

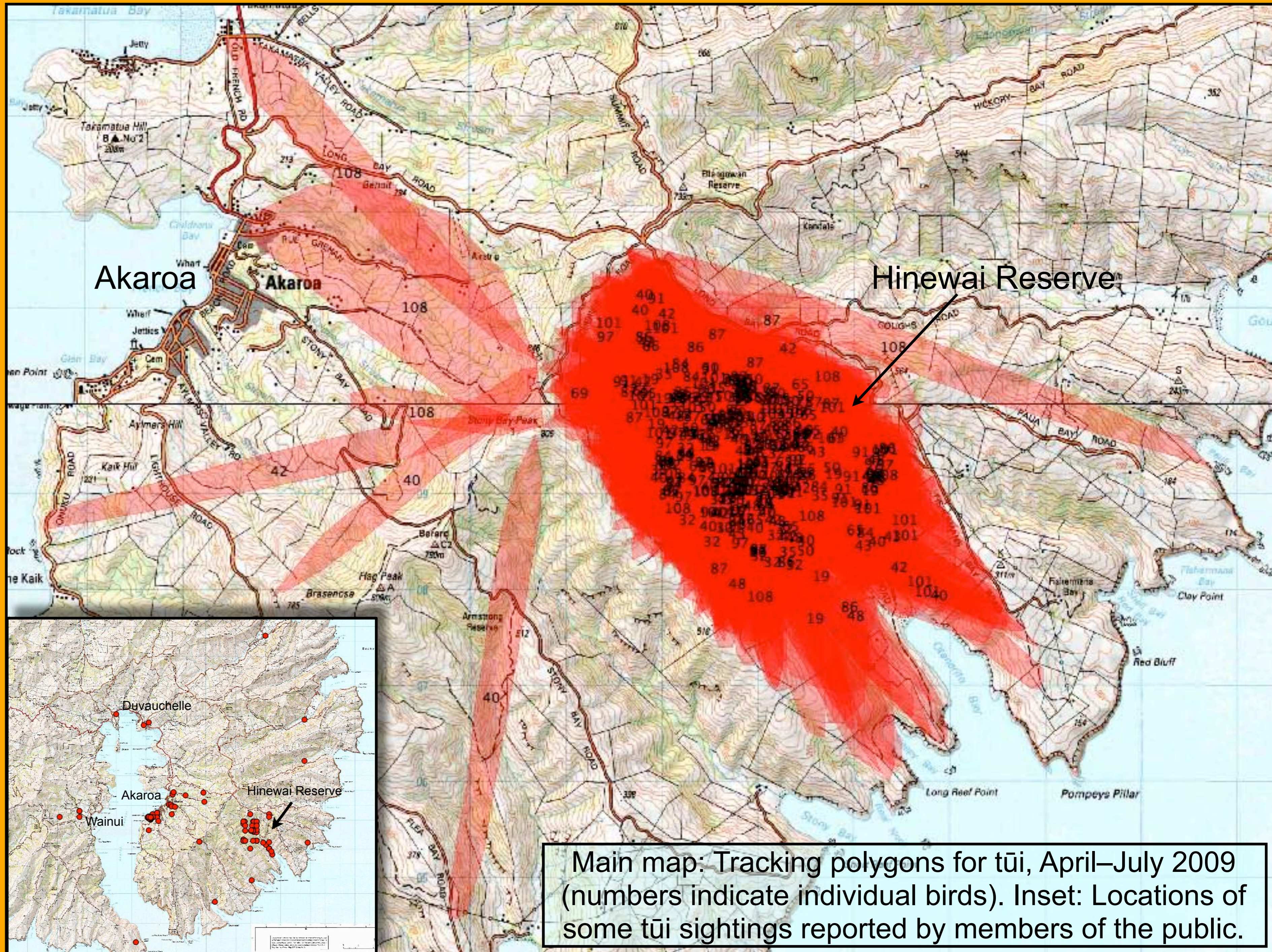
Return of the Tūi: Post-release and breeding season monitoring

The translocation of tūi from Maud Island to Banks Peninsula was the first mainland transfer for this species; we were not sure what the birds would do when they were set free in their new home. Monitoring has allowed us to determine that the translocation was successful in the short term. We will continue monitoring tūi on the Peninsula for several years to evaluate the long-term success of the new population and inform management decisions.



Alice Webster tracks birds.

Photo: Laura Molles



Main map: Tracking polygons for tūi, April–July 2009 (numbers indicate individual birds). Inset: Locations of some tūi sightings reported by members of the public.

Survival and movement post-release

- Since release, 27 of 30 birds have been located at least once, and 24 of 30 birds have been sighted at least once.
- Tūi have been seen feeding on many plant species, including kahikatea, pohutukawa, NZ myrtle, fivefinger, flax, *Banksia*, *Albizia*, gum, fig and apple trees.
- Tūi have been observed singing and socialising.
- Most tūi with transmitters remained in or near Long Bay for the first several weeks. Some birds were tracked outside of the bay, but all returned to the valley on subsequent days. Several birds foraged regularly in the Akaroa area over the winter.
- Sightings from members of the public indicate that some tūi travelled much farther in the months following their release, with banded birds being spotted in Wainui and Moncks Spur, among other places!



Hone singing in Long Bay.

Photo: Bruno Peeters



Harmony's clutch of eggs, ready to hatch.

Photo: Laura Molles

Incubating female (Harmony) on a nest in Long Bay/Otanerito.



Photo: Karen Middlemiss

The released birds' first breeding season on the peninsula

At least three pair of tūi have nested in Long Bay valley. The first nest found was lost to a predator, most likely a stoat. Fortunately, the female escaped and re-nested. Pest traps are placed around all located nests, and nests are checked regularly to help us determine how many nests succeed and fail, and which birds' genes contribute to the new population. We will colour-band fledglings to allow further monitoring of survival and breeding, important measures for guiding conservation management of the population in the medium to long term.



A fledgling tūi in Long Bay.

Photo: Brian Narbey

You can help!

- We rely on tūi sightings from sharp-eyed members of the public in order to locate traveling tūi! Please contact us with any tūi sightings – even if you are not sure whether or not a bird is banded, your observations are very valuable!
- Tūi, like bellbirds, can be attracted to garden feeders. If you want to feed tūi, please use sugar-water, NOT honey-water. Honey-water ferments quickly and can harbour microorganisms harmful to birds. Clean sugar-water feeders regularly with hot water; a mild bleach solution can also be safely used for cleaning, but it's best to avoid using soap.

Contact: Laura Molles at Lincoln University email: laura.molles@lincoln.ac.nz tel: 325-3838 x 8723