method, by an external contractor. Undertake rabbit counts over historical routes by the Regional Response Team.

Table 9: Summary of the monitoring costs 2026-27.

Accounts	Working LTP 26/27
Revenue	**$478,193**
Environmental Expenditure	$10,220
External Contractors & Service	$261,121
Operating Expenses	$271,341
Personnel Expenses	$202,507
Expenditure	$473,848
Interdepartmental Transfers	$4,345
Surplus / (Deficit)	$0

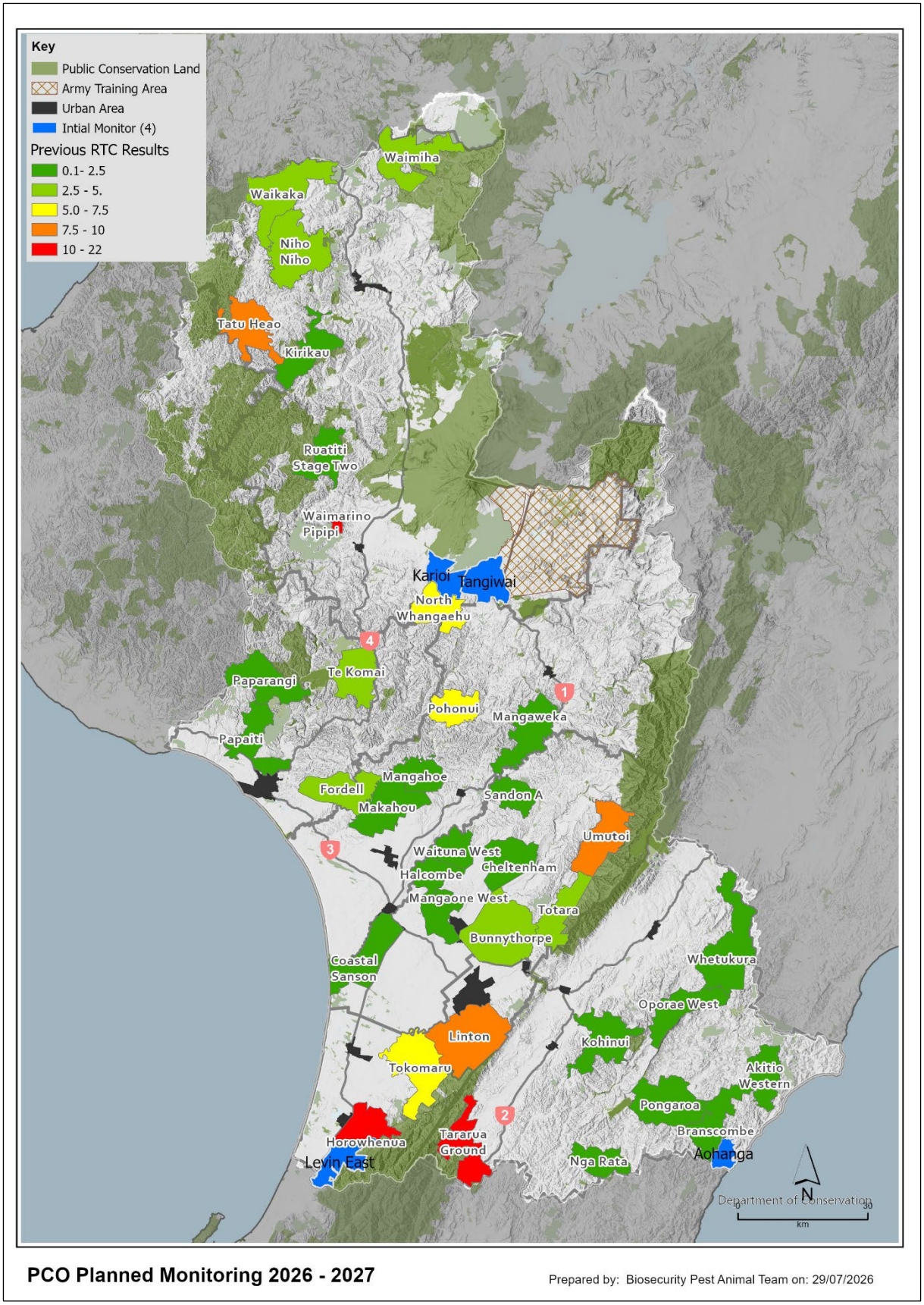
4.5.1 Possum monitoring

Horizons will design, manage and complete 40 possum wax-tag monitors in the 2026-27 financial year. Holden Contracting Ltd is in the third year of the Possum Monitoring 2024-2027 contract and will undertake most of the work. Darrin Spillane Ltd is the back-up supplier and will subcontract to Holden Contracting from time to time if required, particularly for the PCOs in the Ruapehu District. Map 5 and Table 10 provide a summary of PCO to be monitored and previous results.

Table 10: PCOs monitored

Monitors (40)	Number of Lines	Last RTC Results %	2026 -27 Results
Akitio Western	25	0.1	
Aohanga	15	1.5	
Branscombe	25	0.1	0.6
Bunnythorpe	25	2.9	
Cheltenham	25	1.8	
Coastal Sanson	25	2	2.6
Fordell	25	2.9	
Halcombe	25	1.2	2.3
Horowhenua	25	10.4	
Karioi	25	n/a	
Kirikau	25	0.1	
Kohinui	25	1.5	
Levin East	15	n/a	
Linton	25	7.6	
Makahou	25	0.1	
Mangahoe	25	0.6	
Mangaone West	25	0.1	
Mangaweka	25	1.8	
Nga Rata	20	0.1	1.2
Niho Niho	25	4.3	
North Whangaehu	25	6.8	
Oporae West	25	0.1	
Papaiti	25	0.4	
Paparangi	15	0.9	
Pohonui	25	6.2	
Pongaroa	25	0.1	0.1
Ruatiti Stage Two	25	0.1	
Sandon A	25	0.1	
Tangiwai	25	n/a	
Tararua Ground	25	10.4	
Tatu Heao	25	7.6	
Te Komai	25	2.6	

Monitors (40)	Number of Lines	Last RTC Results %	2026 -27 Results
Tokomaru	25	6	
Totara	25	4.3	
Umutoi	25	8.8	
Waikaka	25	4.6	
Waimarino Pipipi	15	22	
Waimiha	25	3.2	
Waituna West	25	0.9	
Whetukura	25	0.1	
Total/Average	**955**	**3.5**	



Map 5: Possum – Planned wax-tag monitoring showing previous results.

4.6 Wallaby surveillance

The Plan has wallabies listed in the "exclusion programme" as they have the potential to cause adverse effects to both productive capacity and environmental values in the region. While wallabies are present in New Zealand, currently there are no known populations established in the region. During the coming year, Horizons Biosecurity personnel will investigate any reported wallaby sightings by inspecting likely habitat in and around the location of the sighting and may also involve using a contractor with an accredited wallaby detection dog. The results of inspections will be reported to MPI. Should any of the inspections subsequently confirm the presence of wallabies, Horizons will work closely with MPI to determine the extent of the population and initiate control work.

5 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Table 11: 2026-27 Annual Plan targets.

Performance Measure / Contract Target	Target
Possum densities are maintained at/below 10% RTC in all existing and new possum control operations. This is to enhance production, biodiversity, disease protection and amenity values.	<10% RTC
Monitor possum control densities within the Horizons possum control programme based on the PCOs that make up the overall possum control area.	>20% of PCOs monitored
All additional hectares released from OSPRI control are included in the PCO programme.	3 PCOs = 21,067 hectares
All known rookeries are treated annually to reduce crop losses and damage.	95%
Provide an urban/peri-urban animal pest management service to assist ratepayers with specialist advice and equipment. All enquiries responded to within 2 working days.	100%

6 BIODIVERSITY PEST ANIMAL CONTROL

The Regional Response Team supports the Biodiversity work programme by carrying out possum, predator, ungulate and wasp control and result monitoring at selected priority habitat sites throughout the region; hours are summarised in (Table 12) for the trapping programme.

The biosecurity team currently maintain a network of over 2,000 bait stations and 700 predator traps protecting priority habitat sites, with additional bait stations and traps added to new sites as they are added to the program. Predator traps are checked and maintained monthly.

Deer control in Totara Reserve is in its second year, with regular control planned throughout the year.

Control of vespula wasp species is undertaken in Totara Reserve using a network of around 300 bait stations installed throughout the reserve. Destruction of individual nests is also undertaken where there is a risk to people using the campgrounds, amenity areas or walking tracks.

Table 12: Estimated hours required for pest control at Biodiversity sites.

Site	Target species	Hours
Tōtara Reserve	Possum, mustelids, rats, deer	915
Te Āpiti Buffer	Possum, mustelids, rats, cats	400
Pukaha Buffer	Mustelids, cats, possums	384
Manawatū Estuary	Mustelids, hedgehogs and rats	96
Christie's Lake	Mustelids & Possums	60
Broadlands	Mustelids	60
Blake's Bush	Possums, rats, hedgehogs	43
McErlean's Snail Gully	Possums, rats, hedgehogs	43
Perawitis Wetland	Possums, rats, hedgehogs	43

7 MONITORING REPORT 2025 - 2026

7.1 Overview

The biosecurity animals programme achieved all five Annual Plan targets. (Table 13).

Table 13: Reporting for the Biosecurity Animals Annual Plan targets as of end of year June 2026.

Performance measure/ contract target	Target	YTD Result
Possum densities are maintained at/below 10% RTC in all existing and new possum control operations. This is to enhance production, biodiversity, disease protection, and amenity values.	<10% RTC	Achieved. Results from 35 of the planned 37 monitors (Map 4) completed this year range from 0.1% to 4% RTC, average 1.2% RTC (+/-0.6%).
Monitor possum control densities within the Horizons possum control programme based on the PCOs that make up the overall possum control area.	>20% of PCOs monitored	Achieved. 22% (35 of 156) PCO monitored (Map 4).
All additional hectares released from OSPRI control are included in the PCO programme.	19,888 hectares	Achieved. 100% of available ha's in all four PCO have been setup
All known rookeries are treated annually to reduce crop losses and damage.	95%	Achieved. 39 (95.1%) out of 41 rookeries treated. Access could not be gained in time to treat two rookeries.
Provide an urban/peri-urban animal pest management service to assist ratepayers with specialist advice and equipment. All enquiries responded to within two working days.	100%	Achieved. 553 enquiries have been received, and all were followed up within the agreed timeframes.

7.2 Possum Control Operations

In 2025-26 the PCO programme:

- Planned to control possums over 92 operational areas with an estimated 118,348 bait stations to be refilled across an area of 965,341 ha.
- As of 30 June 2026: 98% of the planned PCO's (90 of 92) had been completed, being approximately 955,688 ha (99%) of the total planned area (Map 4). The programme planned to complete 118,348 bait station fills and exceeded this with 118,559 fills completed.
- Bait station setup has been completed in the four new PCO's with the available hectares receiving 3,364 bait stations. Aohanga will receive more stations as forestry tracks are reopened, and areas of Levin East were left due to access limitations caused by construction of the new highway. Second treatments were carried out on three (Aohanga, Karioi and Tangiwai) of the four new PCO's as possum sign was heavy.
- The monitoring contractor has completed 35 (95%) of the 37 planned monitors of PCO's. Two trend monitors in the Tararua Region were not completed by June and will be worked in July. This was due to underestimating weather and track issues in the Whangamomona and Parapara PCO's, with more monitoring lines accessed by foot than planned, resulting in the work taking longer to complete. The 35 monitors represented 22% of the 156 PCO's achieving the Annual Plan target of more than 20% of PCO's monitored.
- Monitoring results to date have averaged 1.2% RTC with all monitors being under the target of 10% RTC, with a range of 0.1 to 4% RTC (Map 5).
- A total of 18 PCO appraisals were completed by the pest animal team over the year, this included appraisals of both contractors and internal teams. Work quality between contractors and internal staff was similar, with the health and safety practices of both groups at a high standard. All comments recorded from landowners were positive, especially in the Coastal Bulls PCO where several new setups were installed to fill gaps within the PCO.

7.3 Rabbits

No rabbit counts or Haemorrhagic Disease Virus (RHDV) survey was conducted in 2025-26.

7.4 Rooks

Rooks are listed as an eradication species in the Plan. Members of the crow family and rooks can cause significant economic damage to farms through localised damage to crops. The Plan objective for rook control is "over the duration of the Plan, eradicate breeding rookeries and progressively contain or reduce rooks, across the region to reduce adverse effects on economic well-being".

- Rook control was completed over two flights, one in October and the second in November.
- The first flight included inspection of 82 rookeries, the second flight included 34 rookeries.
- The timing of first treatment was good with only seven nests treated during the second flight.
- Overall, there was a decline in active nests (from 167 to 79), the number of active rookeries continues to decline (now at 33, from 43 last year). At an additional nine rookeries with only empty nests were found indicating just male birds present (Map 6).
- No attempts were made at ground control during this period as no reports were received from the public.

7.5 Wallaby Surveillance

The Plan designates wallabies an Exclusion species as they have the potential to cause adverse effects to both productive capacity and environmental values in the region. While wallabies are present in New Zealand, currently there are no known populations established in the region.

In the 2025-26 year: we have followed up on five reported sightings from the public that came via the Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI) National Wallaby Programme website. They were:

- 1st November 2025 – a possible wallaby was glimpsed on a farm in the Ngapuke area. An interview took place and neighbours informed, but the animal could be one of the many hares in the area. Location noted in case of any further sightings.
- 22nd November 2025 – between Hunterville and Ohingaiti a motorist reported seeing a wallaby roadkill. Phone call with the reporter and prompt visit that day deemed it to be a possum seen, and the animal was removed.
- 12th January 2026 – a motorist reported a wallaby roadkill halfway between Taihape and Waiouru. After phoning the reporter and visiting the location the next day, two cats and a possum were removed from the side of the road in the general area.
- 3rd February 2026 – on SH1, south of bridge across the Manawatū River a wallaby roadkill was reported. Prompt investigation of the road the same day deemed it was a possum, animal removed.
- 25th April 2026 – a motorist on the outskirts of Levin reported seeing a live wallaby at night on the roadside. A phone call to the reporter was carried out, glimpse was under 2 seconds and on the edge of headlights at speed, location was noted in case of any further sightings.

7.6 Amenity Pests

Horizons Amenity Pests Programme fills a niche in the biosecurity programme for responding to animal pest enquiries for species outside the Plan designated species. It also responds to enquiries about the pest plan species in peri-urban and urban environments, where the major control programmes focus on larger blocks of land (>4 ha).

The amenity pest programme responded to 553 enquiries for the year. The highest number of calls received were about possum (189) followed by rabbits (110) and mustelids (66).

- Rooks - are a common enquiry year-round. Advice is given or the site is investigated for feasibility of a ground operation. Otherwise, locations are recorded for follow up in the breeding season if the birds are likely to nest in the area or nearby.
- Cats - mostly feral or strays. Cage traps are supplied and the person reporting deals with the animal from there.
- Magpies – loan traps/advice is given and the person reporting deals with the birds from there.
- Misc – pigeons, goats, feral pigs, deer, rats, mice, pukeko, ducks, and wasps. Ducks and other gamebirds are passed onto Fish and Game.

All landowners making enquiries were contacted within the prescribed timeframes and provided with advice and, in some cases equipment such as traps and small amounts of toxins to help them deal with their particular pest issues. Distributions of enquiries across the region for the year-to-date are shown in (Map 7).

7.7 Biodiversity Support Animal Pest Control

Horizons staff have carried out 6,268 trap checks at selected priority habitat and icon sites with the catches over the period from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026. The catches are shown in Table 14.

Tōtara Reserve rat control was carried out in May prior to the May monitor in which rats were at an undetectable level at result of 0% Tracking Tunnel Index (TTI). This is an excellent result, the next tracking tunnel monitor will be undertaken in August 2026, in preparation for a pre-bird nesting season assessment. Possums were monitored in February 2026 with ten waxtag lines returning a 2.3% RTC. This is another good result, considering 50% of the positive tags were from a single line. This line is close to houses and Pohangina East Road. It will require an increase in bait frequency and likely a change of methods to significantly lower numbers.

Ground based deer control was undertaken in Totara Reserve using a combination of RRT staff and contractors, with the bulk of the control focussed on the Pohangina River corridor, which is the main travel route between farmland and the reserve. This is the first year that control has been implemented. Results are shown in Table 15

Vespula wasp control was carried out in Tōtara Reserve in April using the existing network of wasptek bait stations. Extra stations were also added to the network this year to fill in gaps. There was a noticeable decrease in wasp numbers in and around the campgrounds, amenity areas and walking tracks which is largely due to the success of control undertaken in 2024-2025.

Table 14: Trapping results at various biodiversity sites in 2025-26.

Operation	Trap Numbers	Cat	Ferret	Hedgehog	Possum	Rat	Stoat	Weasel	Total
Blake's Bush	5	0	0	5	0	1	2	0	**8**
Broadlands	16	3	2	39	1	19	3	3	**70**
Christie's Lake	33	1	4	12	0	17	9	0	**43**
Manawatū Estuary	40	0	0	15	0	10	22	7	**54**
McErlean	8	0	1	14	0	5	3	0	**23**
Perawitis Wetland	7	0	0	11	0	1	0	0	**12**
Pukaha Buffer	186	25	11	88	0	152	14	24	**314**
Te Āpiti Buffer South	172	0	0	77	0	56	3	42	**178**
Tōtara Reserve	157	1	1	29	3	85	6	20	**145**
FW Horowhenua Wetland	25	0	0	14	0	13	6	0	**33**
Total	**715**	**39**	**26**	**267**	**16**	**464**	**66**	**88**	**966**

Table 15: Deer Control undertaken in Totara Reserve in 2025-26.

Operation	Total Hunting Hours	Deer Species	Total Kills	Kills per hunting hour
Totara Reserve	77	Fallow	18	0.25
		Red	1	

7.8 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

The strain (H5N1) emerged in 2020 and is now found extensively around the globe infecting 500+ bird species and 60 mammal species. Not yet present in New Zealand, or the South Pacific HPAI has now been detected in Australia. Regional Councils have a role in coordinating regional responses, amplifying national messaging and managing consenting of disposal of large volumes of infected carcasses. Horizons is involved along with the regional sector in a collaborative effort with One Health partners to improve New Zealand's preparedness for a potential incursion of H5N1 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI).

Local Councils will have a role in protecting public health by removing sick and dead wild birds from some public spaces.

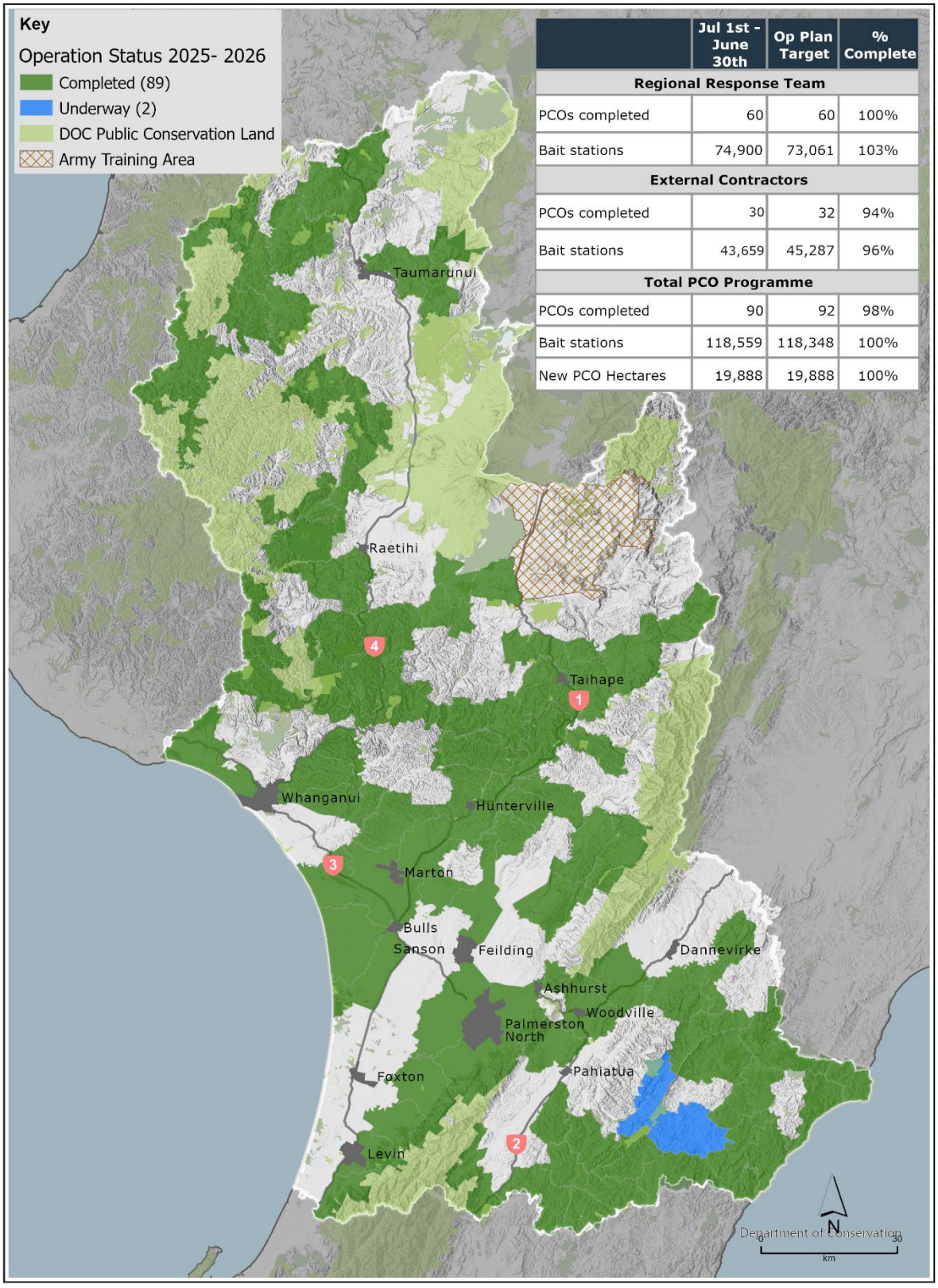
- Horizons is involved along with the regional sector in a collaborative effort with One Health partners to improve New Zealand's preparedness for a potential incursion of H5N1 HPAI.
- To enable regional councils to prepare a regional response plan MPI have provided funding for the 2025-26 financial year to; engage contractors (write plan, consult and prepare contacts). The procurement process for the contracts to write response plan closed mid-April. Individual councils have been asked to provide costings for; coordinating with territorial authorities, establish contracts for bird disposal, purchase PPE and signage.
- The regional team leads meet fortnightly with MPI and their contractors. There will be an increasing need to provide updates to wider Horizons staff.
- HPAI was detected in Australia in June 26, with dead birds found in in Western Australia and near Adelaide, South Australia testing positive.
- Staff are implementing actions from the 'Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) Preparedness Plan for the Horizons Region'; which was prepared through FY26, consistently with other regions. Horizons is responsible for regional coordination through the Horizons HPAI Coordination Group. This group will: coordinate agencies; iwi; stakeholders to share information and guidance and lead regional communications.

7.9 Yellow-legged hornets (Vespa velutina)

The yellow-legged hornet has not been detected in New Zealand before, although it is found widely across Southeast Asia and has been introduced to Europe and USA. This hornet feeds on both insects (including honeybees) as well as tree sap and fruit. This hornet was first discovered in October 2025 with MPI removing a nest from Glenfield Auckland. Since October 132 nests have been discovered in the Auckland region of which 63 contained queens. A Technical Advisory Group (TAG) a mix of national and international experts is shaping a strategy for Biosecurity New Zealand

- The Te Uru Kahika Biosecurity Working Group received an update from Biosecurity NZ in February. This noted that monitoring using both traps and tracking via radio were being used to detect hornets, focussing on areas within 11 km of any hornet queens discovered.
- MPI continues to engage closely with beekeepers and the beekeeping industry, providing them with regular updates and advice on actions they can take to assist with surveillance efforts. As at mid-May, 77 queen hornets and 132 nests have been located and destroyed. No hornets or nests have been found since early April.
- As at 30 June 2026, Horizons has not been asked to supply staff or undertake any surveillance.

7.10 End of Year Maps

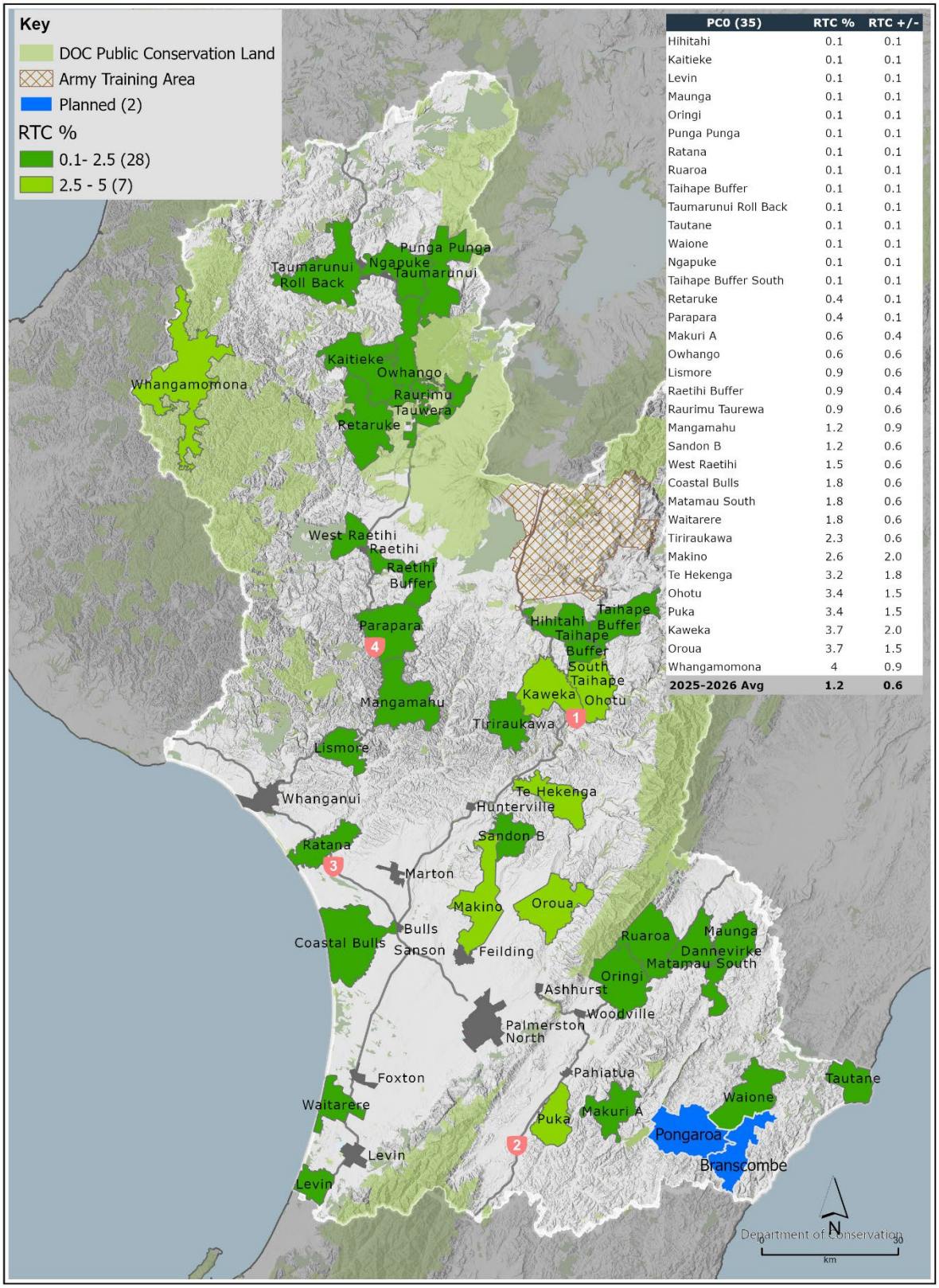


	Jul 1st - June 30th	Op Plan Target	% Complete
Regional Response Team			
PCOs completed	60	60	100%
Bait stations	74,900	73,061	103%
External Contractors			
PCOs completed	30	32	94%
Bait stations	43,659	45,287	96%
Total PCO Programme			
PCOs completed	90	92	98%
Bait stations	118,559	118,348	100%
New PCO Hectares	19,888	19,888	100%

PCO Status at June 30th 2026

Prepared by: Biosecurity Pest Animal Team on: 2/07/2026

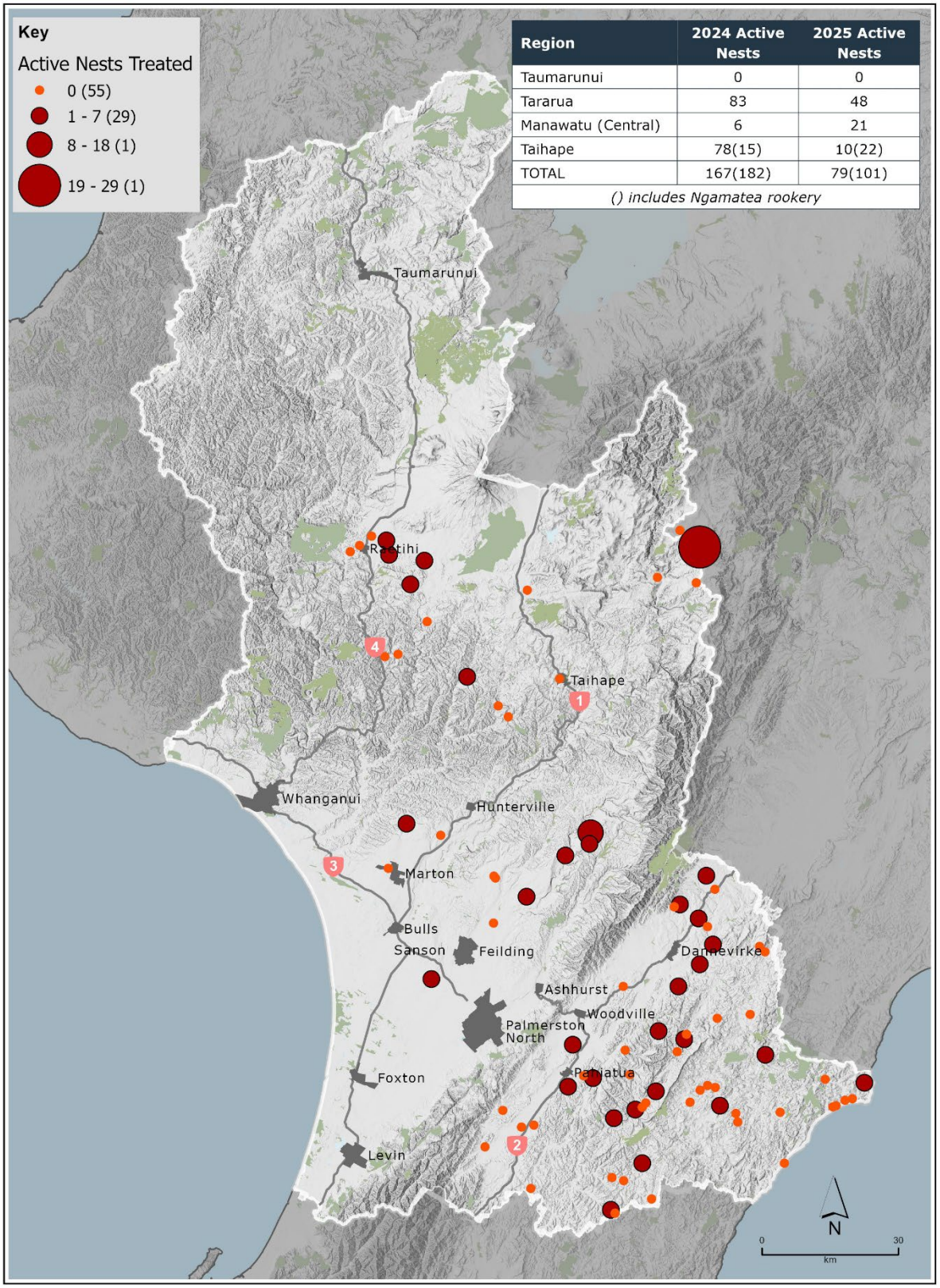
Map 6: Possum Control Operation Status at year end 2026-27.



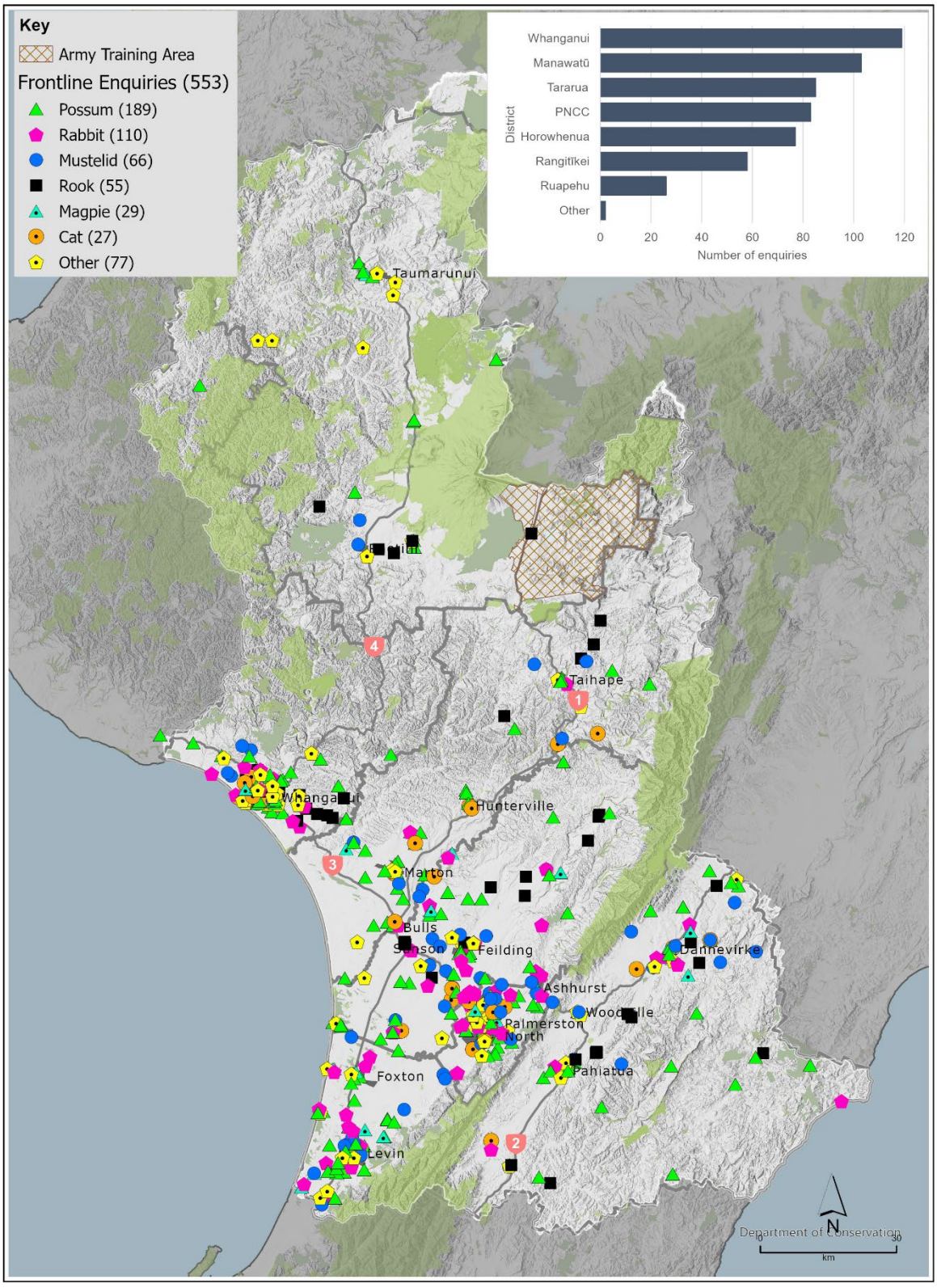
PCO Monitor Results July 1st - June 31st

Prepared by: Biosecurity Pest Animal Team on: 6/07/2026

Map 7: Possum Control Operation monitor results 2026-27.



Map 8: Aerial Rook Control 2025.



Map 9: Amenity pest enquiries 2025-26.

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