

## Tauherenikau Goat Control Report Mar 21



### Overview

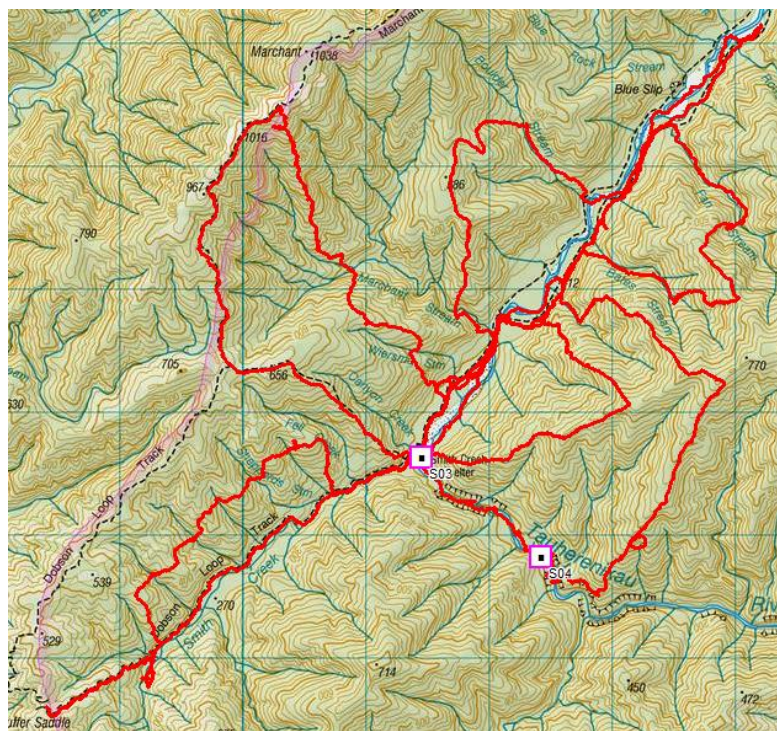
Silver Bullet Contracting was employed by Paul Gasson (DOC Masterton) to conduct 39.5 effective hunting hours of goat control in the Smiths Creek area of the Tararua Forest Park from 08/03/21 – 12/03/21. Hunting was focused on a large area not traditionally known to hold goat populations next to an area that is a known hotspot. The idea was to try and define a line that could be drawn to prevent goats from invading further into the park. Four goats were ground hunted and killed using a mixture of indicating and bailing dogs.

Goat sign through out most of the block was non existent as had been previously thought. The only area that goat sign was found is in the Tauherenikau River down stream of Smiths Creek. A lot of sign was seen on the true right of the Tauherenikau in the known hot spot in the small amount of time I spent there.

Deer were widespread in moderate numbers throughout the park. I believe if targeted 2-3 would be able to be killed a day.

Pig sign was widespread, but they were in low numbers.

### Tracks and Kills

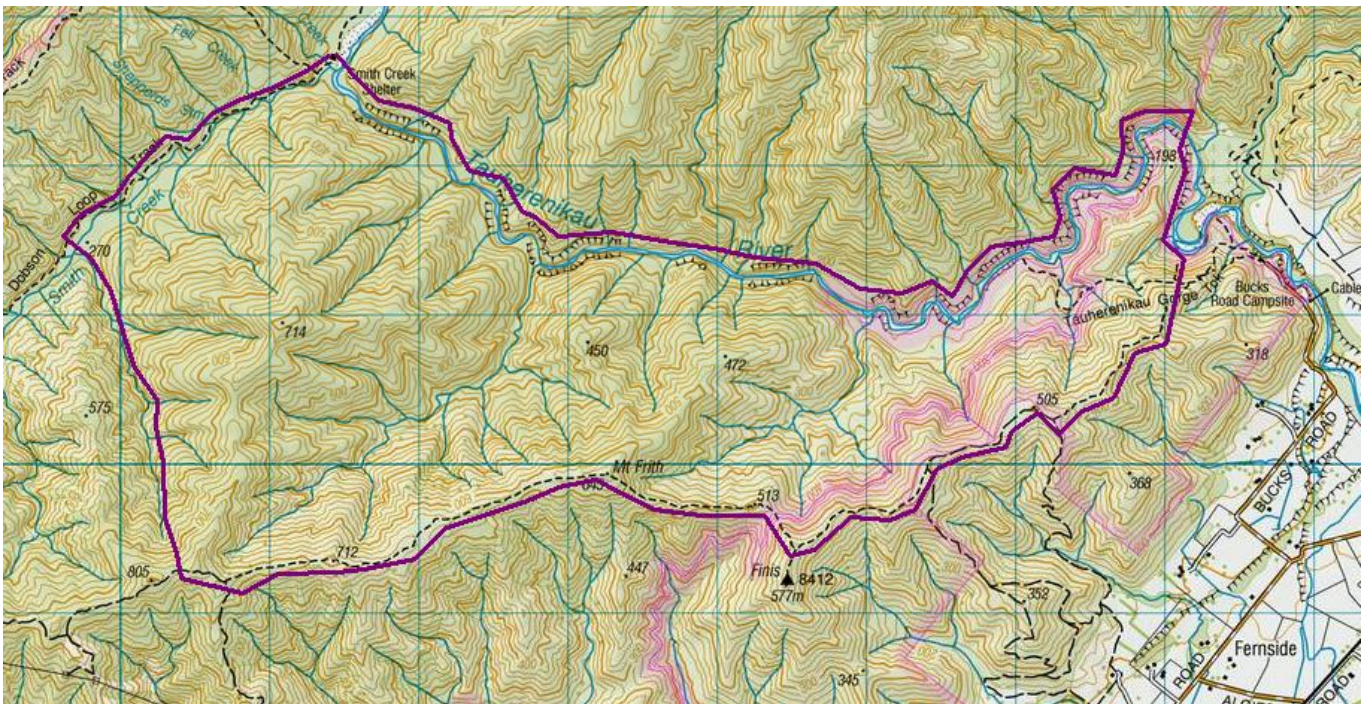


## Recommendations Moving Forward

Of some concern is that one goat was killed on the true left of the Tauherenikau and the other three goats killed very close to the mouth of Smiths Creek. I am surprised that as the goats have already spread to these locations, that they have not already spread further north into the park, particularly up the Tauherenikau flats. I believe that there are two reasons for this. One being, that at this stage the numbers have not built up in the known hot spot to put enough pressure on the habitat. The second being the lack of steep topography north and upstream of the hotspot makes it least favourable goat habitat. Although, I assume that at some point the hotspot will reach it carrying capacity and the goats will be forced to go up the Tauherenikau if left unchecked.

As the goats have shown that they are not aiming to spread from their hotspot I think that as long as their numbers are effectively controlled from here on then they will not spread. I can't comment on the greater area (including down stream of my block in the Tauherenikau or Abbotts creek) but from what I seen from the air I believe that ground control in the hotspot should be undertaken. I believe that all of the true right of the Tauherenikau from Smiths Creek down stream up to the Mt Frith ridge should be in the ground control block. A minimum could be spent with the main aim to not let numbers increase.

## Proposed Ground Control Block



## Interactions with Locals

I had no interactions with locals.

## Incidents, Near Misses and Hazards

There were no incidents, near misses or hazards.

## Recommendations for Health and Safety/Operational Improvements

The only recommendation I would have if ground control were undertaken in the goats preferred habitat, is to avoid the 'Wasp Season'. The goats are living on steep Kiekeie bluffs and it is hard to manage the wasp risk in this terrain and there is plenty of wasps there.

13/03/21

s9(2)(a)

Silver Bullet Contracting Ltd

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JUNE 28, 2023

**Goat Shooting report – Tararua Forest Park 16<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> June 2023**

**Hi Briggs**

**Quick report on goat shoot in TFP. On the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 2023 we did the first run in the TFP on goat contract. In the Waiohine River on the slips, there was a small number of goats found and further up toward Mid Waiohine hut. There were smaller numbers than last time. Back to Neill Forks and up the Hector River a small number found on big slip. Into the Tauherenikau a very small number of goats found, missed three that beat us to the bush. They were just out of the block boundary but still on DOC land.**

**We then headed to False Spur, the beehives, Mt Hector down to Table Top. A small number of goats found in the higher reaches from Hector to Table Top. Into the head waters of Penn Creak, and around to McIntosh, smaller numbers found in the leather wood, due to colder weather. From Penn Creak we moved into the Otaki River to Waitewaewae. A higher number of Goats were found for this contract than the last in these catchments.**

**Went North to Shoulder Knob, Mt Crawford to the Park and back over into the Waiohine Flats no goats found. Into the Waingawa River, no goats were found in the northern end of the block.**

**Over the 3 days there were 15 goats seen but not shot as they beat us to the bush, these were all at the southern end of the block.**

**Kind Regards,**

s9(2)(a)

**Wairarapa Helicopters Ltd**

**CEO/DIRECTOR**

## Penn Creek Goat Control Report Feb 22



### Overview

Silver Bullet Contracting was employed by Jaime Fitzgerald (DOC Masterton) to conduct 80 effective hunting hours of goat control in the Penn Creek area of the Tararua Forest Park from 24/02/22 – 27/02/22. Hunting was completed by s9(2)(a) using a mixture of indicating and bailing dogs.

Goat sign of some description or age seemed to be able to be found in all areas but most goats were found near the creeks, rivers, and slips.

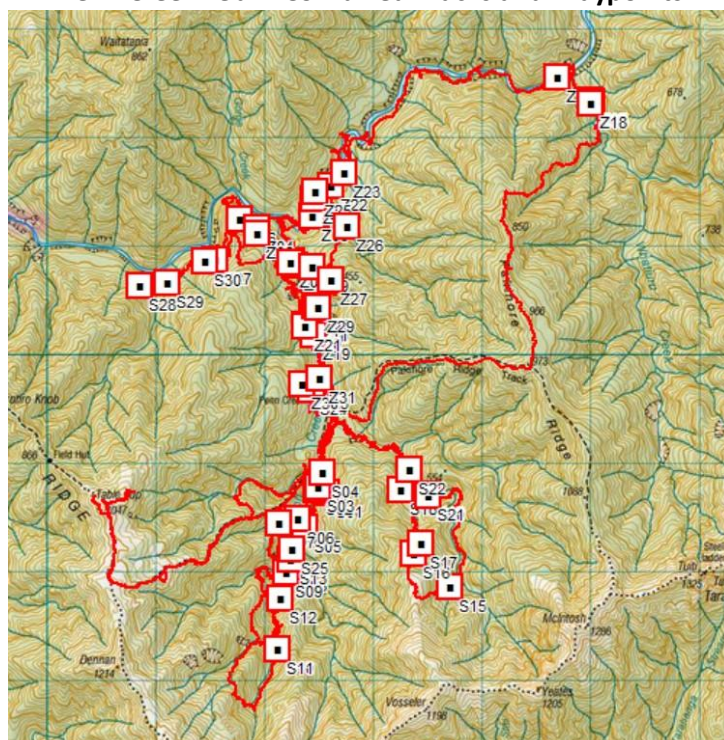
Deer are widespread in moderate numbers throughout. I believe if targeted approximately 2 would be able to be killed a day.

Pig sign was widespread, and in low to moderate numbers.

The hut was in good condition.

Bird life seemed fair compared with many other blocks around the country.

### Penn Creek Feb22 Combined Tracks and Waypoints



### **Recommendations Moving Forward**

Really there are not too many changes moving forward. The terrain is in general steep, gorged and vegetation thick which makes the hunting slow. However, it is in no way impossible to hunt, it just requires many more effective hunting hours to be able to control the goat population.

### **Interactions with Locals**

I had no interactions with locals.

### **Incidents, Near Misses and Hazards**

There were no incidents, near misses or new hazards identified.

### **Recommendations for Health and Safety/Operational Improvements**

I doubt that aerial hunting on its own would ever keep goat numbers to a sustainable level within the block. It would be impossible to effectively ground hunt the whole ungulate control block in the Tararua with the current amount of funding. So, I don't think anything can be changed. All that can be done, is to continue to use ground hunting to monitor the efficiency of the aerial hunting and the two methods combined to monitor the goat population within the park.

**06/03/22**

**s9(2)(a)**

**Silver Bullet Contracting Ltd**

# Penn Creek Goat Control Report December 2022



## Overview

Silver Bullet Contracting was employed by Jaime Fitzgerald (DOC Masterton) to complete 74 effective hunting hours of goat control in the Penn Creek area of the Tararua Forest Park from 14/12/22 – 22/12/22. 56 goats were killed. Hunting was completed by S9(2)(a) using a mixture of indicating and bailing dogs.

Goat sign of some description or age seemed to be able to be found in all areas but most goats were found near the creeks, rivers, and slips. It is also worth noting that with the current amount of funding only previously known goat hotspots were targeted with this work. It is reasonable to assume that many of the smaller steep side creeks may hold some form of goat populations as well.

Deer are widespread but in low to moderate numbers throughout. I believe if targeted approximately 2 would be able to be killed a day.

All the animals killed were small, skinny and in less than average condition.

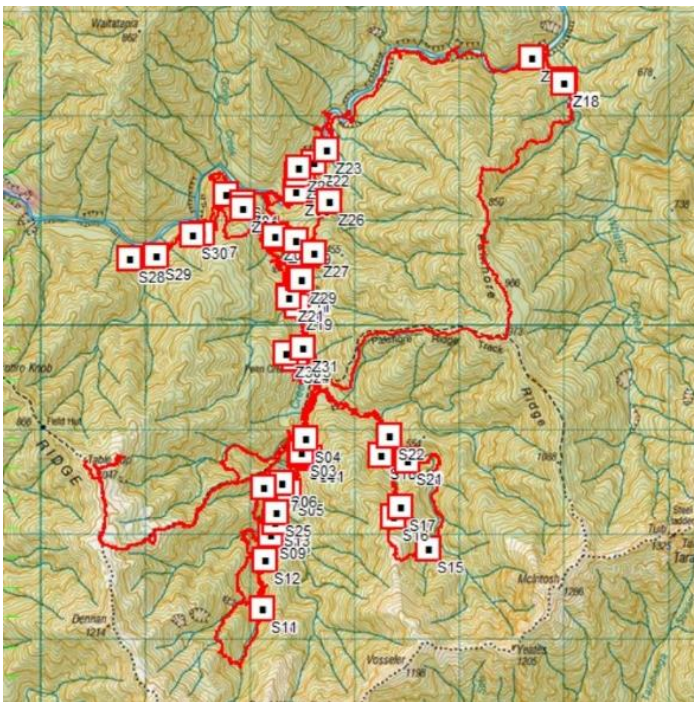
Old pig sign was seen in all the likely spots, but fresh sign was not that obvious and no pigs were seen.

The hut was in good condition.

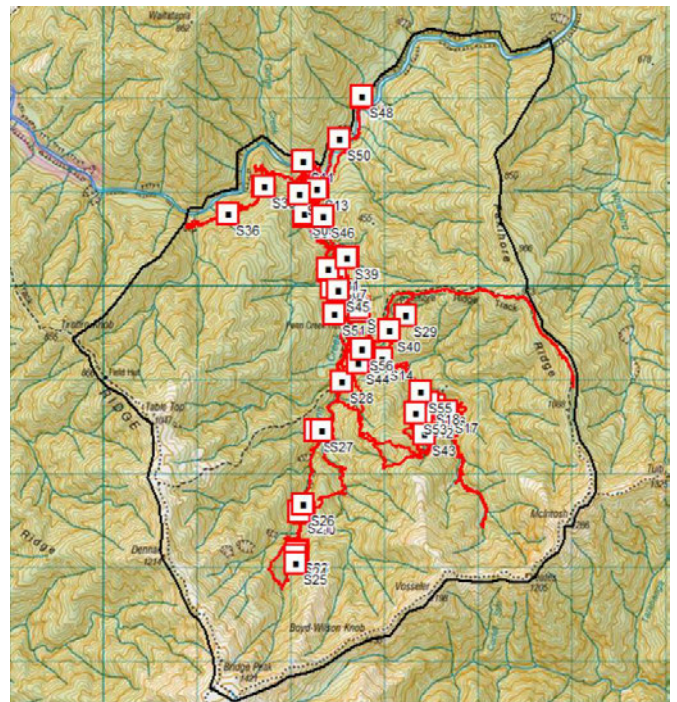
Bird life seemed fair compared with many other blocks around the country.

Unfortunately, a long-term knee injury flaring up reduced overall effectiveness of the ground hunting for this round as it made navigating the steep terrain and big country difficult. This should be considered when comparing hunter kill effort for the 21/22 financial year and the 22/23 financial year. In my opinion goat numbers were higher than the work completed in 21/22 financial.

**Penn Creek Feb22 Combined Tracks/Waypoints**



**Penn Creek Dec22 Combined Tracks/Waypoints and Boundary**



**Silver Bullet Penn Creek Hunting Effort 21/22 and 22/23 Financial**

	21.22 Financial Year	22.23 Financial Year
Penn Creek Goat Killed	61	56
Penn Creek Effective Hunting Hours	80	74
Penn Creek Killed/Hunter Hour	0.76	0.76

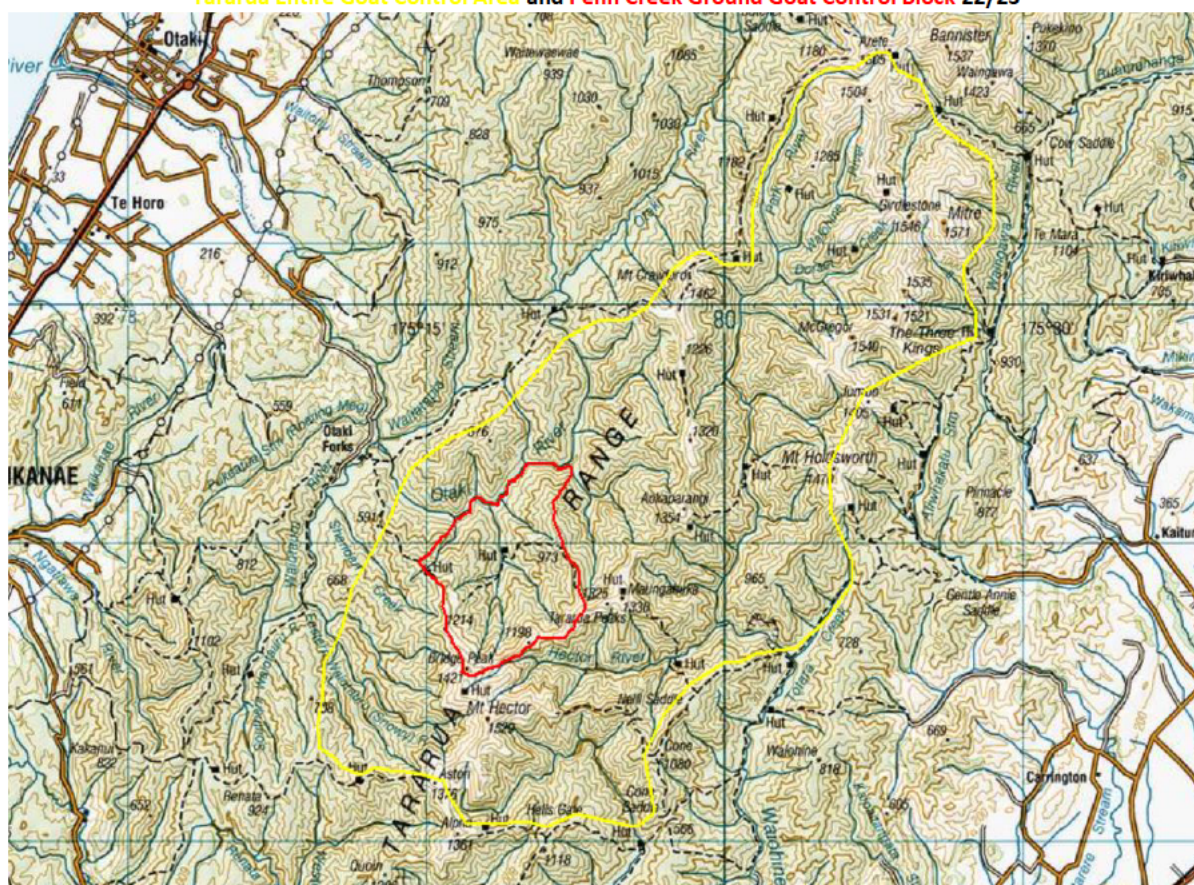
**Recommendations Moving Forward**

I cannot see any changes moving forward with the current budget available. The terrain is in general steep, gorged and vegetation thick which makes the hunting slow. However, it is in no way impossible to hunt, it just requires many more effective hunting hours to be able to control the goat population.

The Penn Creek block boundary itself is too large to hunt effectively without either investing in a more extensive track network, having multiple campsites within the block, or ideally both. To put the scale of the problem into perspective, I believe that to reduce the goat population to the 0.3 goat killed/hunter hour (this is an indication of the number of goats I believe the average native bush can sustain and regenerate), all the Tararua ground control budget may need to be applied to the Penn Creek block itself over the next 3 years.

This calculation does not account for deer within the block, already in numbers I would consider only just sustainable. Like nearly everywhere else deer exist in New Zealand, I would assume they are increasing in number. However, if deer were not targeted within the block but killed when encountered while doing goat control, it may at least aid the numbers from increasing.

**Tararua Entire Goat Control Area and Penn Creek Ground Goat Control Block 22/23**



**Interactions with Locals**

1 party of trampers came through the hut. They seemed supportive and interested in the goat project.

**Incidents, Near Misses and Hazards**

There were no incidents, near misses or new hazards identified.

**Recommendations for Health and Safety/Operational Improvements**

Aerial hunting on its own will never keep goat numbers to a sustainable level within Tararua Forest Park. It would be impossible to effectively ground hunt the whole goat control block in the Tararua Forest Park with the current amount of funding. I have heard reports of goats being sighted in areas that they have not previously been. So, I don't think anything can be done to control goat numbers in the park with the current budget available. All that can be done, is to continue to use ground hunting to monitor the efficiency of the aerial hunting and the two methods combined to monitor the goat population and hopefully slow it's spread within the park.

24/12/22

s9(2)(a)

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# Whatiuru and Mid Waiohine Goat Control Report March 2023



## Overview

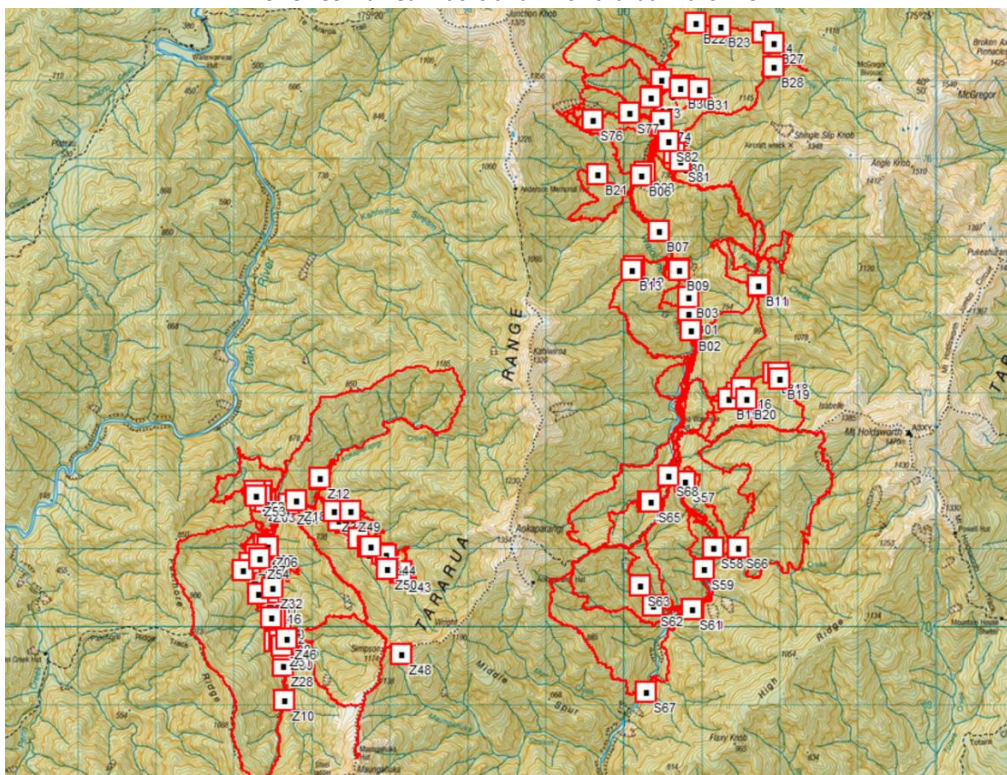
Silver Bullet Contracting was engaged by Jaime Fitzgerald from the Department of Conservation Masterton office to complete 281.5 effective hunting hours of goat control in the Whatiuru and Mid Waiohine areas of the Tararua Forest Park from 05/03/23 – 15/03/23. 112 goats were killed. Ground hunting was completed by s9(2)(a) using a mixture of indicating and bailing dogs. 3 camp sites were used. s9(2)(a) completed 92.5 effective hunting hours from the Whatiuru camp, and 54 goats were killed. s9(2)(a) first completed 106 effective hunting hours from the Mid Waiohine Hut, killing 32 goats. Camp was then shifted up stream to the Mid Waiohine Bivy, to complete a further 83 effective hunting hours, killing 26 goats.

Likely and known goat hotspots were targeted, with some goat sign able to be found in most areas, but nearly all goats were found near the creeks, rivers, and slips. It is worth noting that within the Whatiuru block, s9(2)(a) found many goats living up high in the leatherwood belt. These animals were difficult to hunt and it is suggested that a longer range rifle and glassing method may be worth trying to knock a few of these numbers back.

Deer are widespread but in low numbers throughout the Mid Waiohine block with only 4 being sighted for the trip. The goats were in average condition. One pig was seen for the trip. The Mid Waiohine hut was in good condition but the bivy could use a lot of work. Bird life seemed to be pretty good compared with many parts around the country. They were not in huge numbers but were evident everywhere with many different species being sighted including Kaka, Kereru, Tomtit, Kakariki, Rifleman and Fantail.

Deer are widespread and in moderate numbers throughout the Whatiuru block with 17 being sighted for the trip. Birdlife on the contrary to the Mid Waiohine block was noted to be nearly non-existent.

## SBCL Combined Tracks and Kills Tararua March 23





### Silver Bullet Contracting Hunting Effort Tararua March 23

	Mid Waiohine Bivy	Mid Waiohine Hut	Whatiuru
Goat Killed	26	32	54
Effective Hunting Hours	83	106	92.5
Goat Killed/Hunter Hour	0.30	0.30	0.58

#### Recommendations Moving Forward

I cannot see any changes moving forward with the current budget available. The terrain is in general steep, gorged and in the case of the Whatiuru block the vegetation thick, which makes the hunting slow. However, it is in no way impossible to hunt, it just requires many more effective hunting hours to be able to control the goat population.

As is the case with the Penn Creek block previously reported on, the blocks are too large to hunt effectively without either investing in a more extensive track network, having multiple campsites within the block, or ideally both.

It is also of some concern that even with ungulate numbers to be at a level I consider sustainable for forest regeneration (.30 goat/hunter hour), the Mid Waiohine Blocks are still struggling to regenerate species that are palatable to deer and goat.

Deer within the Whatiuru block are at levels possibly sustainable but should be killed when encountered while doing goat control, as it may at least aid the numbers from increasing in an area that receives minimal recreational hunting.

#### Interactions with Locals

1 party of trappers came through the Mid Waiohine Hut. They seemed supportive and interested in the goat project.

#### Incidents, Near Misses and Hazards

There were no incidents, near misses or new hazards identified.

#### Recommendations for Health and Safety/Operational Improvements

Aerial hunting on its own will never keep goat numbers to a sustainable level within Tararua Forest Park. It would be impossible to effectively ground hunt the whole goat control block in the Tararua Forest Park with the current funding. I have heard reports of goats being sighted in areas that they have not previously been. So, I don't think anything can be done to control goat numbers in the park with the current budget available. All that can be done, is to continue to use ground hunting to monitor the efficiency of the aerial hunting and the two methods combined to monitor the goat population and hopefully slow it's spread within the park.

16/03/23

§9(2)(a)

Silver Bullet Contracting Ltd

## Waiotauru Goat Control Report 20/21



### Overview

Silver Bullet Contracting was contracted by Paul Gasson (DOC Masterton) to conduct 45 effective hunting hours of goat control in the Tararua Forest Park from 16/10/20 – 22/10/20. All of the hunting was completed from the Waiotauru Hut. Areas were identified within the block that were deemed to have high visitor use and because of this less suitable for aerial hunting. A total of 39 goat were killed (.86 goat per effective hunter hour) using indicating and bailing dogs with all the hunting being completed by myself.

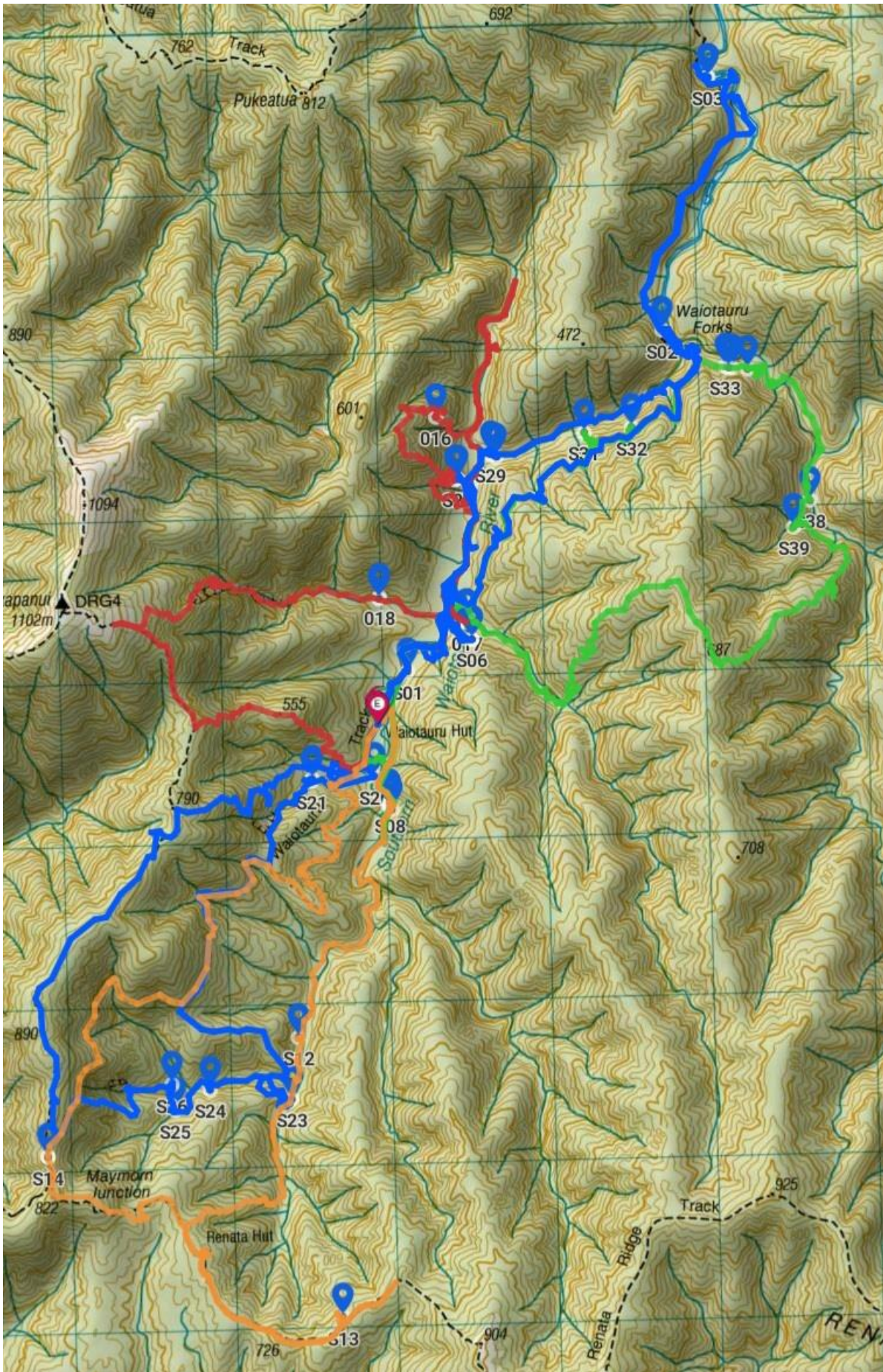
### Observations

Goat numbers in the area are at moderate levels and goat sign can be found in all areas of preferred goat habitat. What I found most interesting was that animals were also killed in areas that didn't seem to be as favourable goat habitat and makes me wonder where else in the area goat may be and in what sort of numbers. Without thoroughly ground hunting it is hard to gauge.

Deer numbers in the area were a lot lower than most I have frequented lately. Only 1-2 deer were encountered a day and given the easy access in the area and I assume high recreational hunting I believe at this stage that it is a good idea to be leaving the deer for recreational hunters.

No pigs were encountered.

# Kill Sites and Tracks



## **Public Interaction/Issues**

Waiotauru Hut is a very busy area with 4WD access and it's close proximity to Wellington. Most of the visitors while I was there were respectful of the hut but not all. The hut was a mess when I got there, with left behind rubbish and I tidied it the best I could. The first night there about 10 guys turned up around 11pm and proceeded to carry on their party in the hut– drinking, smoking tobacco and pot with their own UE Boom to go with it. I had to move myself out with all my gear down the track and if it had been raining would have been an issue with no tent. The next day I again cleaned the hut after the party and moved my gear back in again.

I spoke with a recreational hunter in the area that had been hunting the area a lot for 30 years and in his opinion the goat numbers were increasing.

## **Recommendations Moving Forward**

I think that ground hunting this area with such high visitor usage could definitely save some issues from arising further down the track. With access by quad it could be relatively cost effective, there would just be some liaising with pick up and drop off so that a vehicle was not left on Akatarawa Rd. I would definitely recommend a tent camp downstream away from the hut to keep away from any disrespectful hut users and prevent the theft of gear.

On a big scale I would be surprised if goat numbers could be kept in check throughout the Tararua Forest Park by aerial hunting on it's own. With such a large area to cover and small budget maybe it is the only approach if hunting right throughout the park has to be done every year. The only other option that seems possible is to split the areas of the park that has goats into maybe three sections (depending on size) and rotate the blocks each year with a mixture of ground and aerial hunting. Hopefully, populations could be reduced enough in each area that they would not be able to build back up enough before the block was hunted again in three years time.

On another note, there is a lot of building material left over from the old Waiotauru Hut. I think that if it was removed, then it might not encourage other park users to add to it. Long drop is getting a tad full.

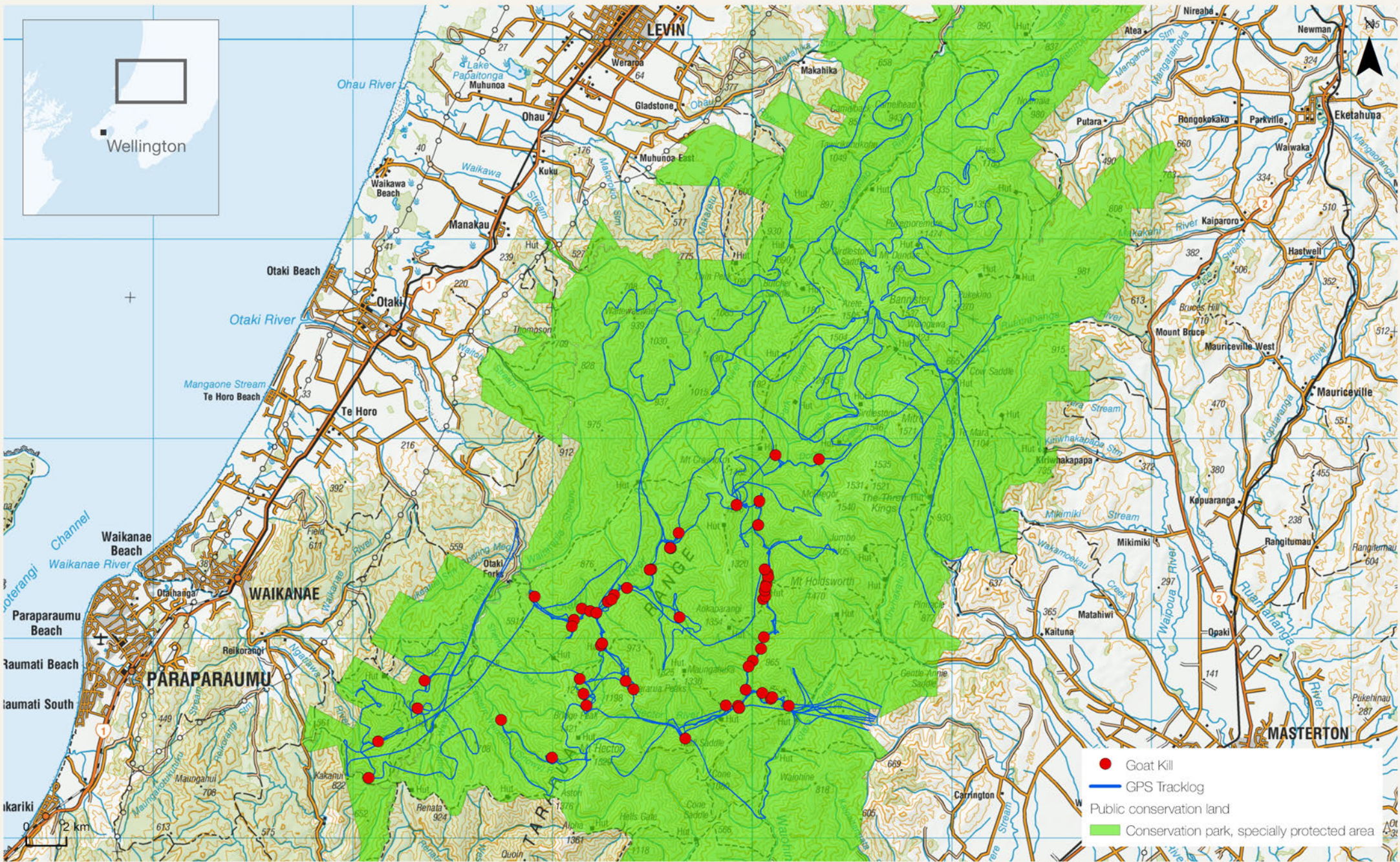
## **Incidents, Near Misses and Hazards**

The only incident was surrounding the other hut users. There was no new hazards identified or near misses.

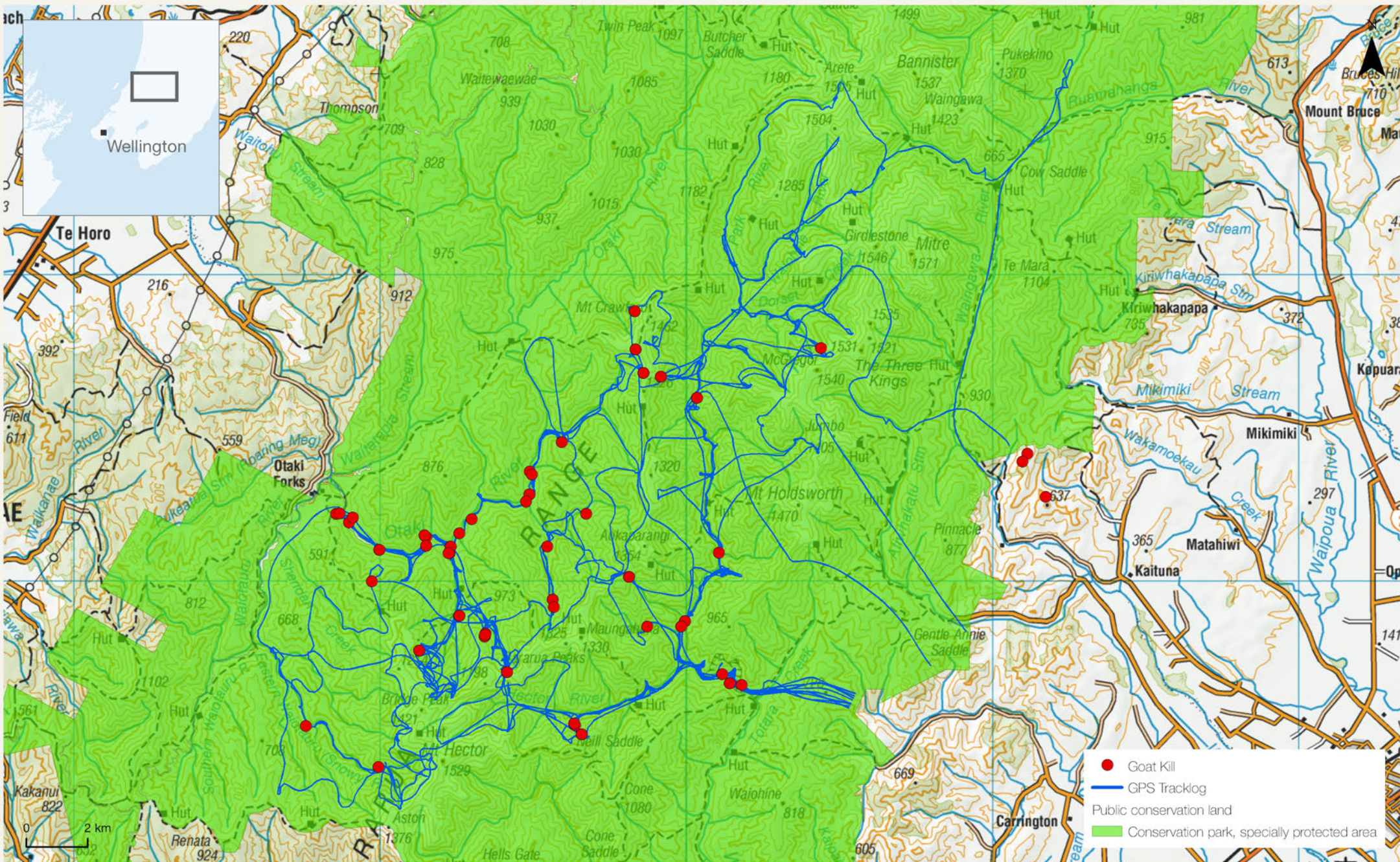
**21/10/20**

**s9(2)(a)**

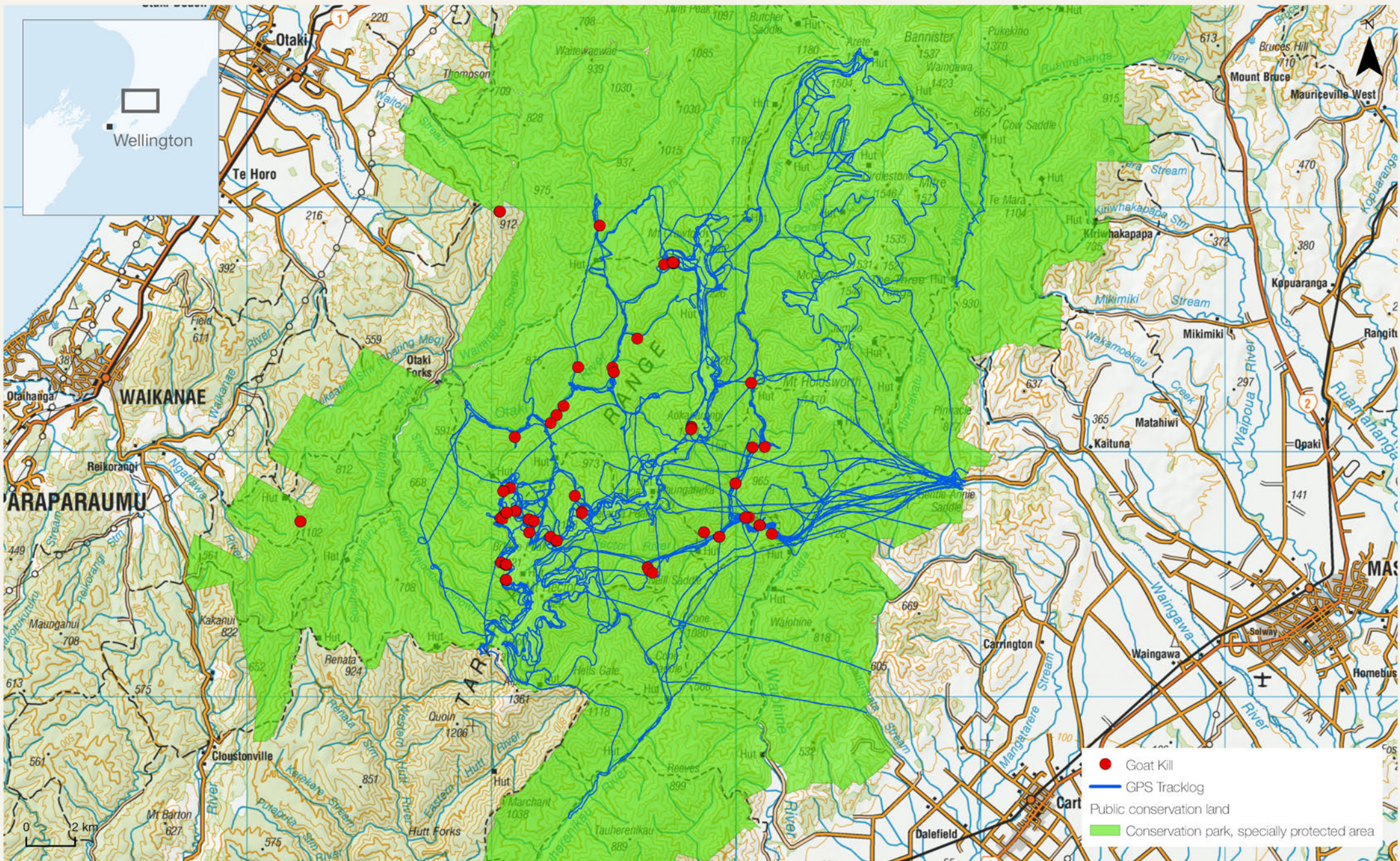
**Silver Bullet Contracting Ltd**



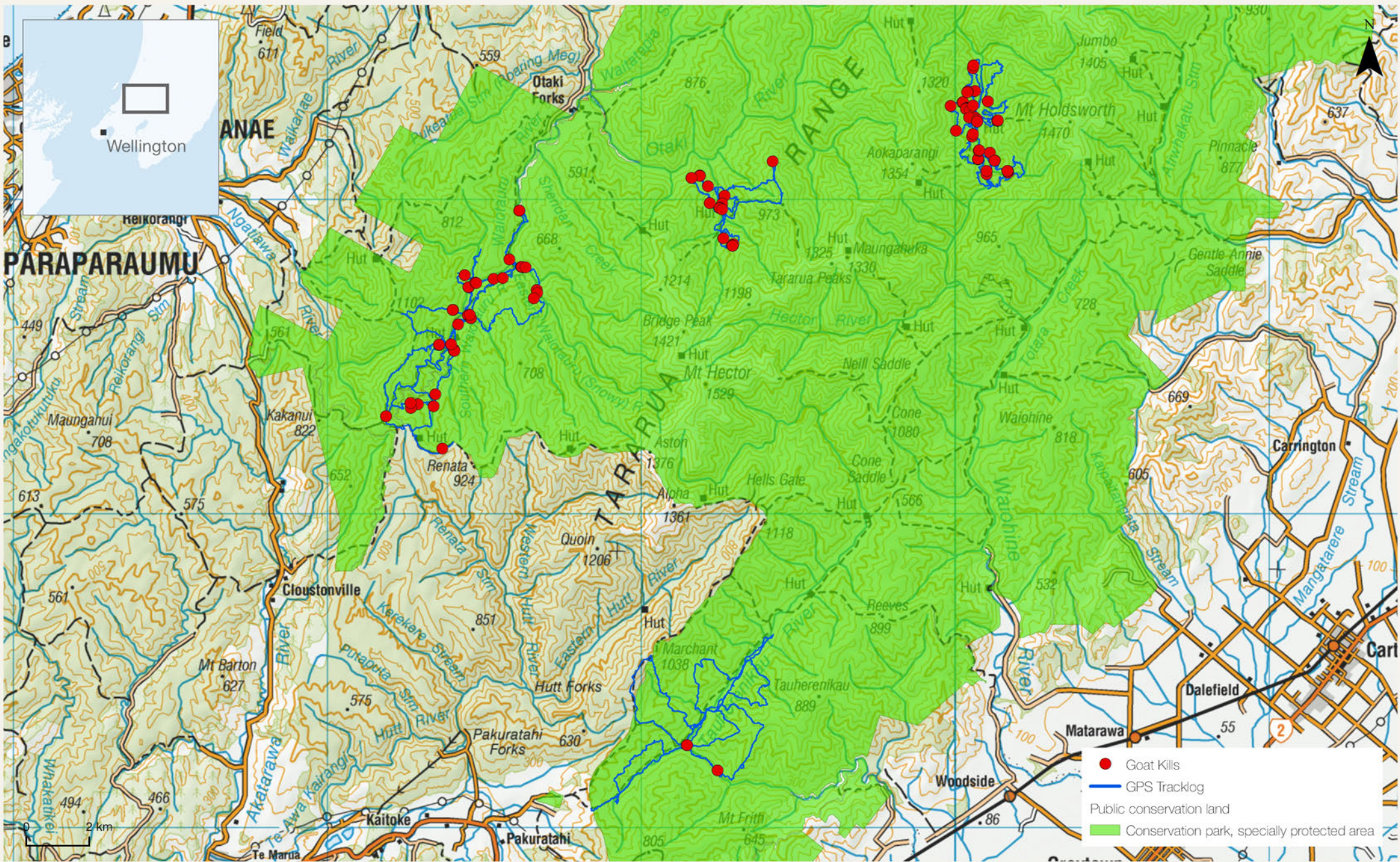
# Tararua Forest Park Aerial Ungulate Control 2020 - 2021



# Tararua Forest Park Aerial Ungulate Control 2021 - 2022

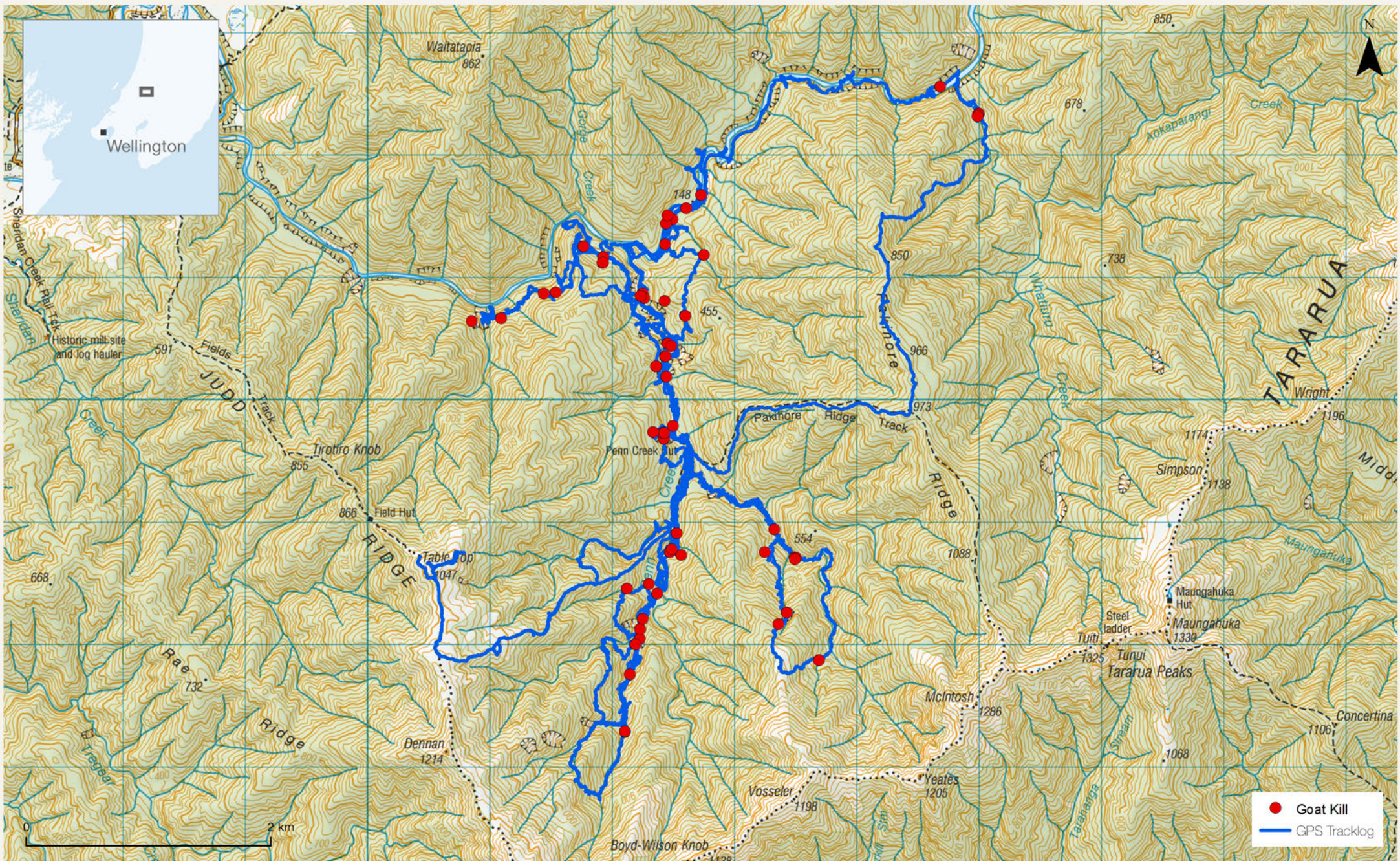


# Tararua Forest Park Aerial Ungulate Control 2022 - 2023

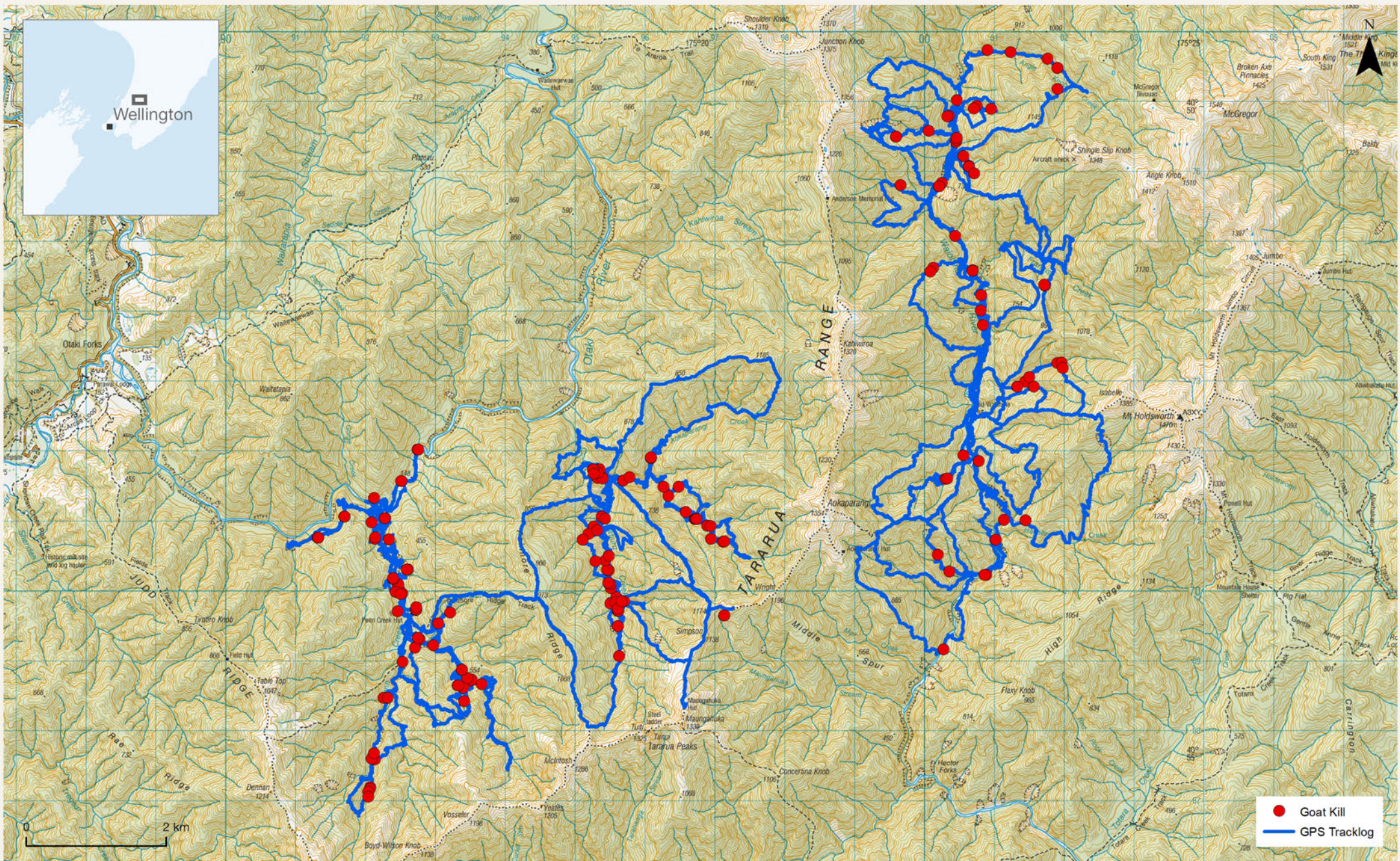


# Tararua Forest Park Ground Ungulate Control 2020 - 2021





# Tararua Forest Park Ground Ungulate Control 2021 - 2022



# Tararua Forest Park Ground Ungulate Control 2022 - 2023