

Monitoring results update #2

Pukunui predator control/suppression

25/11/25

Monitoring results for rats and a second round for feral cats, kiwi and possums are available following the aerial predator control operation on Rakiura/Stewart Island in August to protect pukunui/Southern NZ dotterel.

Rats reduced to very low levels

Rats were monitored for six weeks after the pukunui predator control operation with a network of 135 trail cameras. The results show rats were reduced to very low levels (see the maps on the next page).

This is in stark contrast to monitoring results from outside the operational area where 1080 bait was not applied and rat numbers have remained very high.

By controlling rats, we were able to target the primary target - feral cats - through secondary poisoning as they ate the poisoned rats.

The results from the Predator Free Rakiura eradication trial are separate to this and will be available soon.

Feral cat monitoring update

We've analysed another three weeks' worth of images from cameras set up to monitor feral cats. There were no detections, making it at least six weeks post-operation without feral cats.

This gives us further confidence that pukunui have the best possible chance at a successful breeding season this year. However, it's only a matter of time before feral cats reinvade. We've caught two feral cats in traps so far. One was about 500 metres from the operational boundary and the other was about five kilometres inside.

Our cameras will remain active to monitor the reinvasion and see how long it takes for feral cats to reach the Tin Range pukunui breeding grounds. This will help to inform future predator control efforts to protect pukunui.

Update on kiwi and possums

We also have another three weeks (six weeks in total) of monitoring data for possums and Rakiura kiwi.

Possum numbers have remained very low, with detections in two spots, which is likely to be two individuals. Kiwi numbers have remained high, with no discernible change before or after the operation.



One of the first pukunui chicks to hatch this season.

Photo: Daniel Cocker DOC

Update on pukunui nest surveying

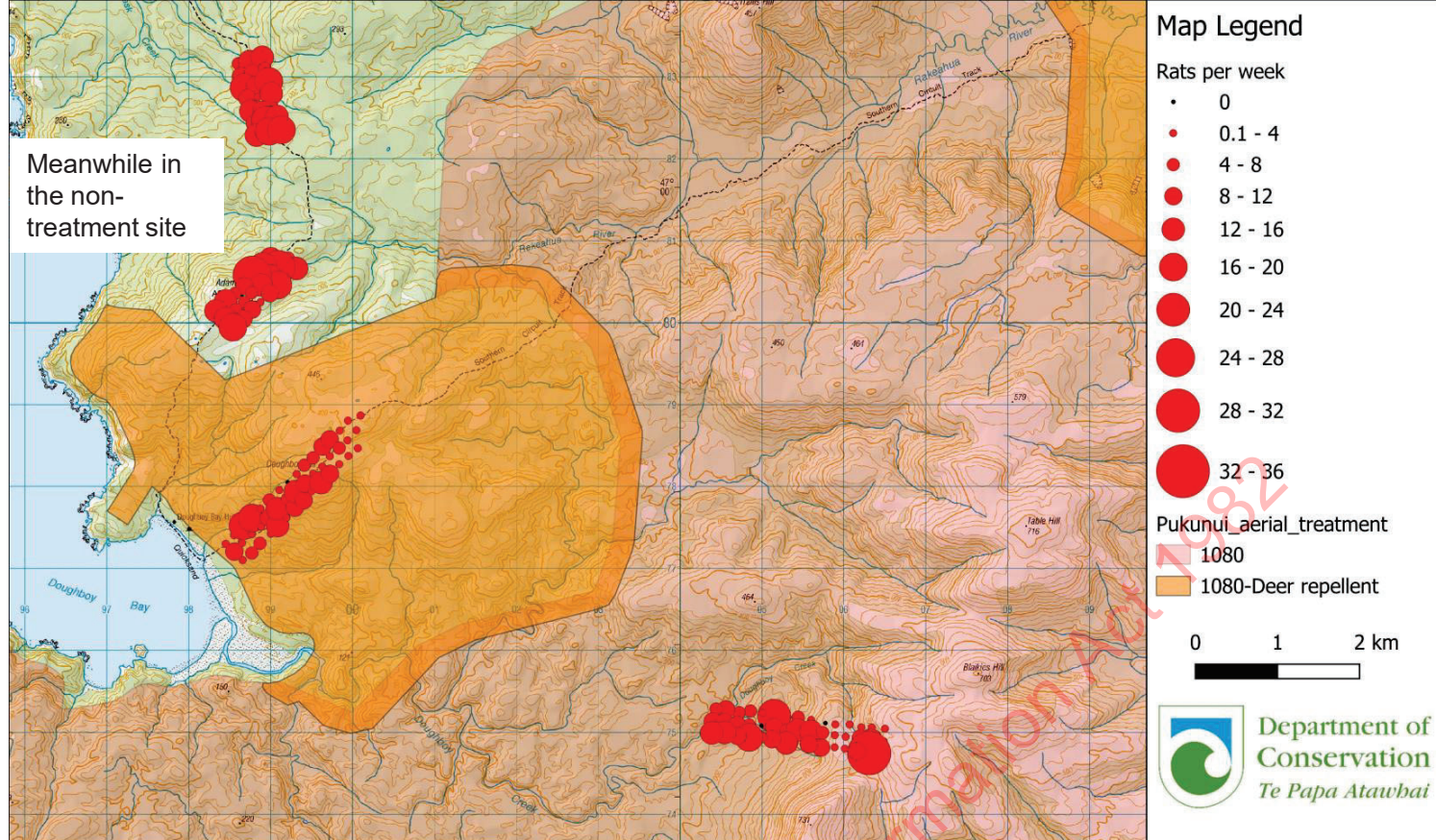
The first pukunui chicks of the breeding season have hatched on Rakiura. In the latest update, the Pukunui Recovery Team have found approximately 62 eggs (47 of which are in the operational area), 22 nests, and 12 chicks. Nest surveying will continue until the end of December.

It's a promising count so far and potentially a big boost for pukunui recovery efforts. However, there's no guarantee all the eggs will hatch or that the chicks and adults will survive. The main measure of success will be the pukunui flock count in April, and also the long-term population trends.

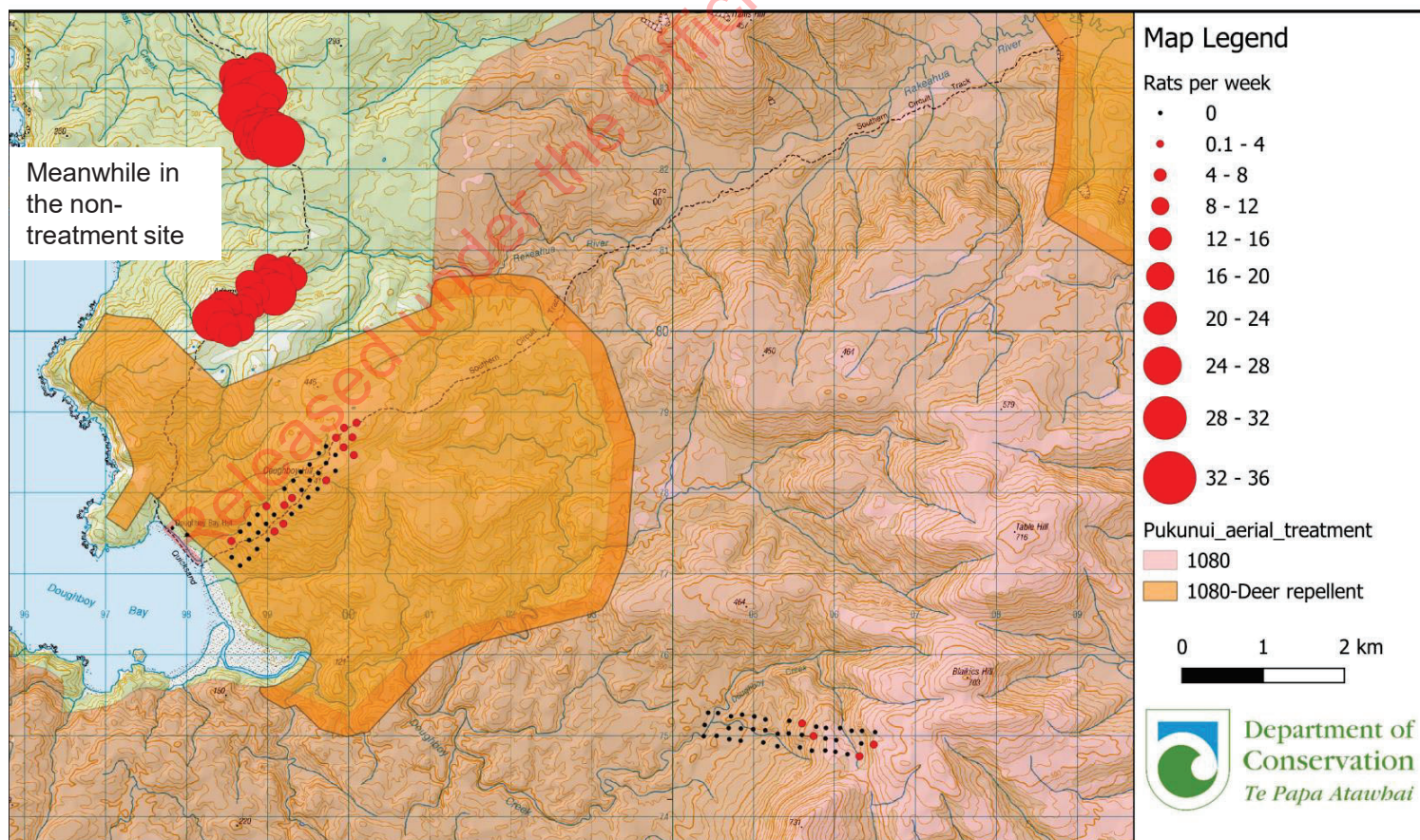
For more information

Contact DOC or ZIP Email: pukunui@doc.govt.nz

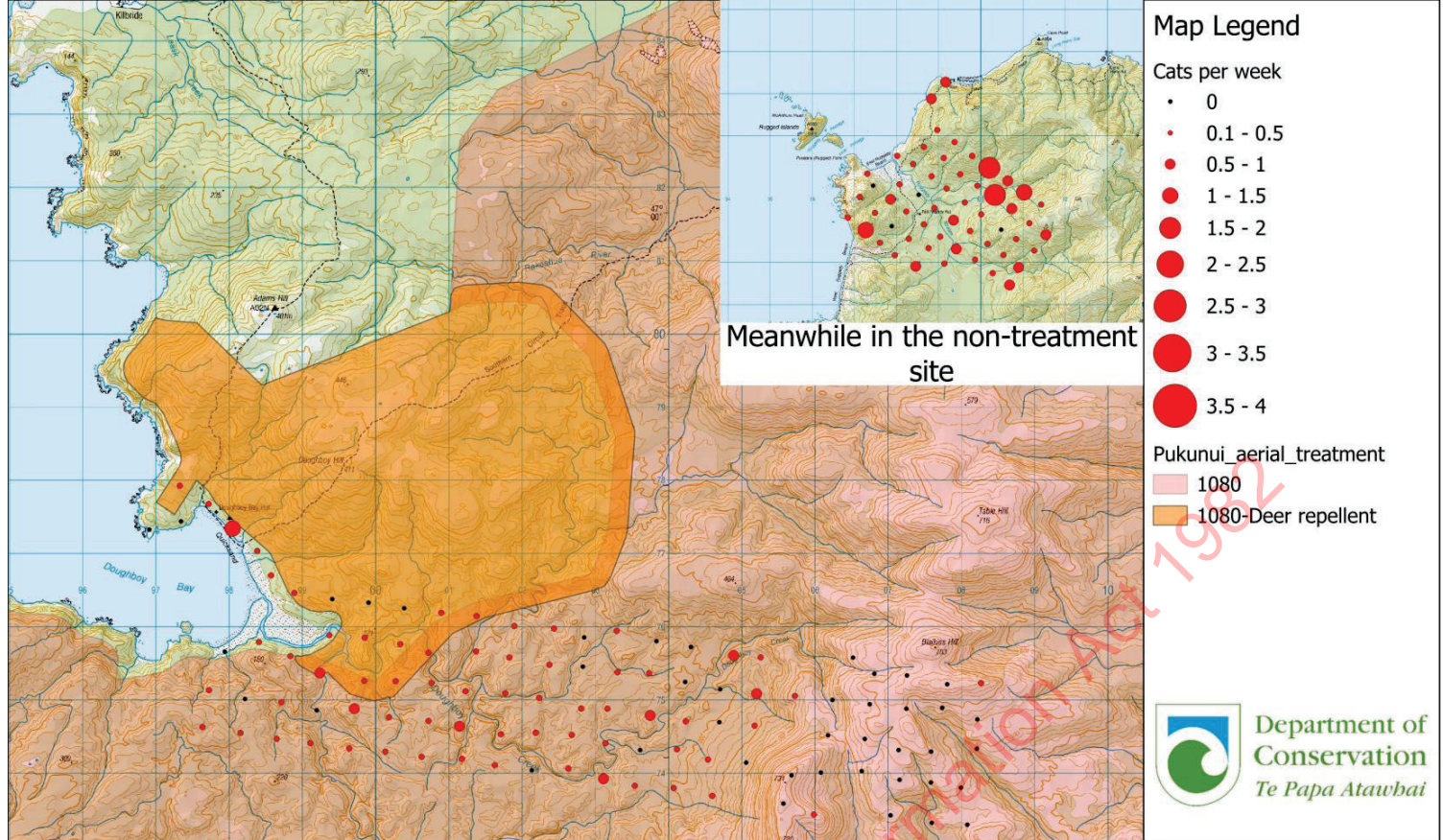
Learn more about the nest surveying work:
www.doc.govt.nz/news/media-releases/2025-media-releases/pukunui-chicks-bring-hope-for-survival/



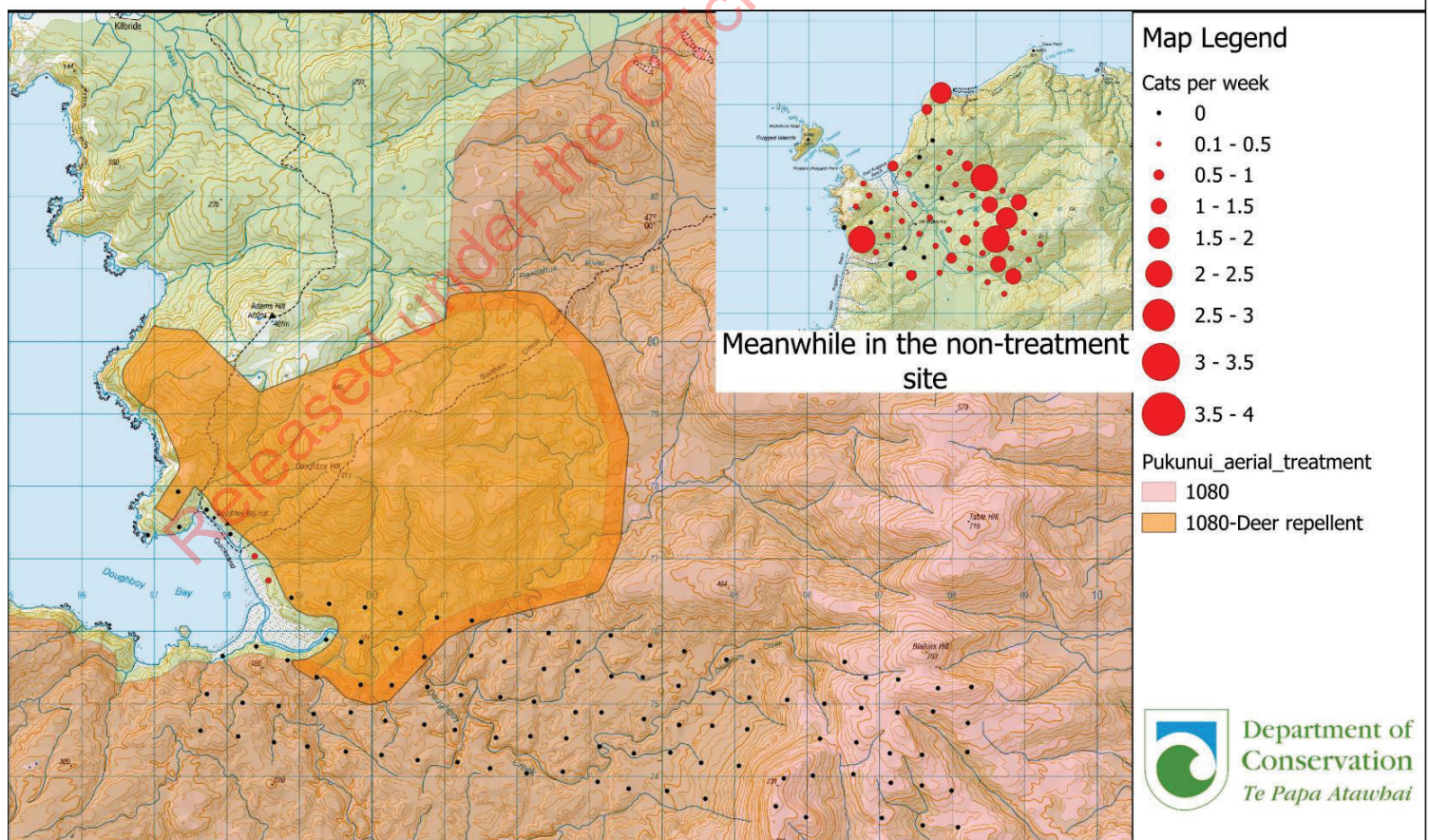
Trail camera image index for RATS on the intensive rat grids, PRIOR to the Pukunui pest control operation. These results are for the period 06/05/25 to 22/08/25



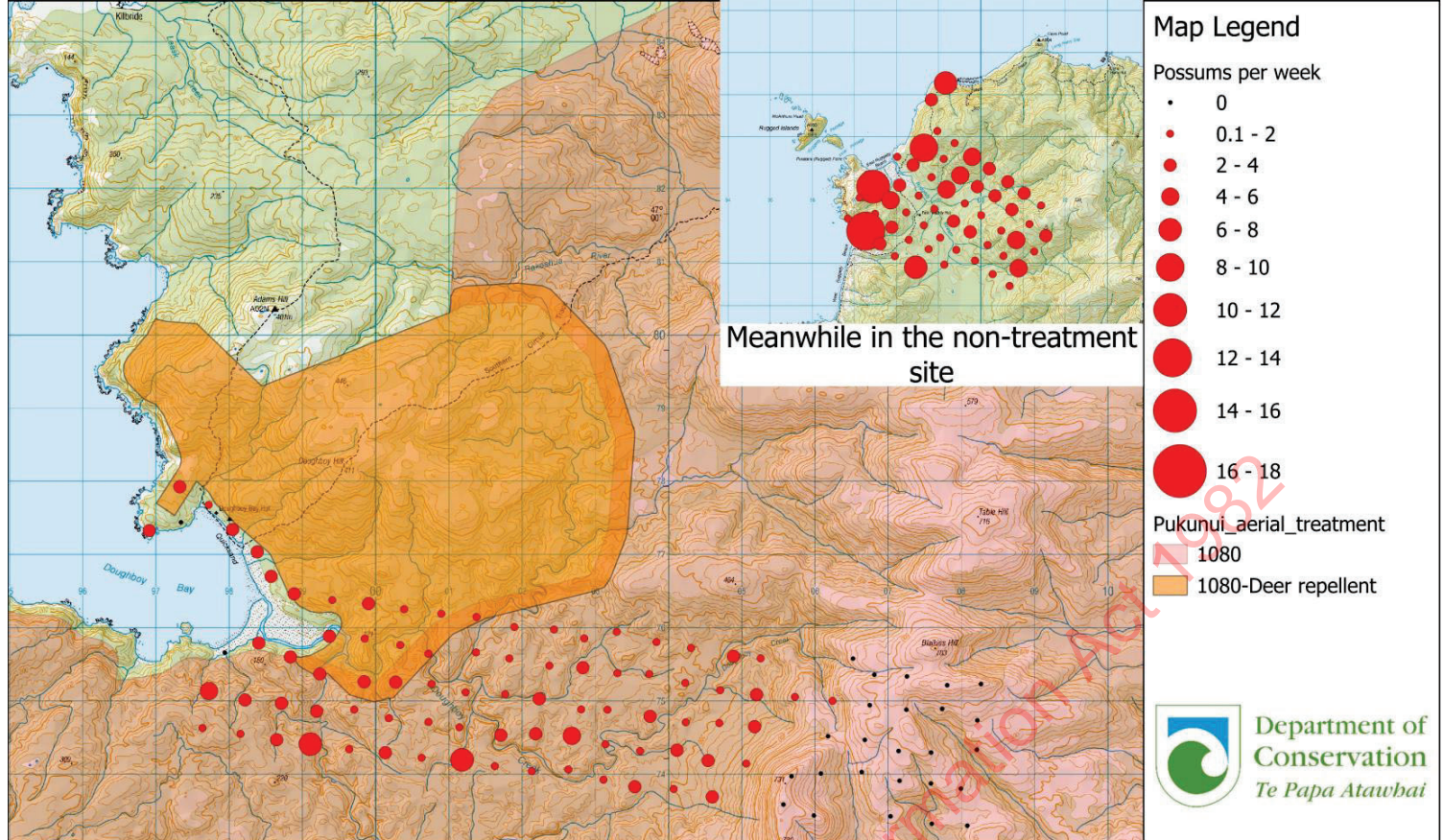
Trail camera image index for RATS on the intensive rat grids, AFTER the Pukunui pest control operation. These results are for the period 23/08/25 to 08/10/2025



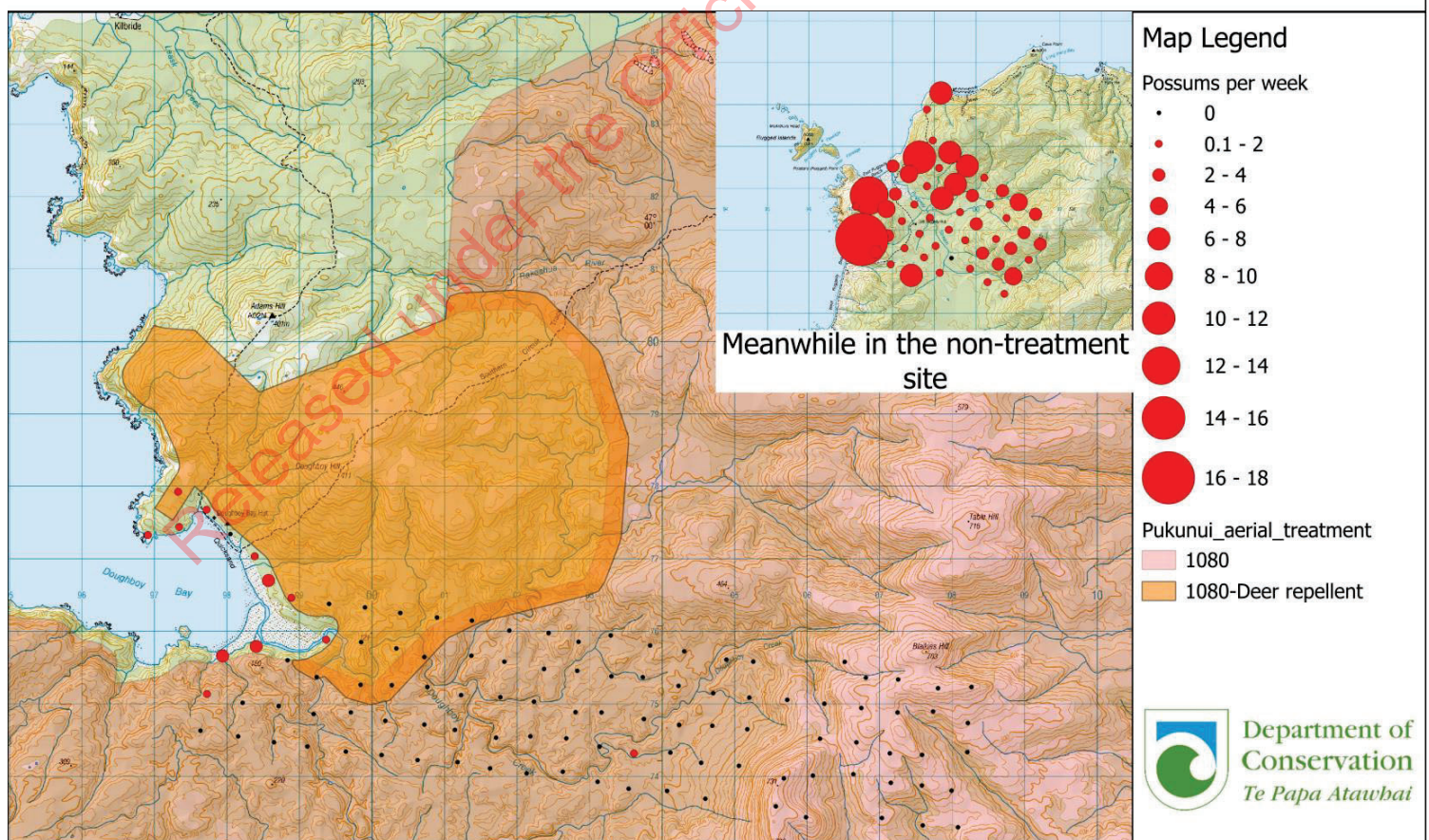
Trail camera image index for CATS on the on the cat grids, PRIOR to the Pukunui pest control operation. These results are for the period 06/05/25 to 22/08/25



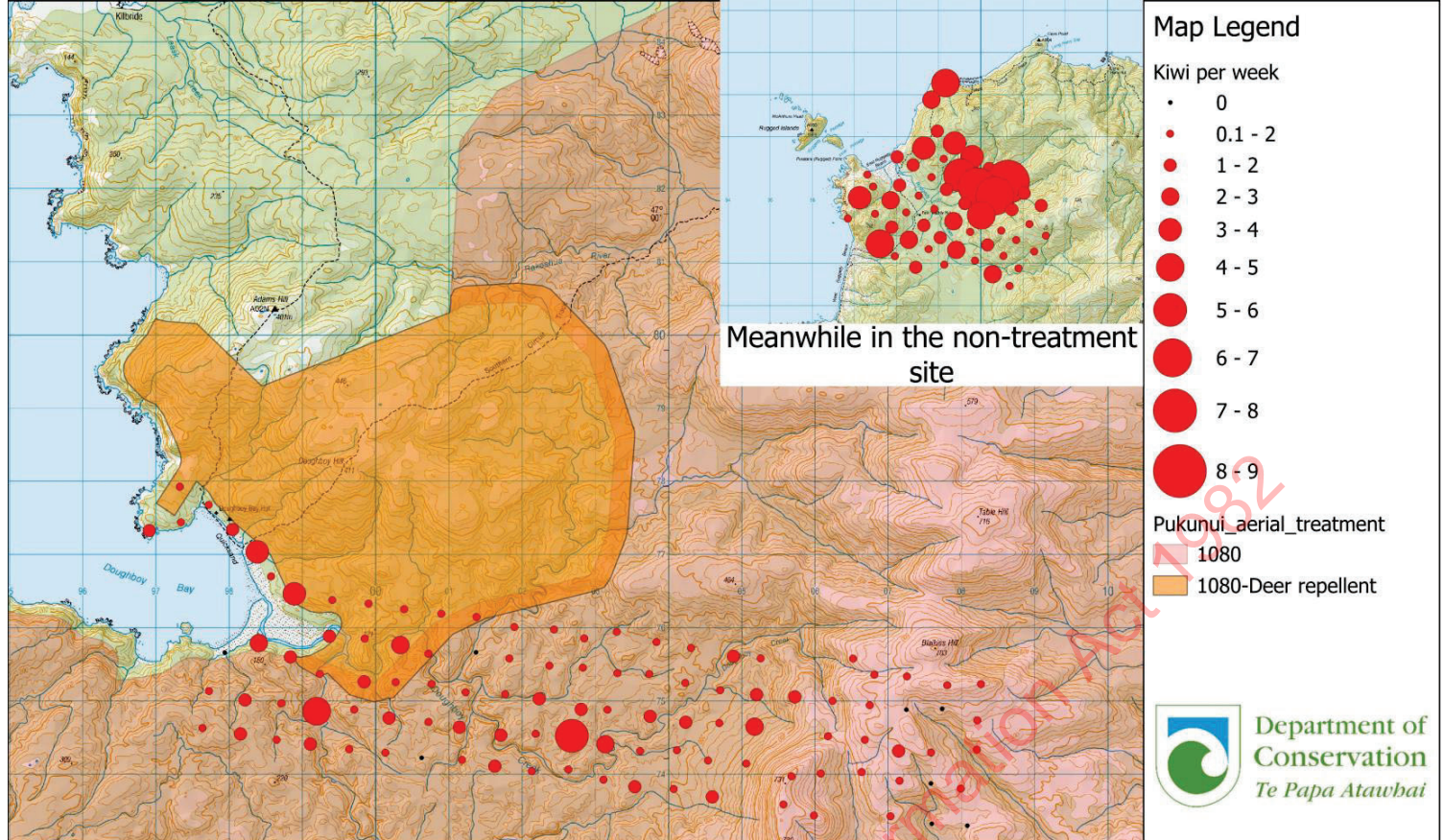
Trail camera image index for CATS on the on the cat grids, AFTER the Pukunui pest control operation. These results are for the period 23/08/25 to 08/10/25



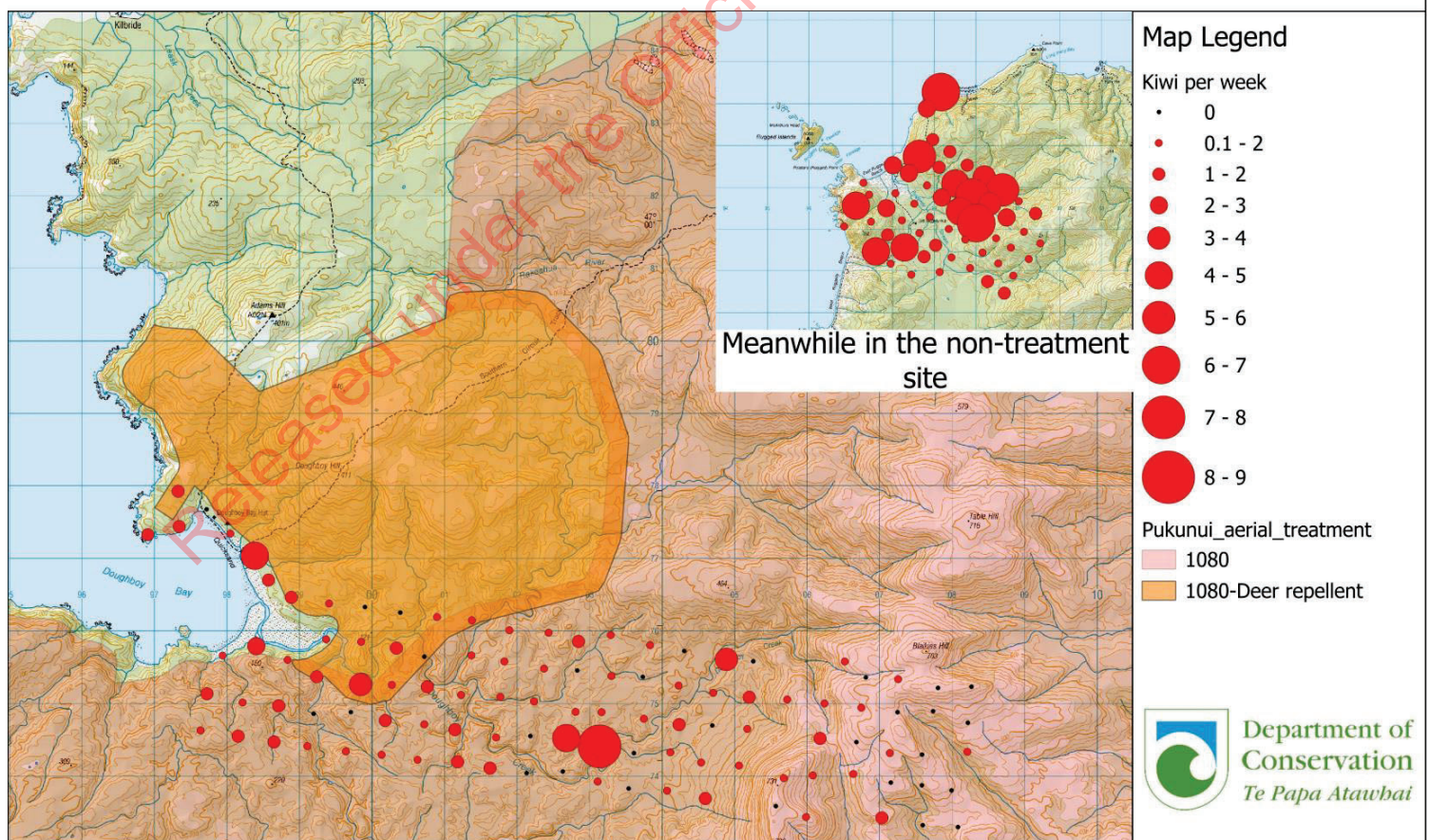
Trail camera image index for POSSUM on the on the cat grids, PRIOR to the Pukunui pest control operation. These results are for the period 06/05/25 to 22/08/25



Trail camera image index for POSSUM on the on the cat grids, AFTER the Pukunui pest control operation. These results are for the period 23/08/25 to 08/10/25

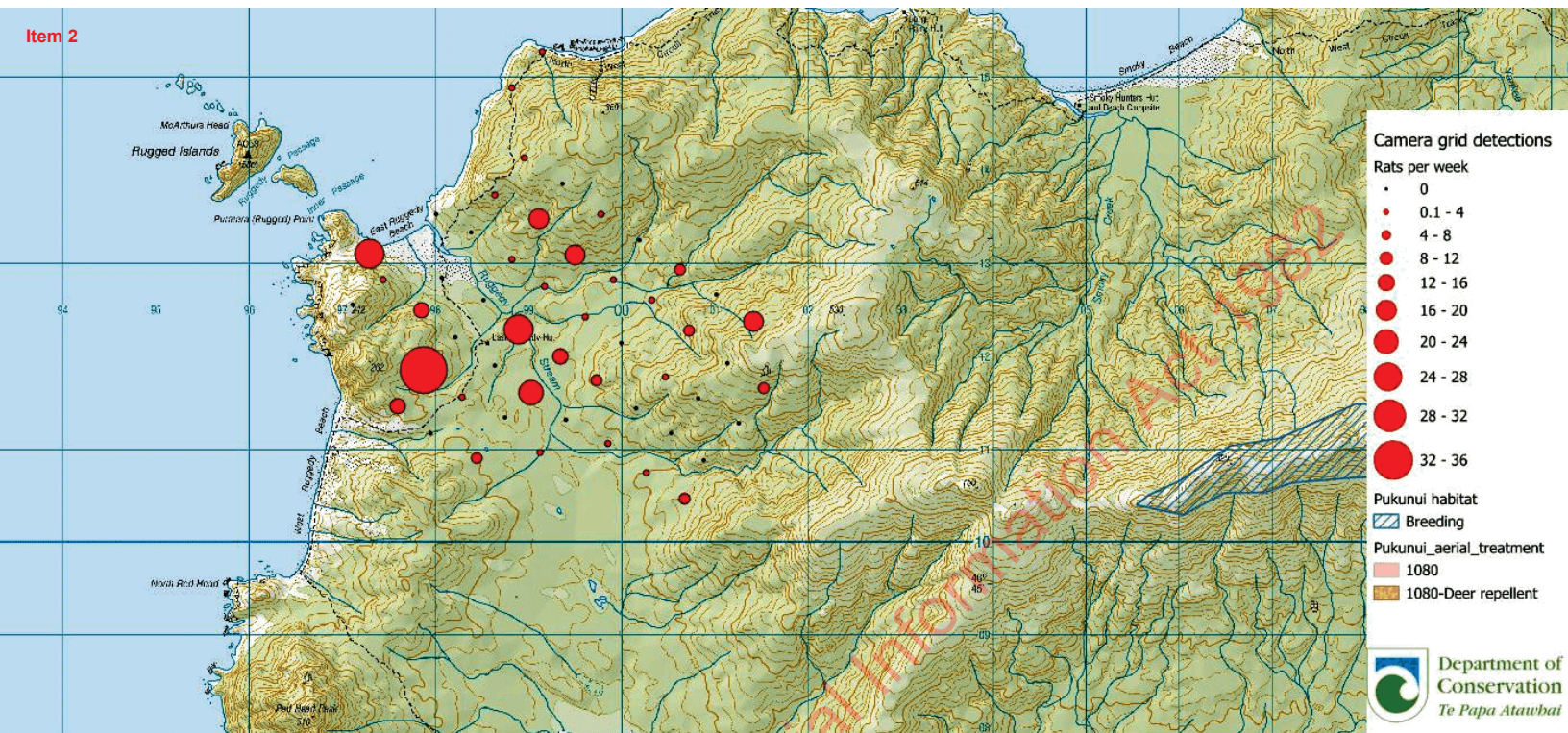


Trail camera image index for KIWI on the on the cat grids, PRIOR to the Pukunui pest control operation. These results are for the period 06/05/25 to 22/08/25

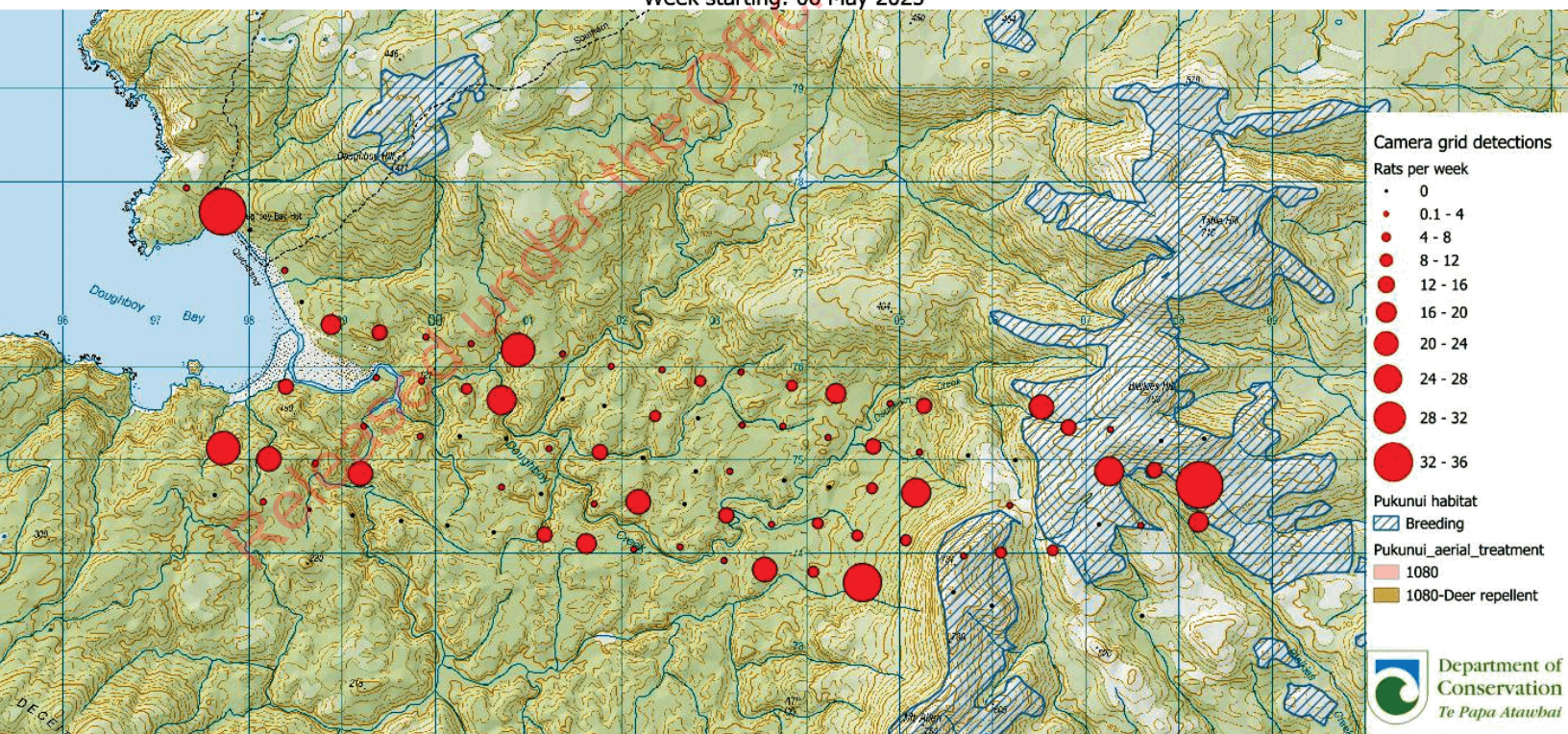


Trail camera image index for KIWI on the on the cat grids, AFTER the Pukunui pest control operation. These results are for the period 23/08/25 to 08/10/25

Item 2



Week starting: 06 May 2025



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