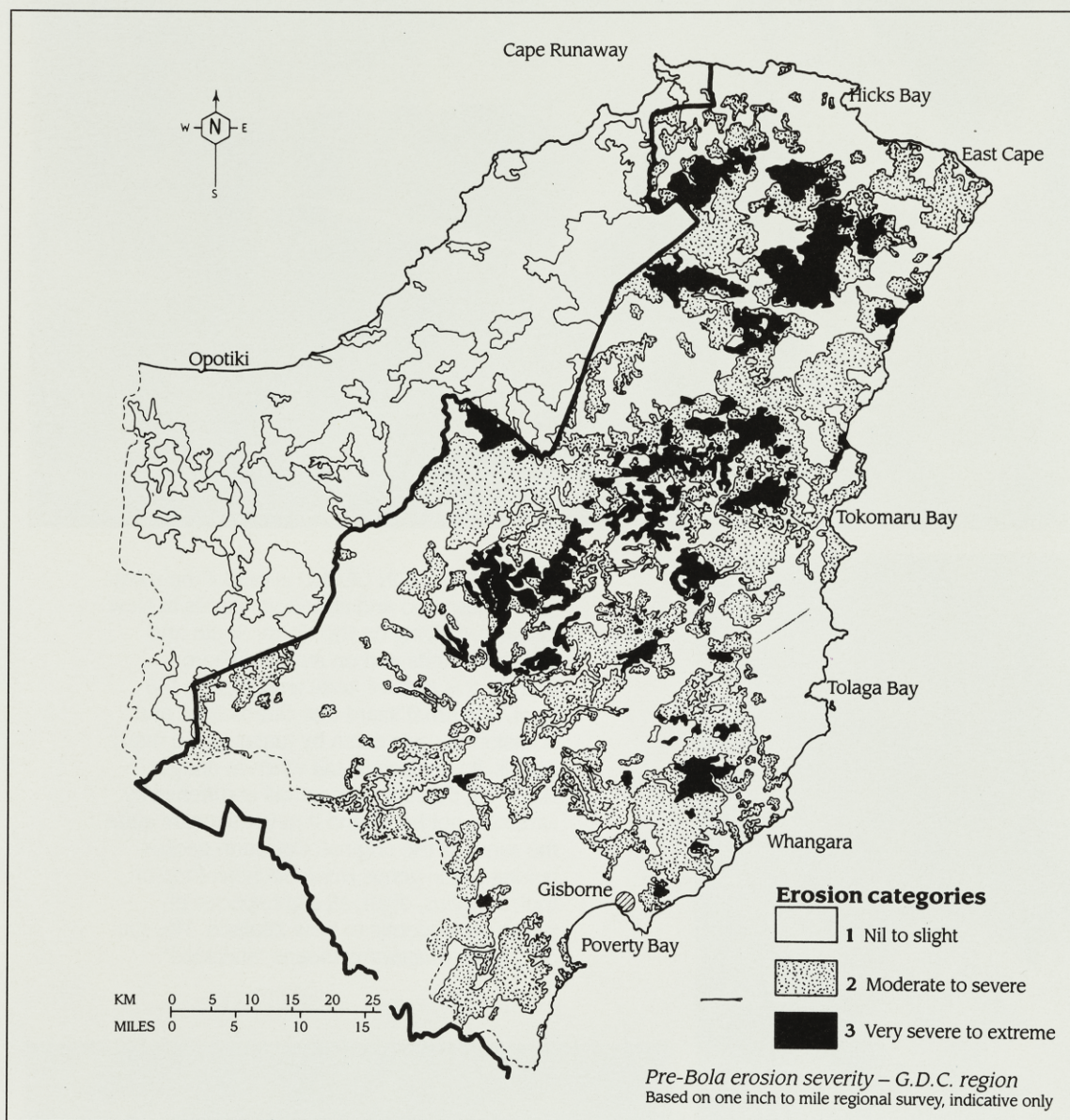


# EROSION ZONE

Earlier this century geologists warned about the problems of East Cape erosion; a major report was written about it in the 1960s; but Cyclone Bola in 1988 proved that none of the lessons of the past had been learned. Forest and Bird's central North Island conservation officer Basil Graeme has been investigating what measures must be taken if the region is to have any future.



**T**HE EROSION of the East Cape region is awesome. I will never forget seeing the tops of two posts sticking out of the mud – they were the tops of a cattle loading ramp. Somewhere beneath the mud lay a set of cattle yards and a farmer's endeavours.

Being human, we sympathise with the misfortunes of those individuals who have been devastated by such erosion. But in reality such tragedies are of little significance compared to the wider tragedy of the destructive silt blanketing the rivers, the sea and threatening to overwhelm the plains, and the economy of the region.

We respond to the personal tragedies as best we can, with \$200 million of disaster relief. We respond to the greater disaster with a paltry \$7 million over five years to tackle reforestation; it is as if we cannot see the erosion for the silt.

## Problems and solutions

How did this tragedy occur? What are the

A maize crop ruined by the 1988 Cyclone Bola. Photo: New Zealand Herald

