Notification about predator control in Northern Ruahine Ranges

To protect native species, the Department of Conservation (DOC) is going to reduce possums, rats and stoats in the area.

Why we are controlling introduced predators

Native species are fighting for survival due to predation from rats, stoats and possums. Without protection, we risk losing the unique natural heritage and biodiversity within the Northern Ruahine Range.

Without control we expect predator populations will grow to such high numbers by November 2025 that they would have devastating effects on nesting native birds, many of which are only just holding on. Past operations in the Ruahine Ranges have significantly reduced predator numbers. This effort needs to be sustained.

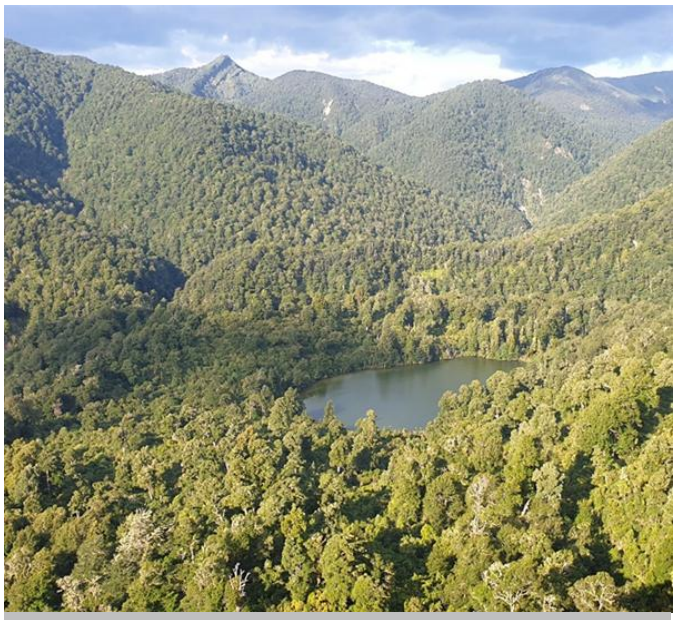
Undertaking predator control early this year will give us the best chance of preventing a predator explosion. It will benefit native species including whio (blue duck), eastern brown kiwi, kaka, kakariki, north Island Robin, giant powelliphanta land snails and long-tailed bats. They will be able to breed with less pressure from predation, and chicks will have a better chance of reaching adulthood.

How are we going to achieve this

The safest and most effective method we have to control introduced predators over large areas is to use biodegradable cereal pellets containing 1080. This bait targets rodents and possums. Stoats are also controlled through secondary poisoning as they feed on the carcasses of the dead rodents.

Helicopters will safely and accurately distribute bait across 37,017 hectares of the forest along pre-determined and monitored flight paths. This is the only viable method to control introduced predators in Northern Ruahine due to the vast and rugged terrain.

Existing trapping networks in the Ruahine Forest Park also support this work. We will monitor rats after the operation to quantify its success. We will also continue to monitor whio (blue duck) to see the population trends over time.



Lake Colenso, Northern Ruahine

Consultation and consent outcome

DOC has consulted with hapū, iwi and key stakeholders including landowners adjacent to the treatment area. This involved sharing information about the operation, listening to any concerns and considering ways to mitigate them.

DOC is delegated authority by the Environmental Protection Agency to decide applications for permission to use 1080 on land administered or managed by DOC. The operation will not commence before permission is received and all conditions will be followed. The operation will also comply with all conditions in the public heath permission issued by the Ministry of Health.

Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

Timeframe

The operation is now planned to take place anytime between 9 February and June 2026. The timing is weather dependent; the operation requires several consecutive days of good weather so this time period allows us to maximise the chances of successfully completing the operations.

This operation begins with the distribution of non-toxic pre-feed bait pellets. This prepares possums and rodents to eat the toxic bait (dyed green) that is applied afterwards. Both baits are about 16 mm in diameter and cylindrical shaped. Toxic bait will not be distributed during the roar.

Managing risk

1080 is poisonous to humans, domestic and game animals. In areas where the toxin has been applied, dogs are highly at risk until poisoned carcasses have disintegrated. This takes four-to-eight months or longer.

Risks can be eliminated by following these rules:

DO NOT touch bait

WATCH children at all times

DO NOT EAT animals from this area or within the buffer zone outside the treatment boundary. The standard buffer zone is 2 km for deer and pigs, 200 m for rabbits, and 1 km for hares, tahr, wallabies and possums.

Poison baits or carcasses are DEADLY to DOGS

Observe these rules whenever you see warning signs about pesticides. These signs indicate pesticide residues may be still present in baits and poisoned carcasses. When signs are removed this means you can resume normal activities in the area. Always report suspected vandalism or unauthorised removal of signs.

If you suspect poisoning, please contact:

- Your local doctor of hospital
- The National Poisons Centre: 0800 764 766 (urgent calls) or 03 479 7248 or dial 111
- Seek veterinary advice for suspected poisoning of domestic animals

Map of predator control area within Northern Ruahine

The maps on the next pages show the 37,017 ha area we are controlling possums, rats and stoats. The treatment of Block 1 (refer map) was completed in May 2025. Block 2 (refer map) is the second area to now be treated.

Next steps

Adjoining landowners and other stakeholders will be notified and there will be a public notice in the local newspaper/s. There will also be warning signs placed at entrances to the treatment area immediately prior to the operation.

After the operation, DOC will contact iwi, hapū, and stakeholders about the results of the operation.

For more information

Please contact:

Manawatu District Office
Email: manawatu@doc.govt.nz
Phone: 0800 275 363

OR

Epro Ltd.
Phone: 0800 275 3776

Visit the DOC website:

See more information about DOC's National Predator Control Programme

www.doc.govt.nz/our-work/national-predator-control-programme

See operational updates and detailed maps of predator control on public conservation land

www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/pesticide-summaries

See updates about track access and safety

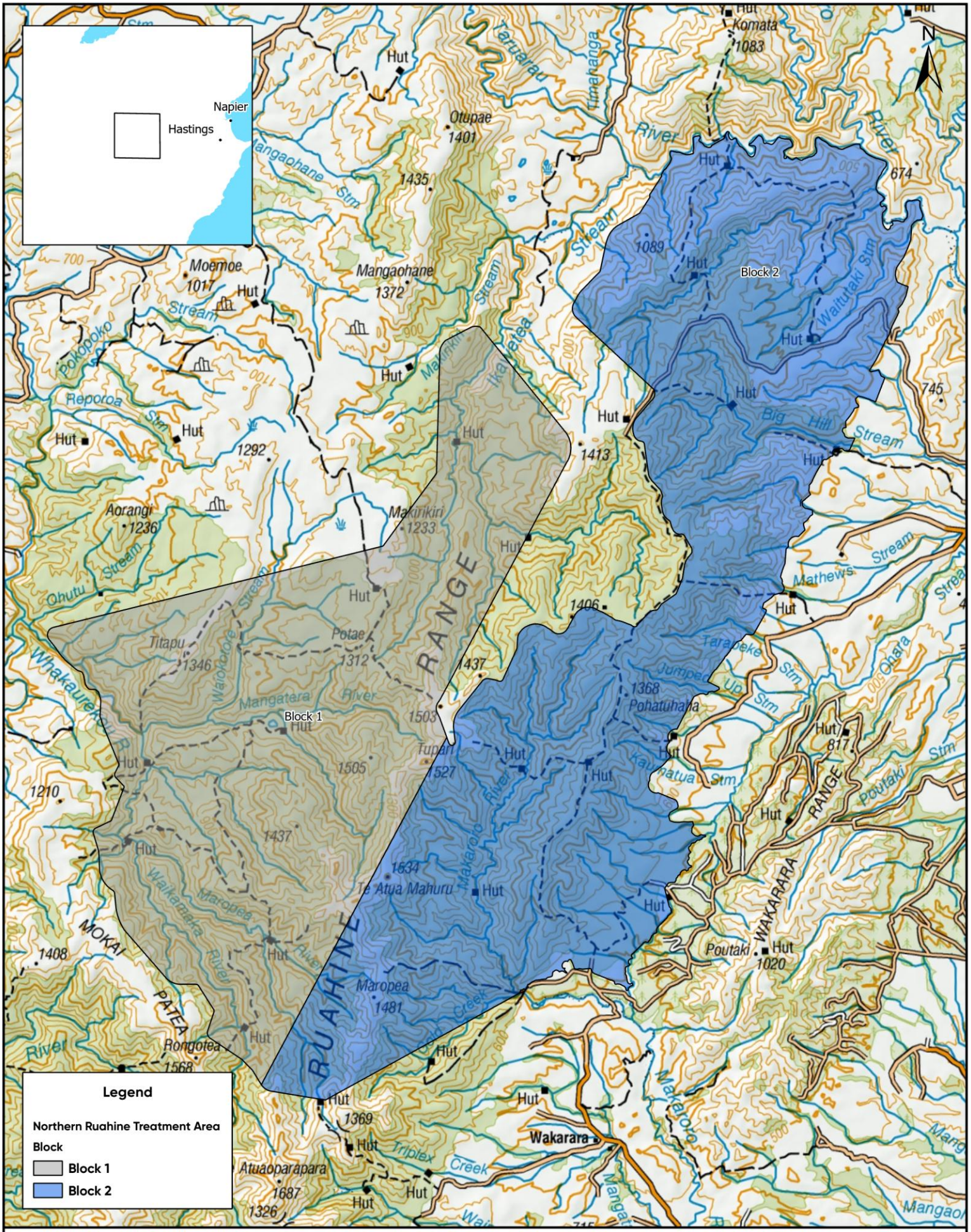
www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/know-before-you-go/alerts

Learn more about why we use 1080 to control introduced predators

www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/methods-of- control/1080

Learn more about Predator Free 2050

www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/predator-free-2050



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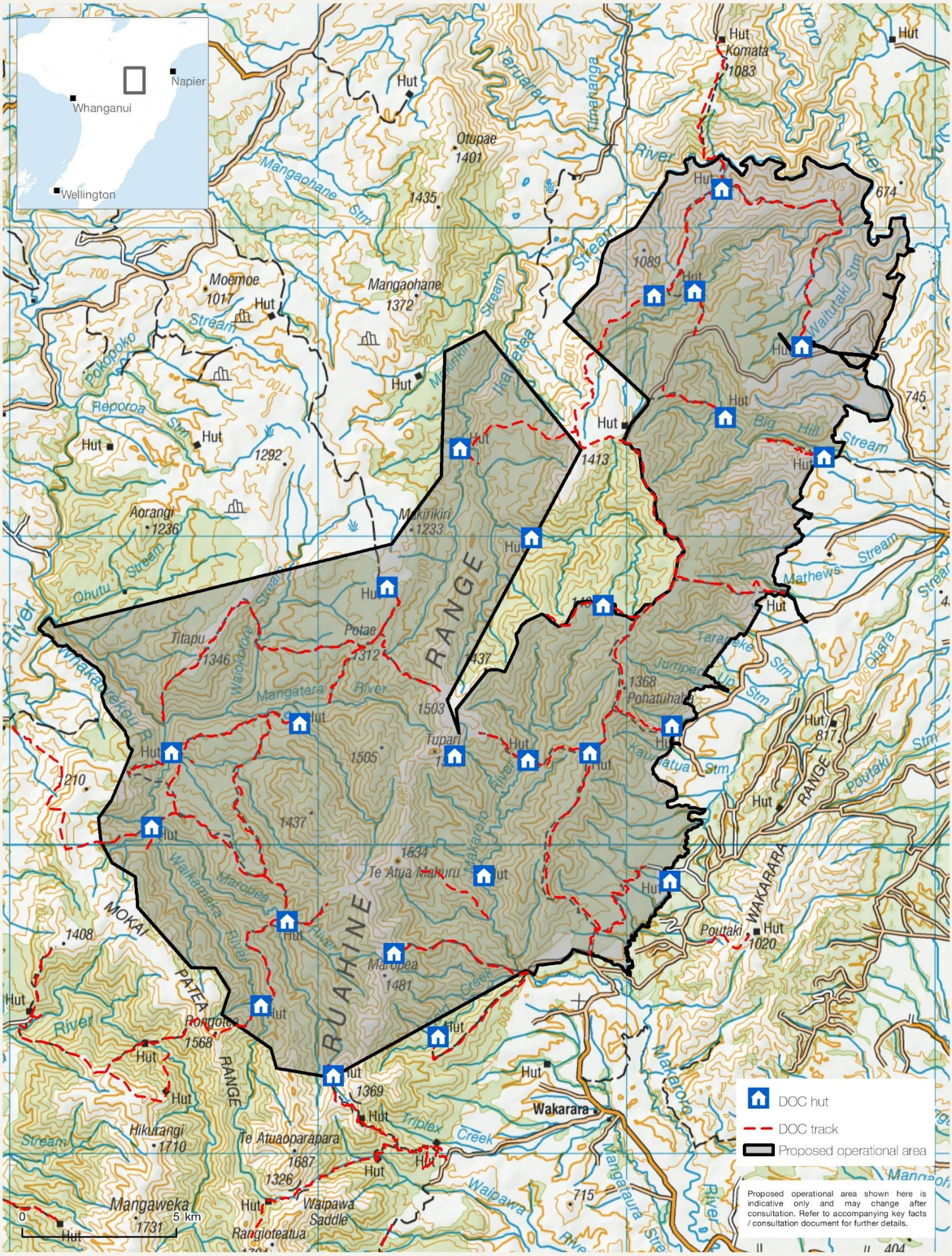
New Zealand Transverse Mercator
Date Created: 21/01/2026
control@epro.co.nz

Northern Ruahine Aerial Operation

Notification Map

Epro



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Northern Ruahine

Aerial Predator Control 2023

Proposed operational area: *37,017 ha*

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NZGD 2000 New Zealand Transverse Mercator
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