

MISTLETOE CENSUS OF TIKITAPU SCENIC RESERVE COMPLETED

Paul Cashmore, DOC Rotorua

Over this winter several Department of Conservation staff along with local Okareka volunteers Mike Goodwin, Rod Stace and John Hobbs from Rotorua Botanical Society have been completing the first-ever full census of the Nationally Threatened mistletoe population in Tikitapu Scenic Reserve (Okareka end) to determine the size of the population there. The Tikitapu Scenic Reserve Pest Control Project which has been running since 2002 was established with one of the main objectives to increase the distribution and numbers of two mistletoe species (*Ileostylus micranthus* & *Tupeia antarctica*) within the management area. DOC undertook a full re-survey of all mistletoe populations around the Rotorua lakes last summer and this information is currently still being analysed. This census was undertaken as part of that wider survey.

The census undertaken over two days in August 2016 revealed a total of 2034 live mistletoe plants present at the Okareka end of the reserve with 2017 of these being *Tupeia antarctica* and the remainder *Ileostylus micranthus*. An initial DOC survey in 2001 before pest control began showed an estimated mistletoe population of 218 plants – all *Tupeia*. The results from this survey show how the population has grown in the last 15 years as a direct result of ongoing intensive pest control. Kevin Buttell from DOC who undertook the wider Rotorua Lakes mistletoe survey stated “With the results from Tikitapu Scenic Reserve we now have a good updated picture of the current distribution and size of the mistletoe population within the reserve for the first time. These results show that the mistletoe population within the reserve is by far the largest population in the Rotorua Lakes District and also the wider Bay of Plenty Region and a key site for the ongoing survival of this Nationally Threatened species in the region.”

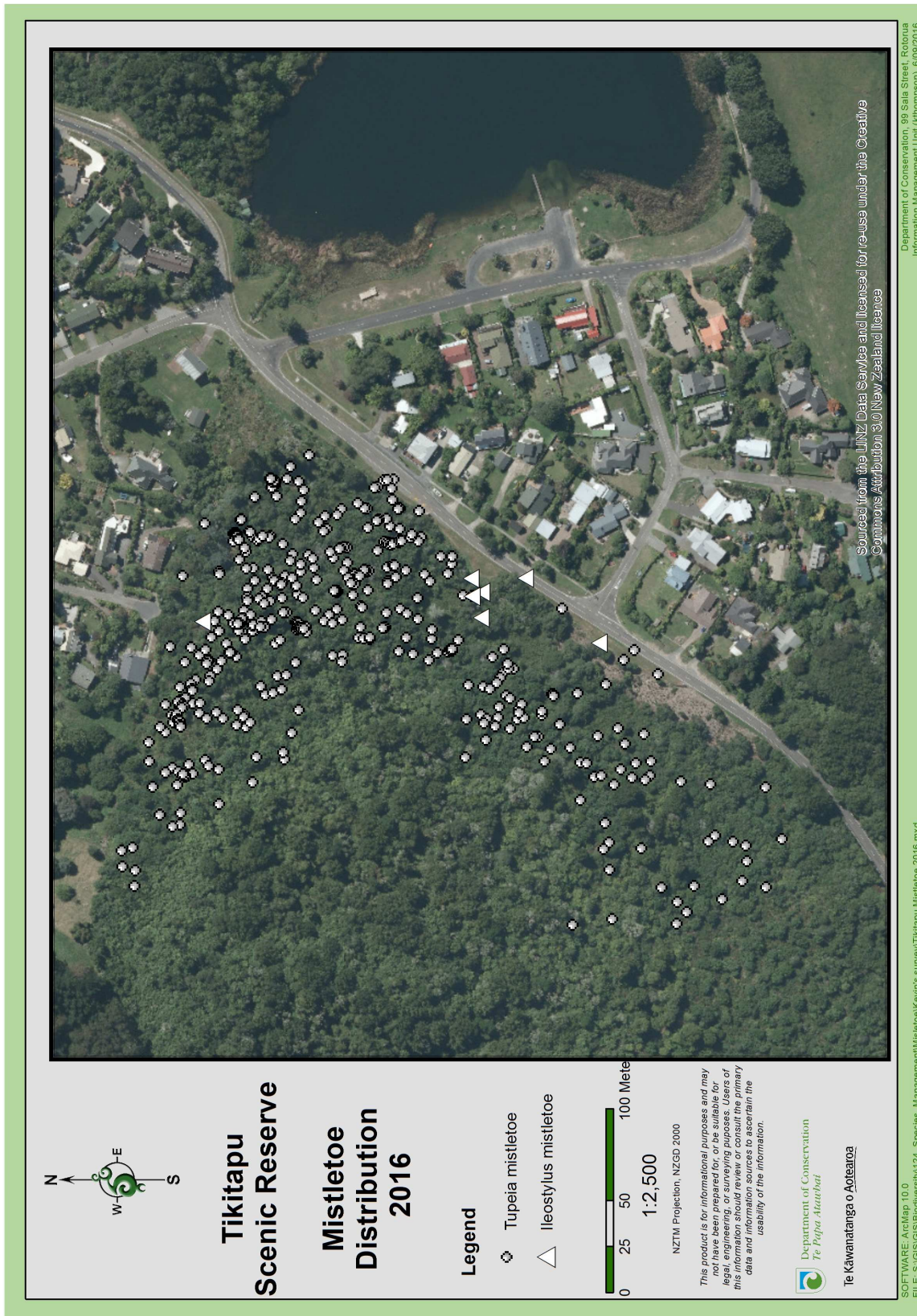


Figure 1: Map showing the distribution and density of mistletoe plants within Tikitapu Scenic Reserve.