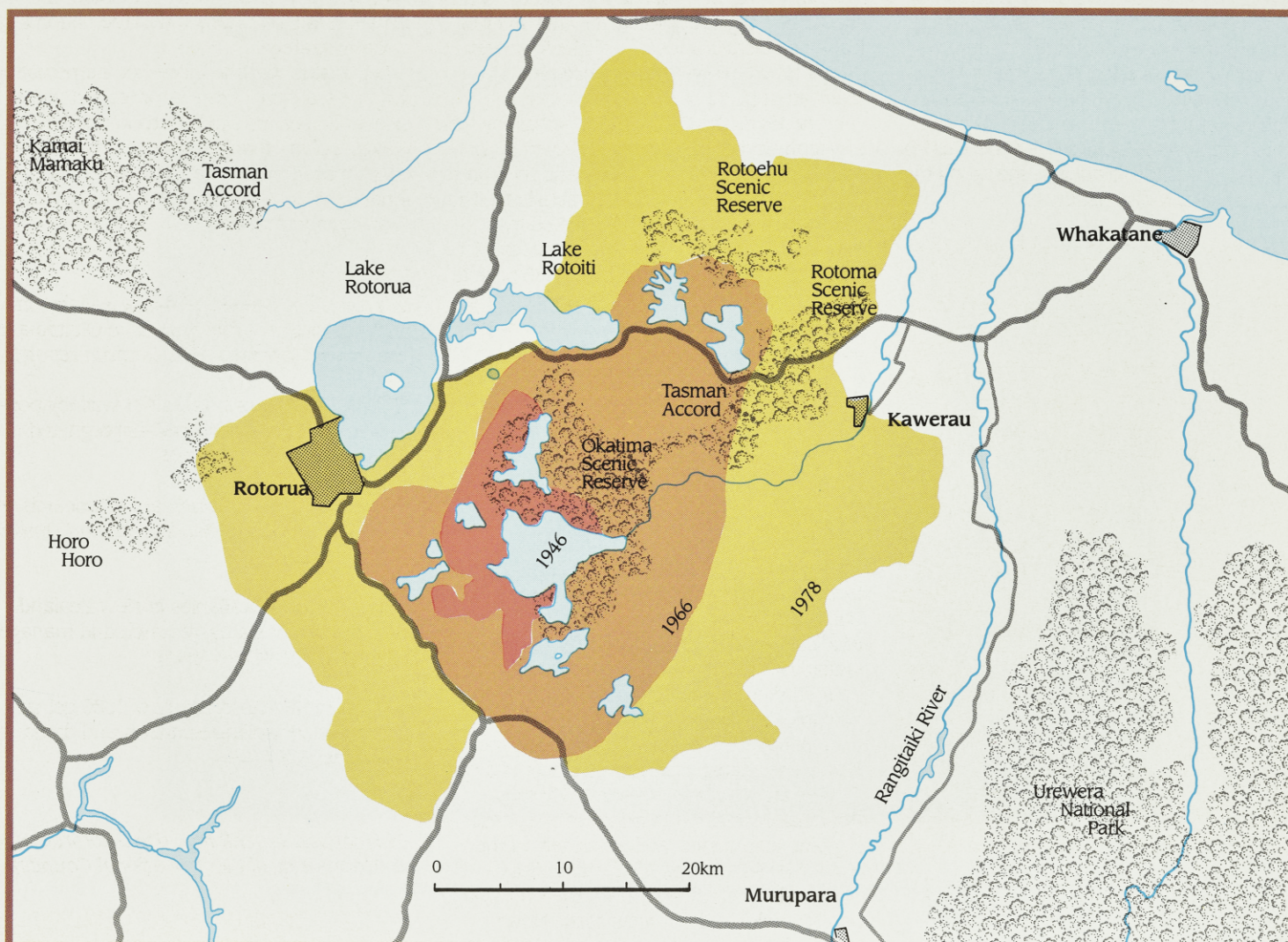


Natural dispersal of Rotorua Wallabies

The Rangitaiki River is an imperfect barrier to wallaby penetration of the Urewera with its shallow headwaters in Kaingaroa Forest. Wallabies have already penetrated the Mamaku margin and Rotoehu Forest. These three native forests nurture the largest populations of the endangered kokako on the mainland. Should wallabies escape to the axial ranges then the regenerative capacity of New Zealand's main catchment forests will be seriously compromised.



Left: Erected in 1984 by the Forest Service, this combined enclosure for wallabies, deer and possums in the Okatima Scenic Reserve was photographed in 1987. Photo: D Harding Right: This low structure excludes wallabies (not deer or possums). The photo shows regrowth of mahoe, five-finger, hangehange, rewarewa, protected when they were seedlings from wallaby grazing by the low fence. Outside the fence seedling loss continues. Ngati Tarawhai gifted 1202 ha of the Okatima Scenic Reserve to the Crown. Descendants encouraged the Department of Conservation and helped fund efforts to poison wallabies in this forest in 1987 and 1990. One can see why! Forest and Bird staff Kevin Smith, Ann and Basil Graeme and DoC Officer Dave Hunt ponder the results of wallaby damage.