

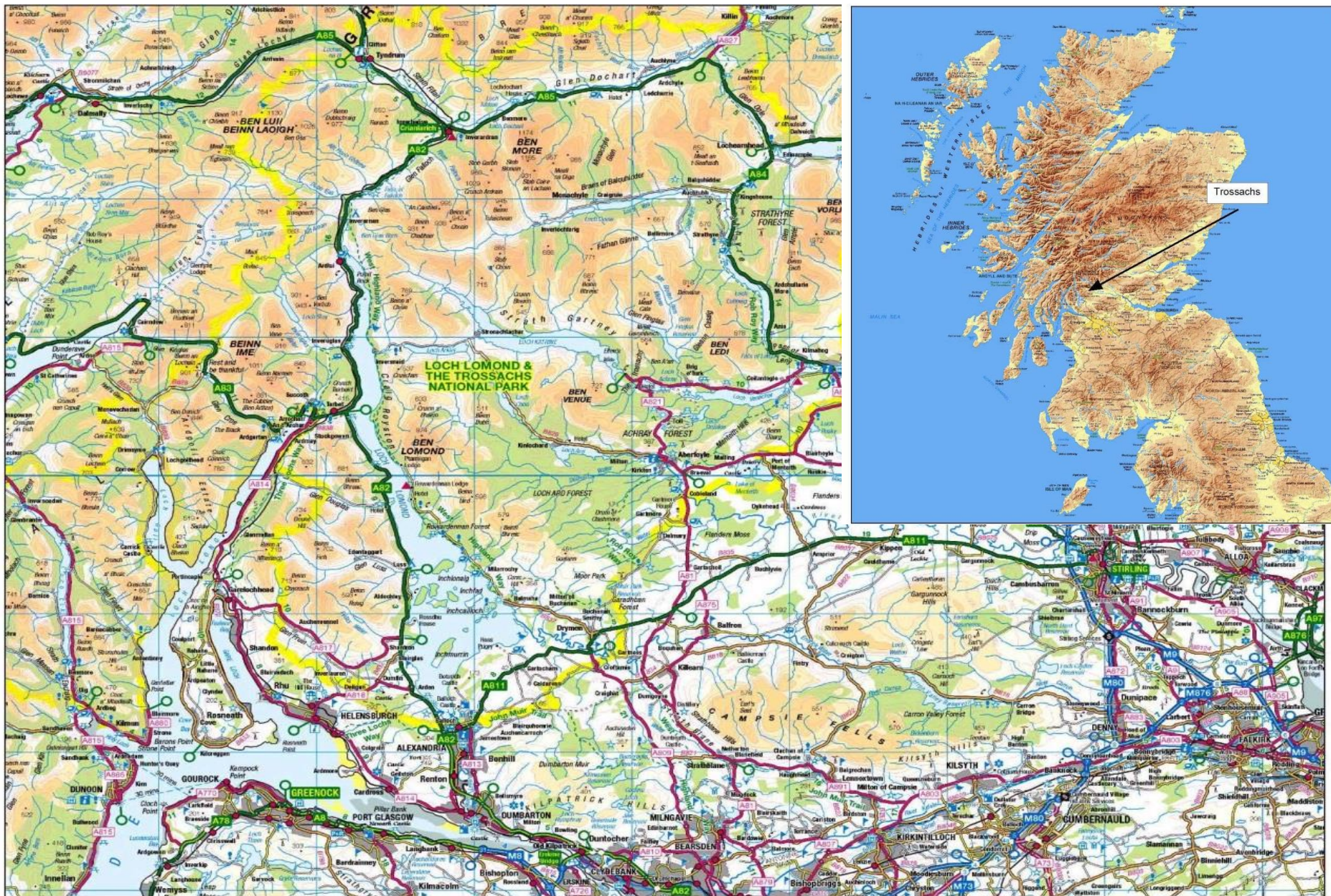
# Trossachs Water Vole Project

## The real story!

Katy Anderson



# Where?



# Once upon a time back in 2003.....

- Increasing concern for water voles in Scotland
- Stirling BAP, Local Forestry Conservation Strategy
- Status in the Trossachs unknown – surveys needed.
- No water voles found but old burrows recorded.



# The dark past....



**Duchray Water 1993**

**to**

**2003**

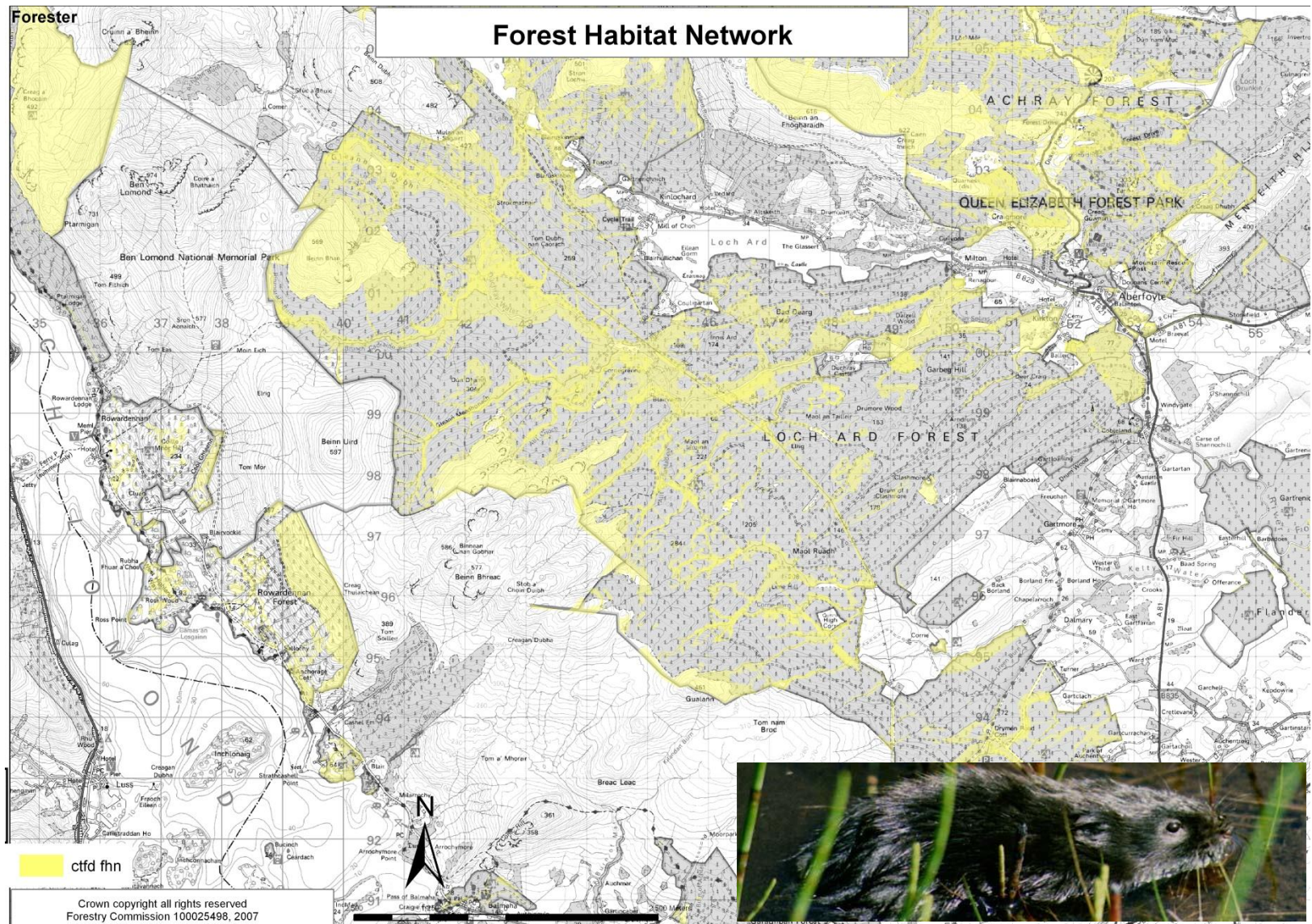


# Duchray Water Restoration

- 1993 - Forest Design Plan produced - complete restructuring of the Duchray zone and restoration of the river corridor. 40 year ongoing project.
- Conifers removed from riverbanks and burns
- Native trees planted
- New ponds and ditches
- Wetland species planted (locally sourced)
- Drains blocked to create new wetlands



# Habitat Networks – 40%




# Lime Hill



# Lime Hill



# What can we do to help Ratty?

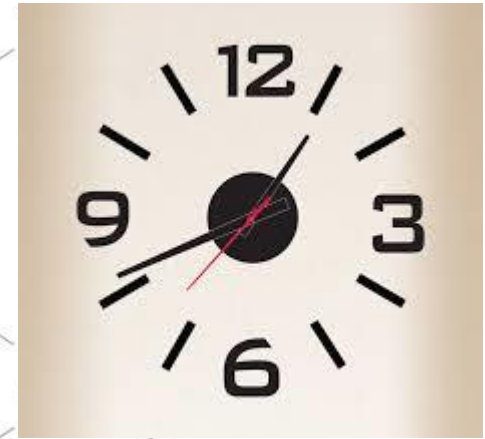


Sympathetic land management  
Enhance wetland habitats  
Mink control

Re-introduction? **What?**  
**We only do trees!!!**



# First hurdle.... Getting support, make a plan



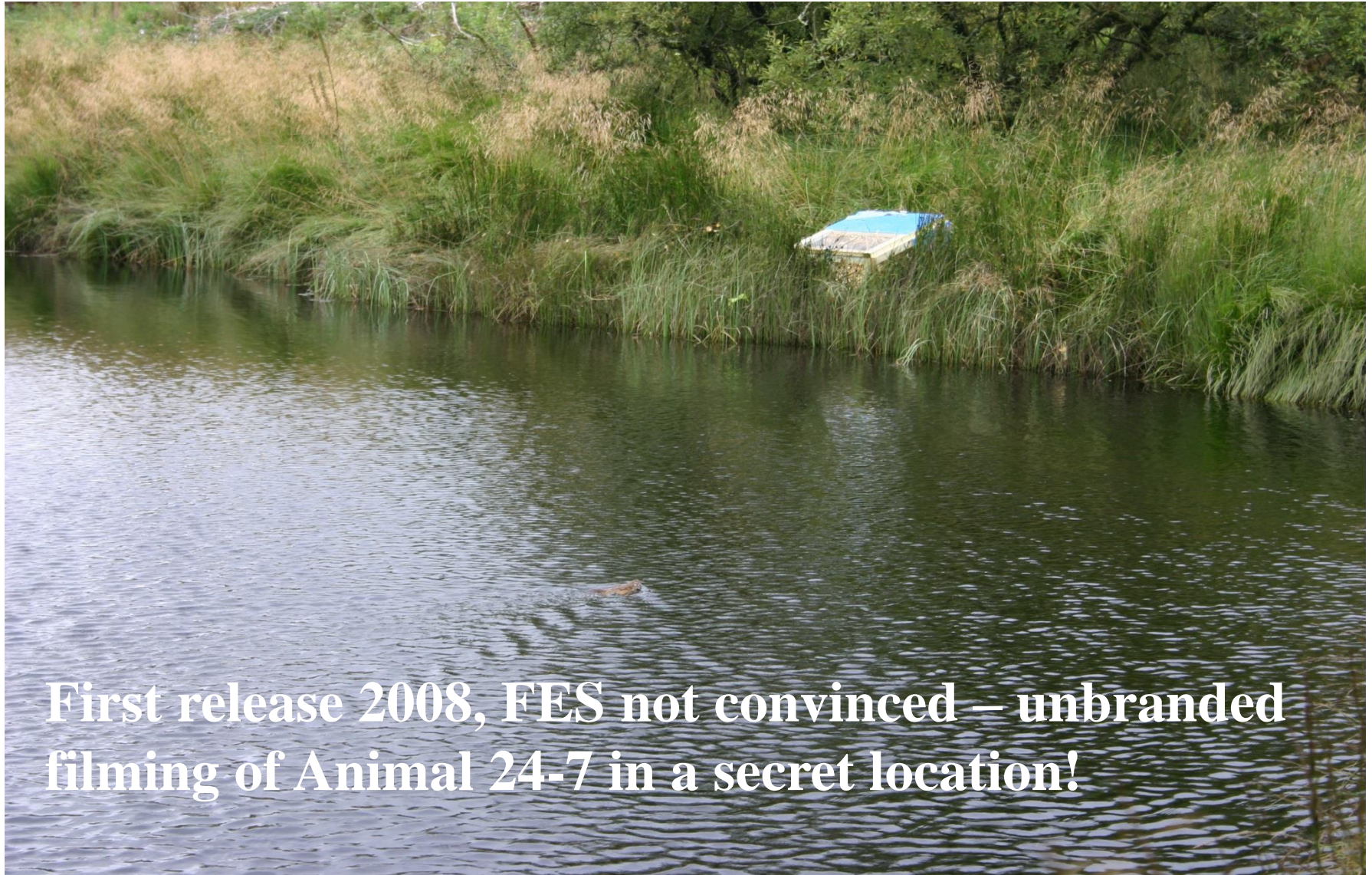
# Pulling together the Project partners



Agreeing priorities not always easy - MOA!  
Forestry Commission reluctant to take the lead!

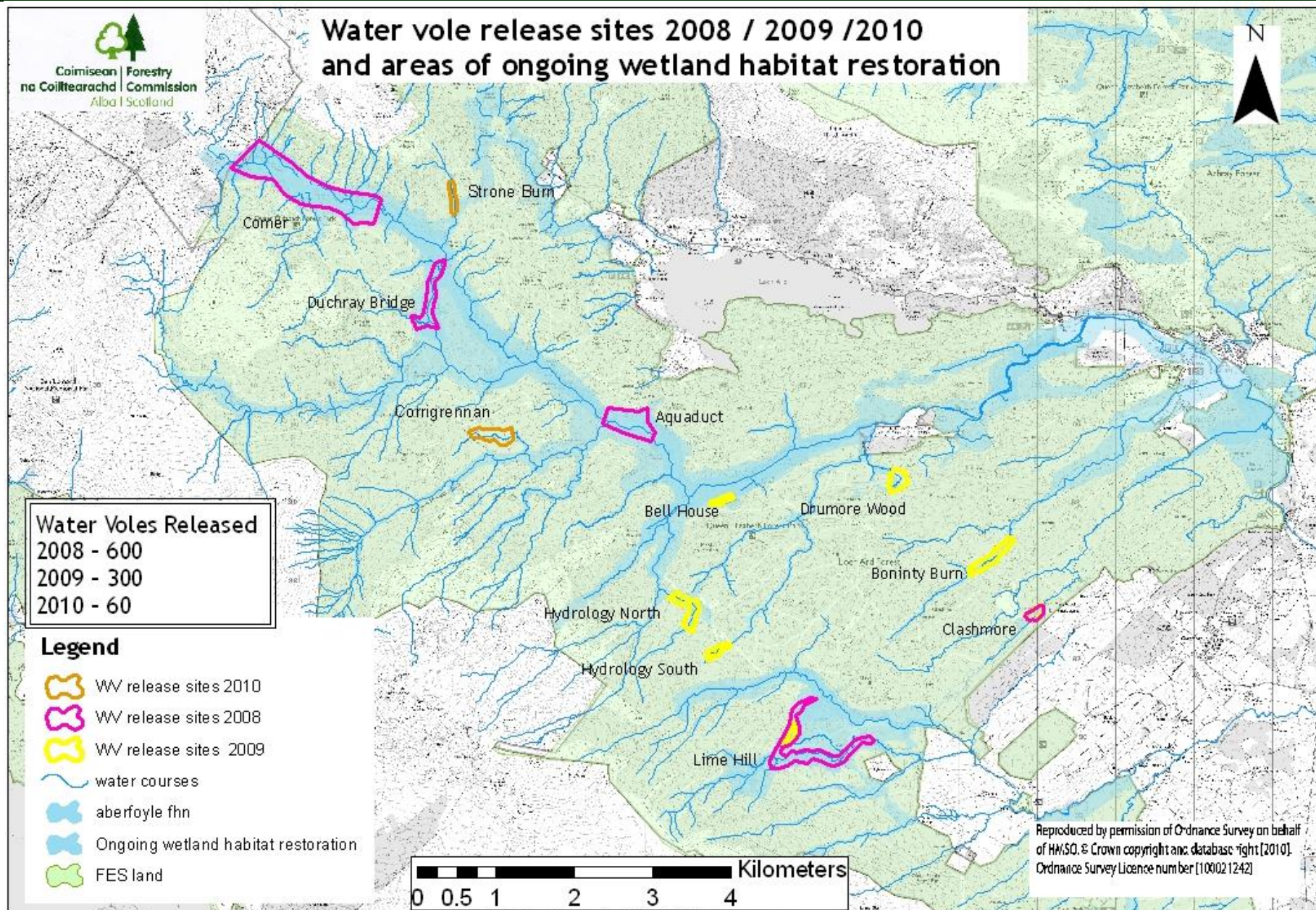




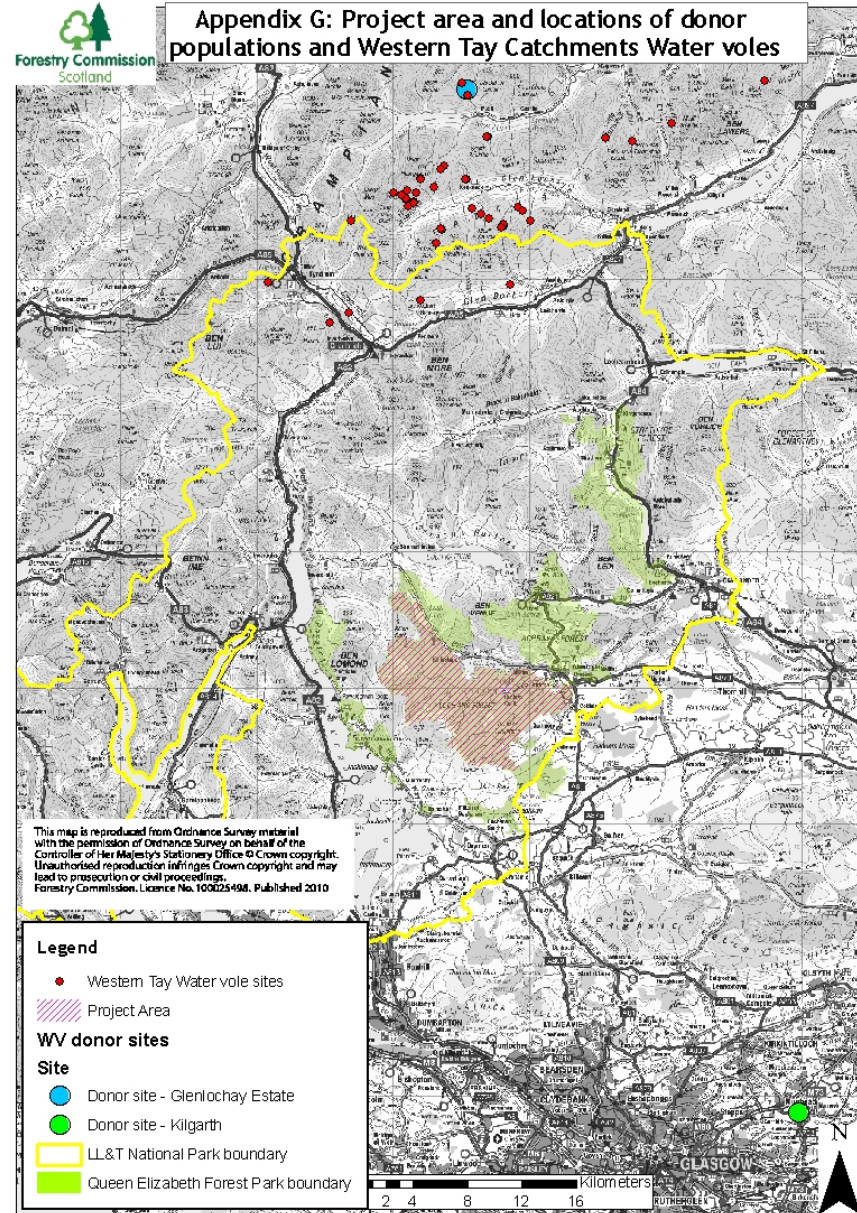


First release 2008, FES not convinced – unbranded  
filming of Animal 24-7 in a secret location!

# 14 Release Sites



# Project area & donor populations



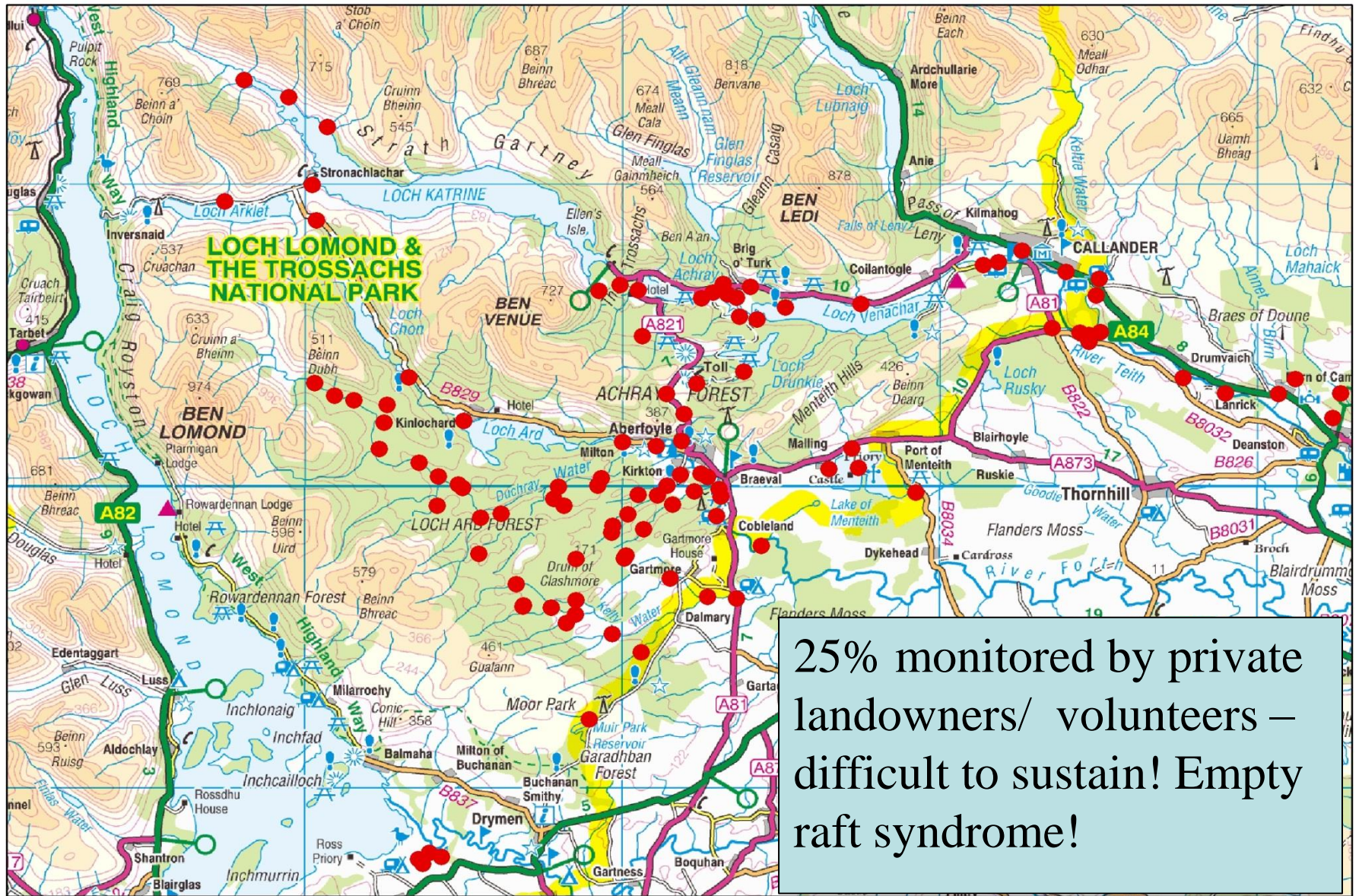
From 60 voles to 1000+  
is there a genetic problem?

2010/11 Wild voles caught  
Bred into the introduced  
Population – 112 voles

# Trossachs topography good for control



# Mink control –93 rafts



# Mink raft challenges



# Mink Captures 2007-2017



	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>Mink trapped</b>	10	14	9	1	2	6	7	4	13	5	9
<b>Number of rafts</b>	17	29	54	72	68	66	65	74	93	c. 90	c. 90

6 so far in 2018....

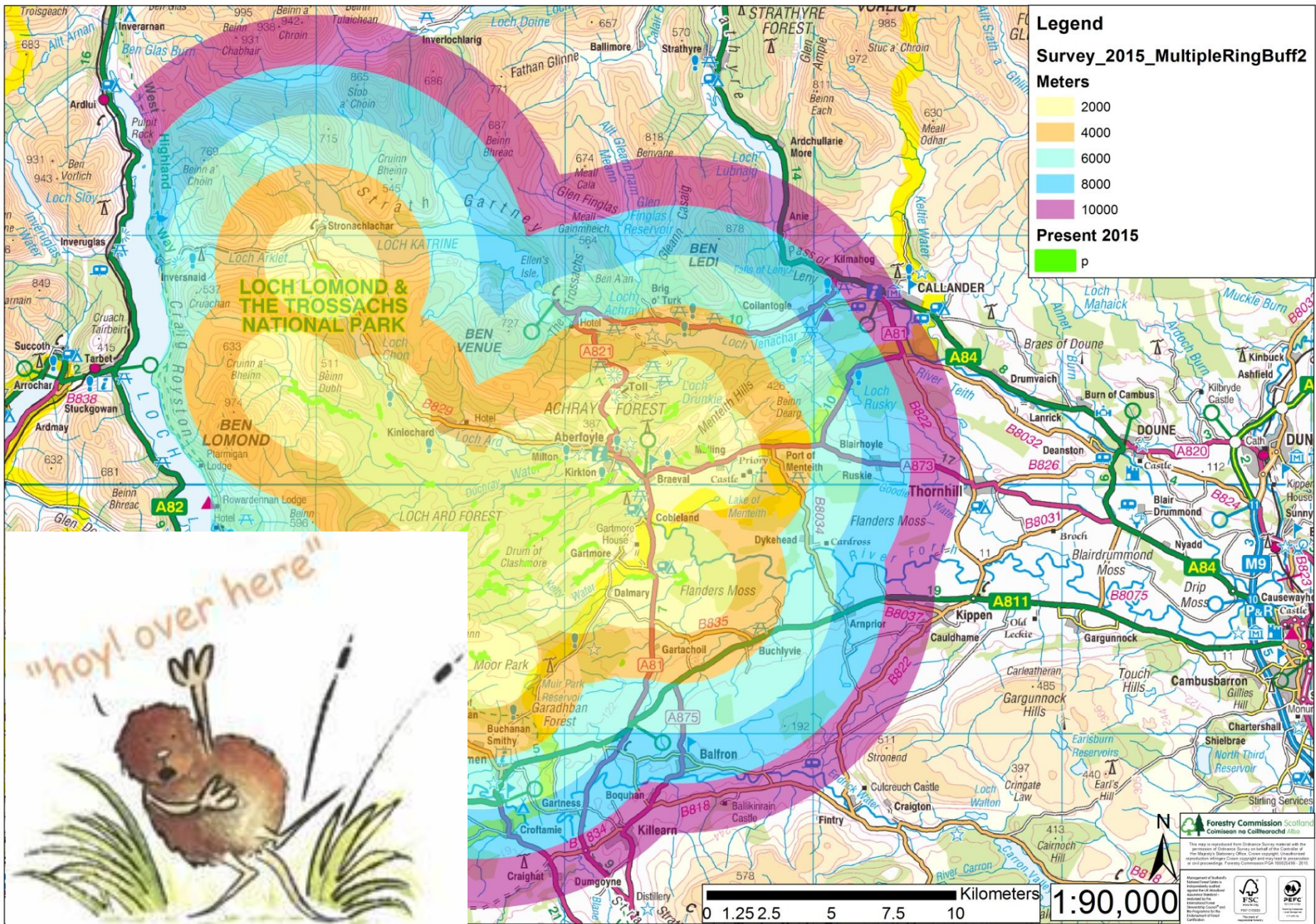
# Non-target captures



- Not always easy to know who has passed through!
- Time consuming trapping
- Mink police / cameras



# Surveys!

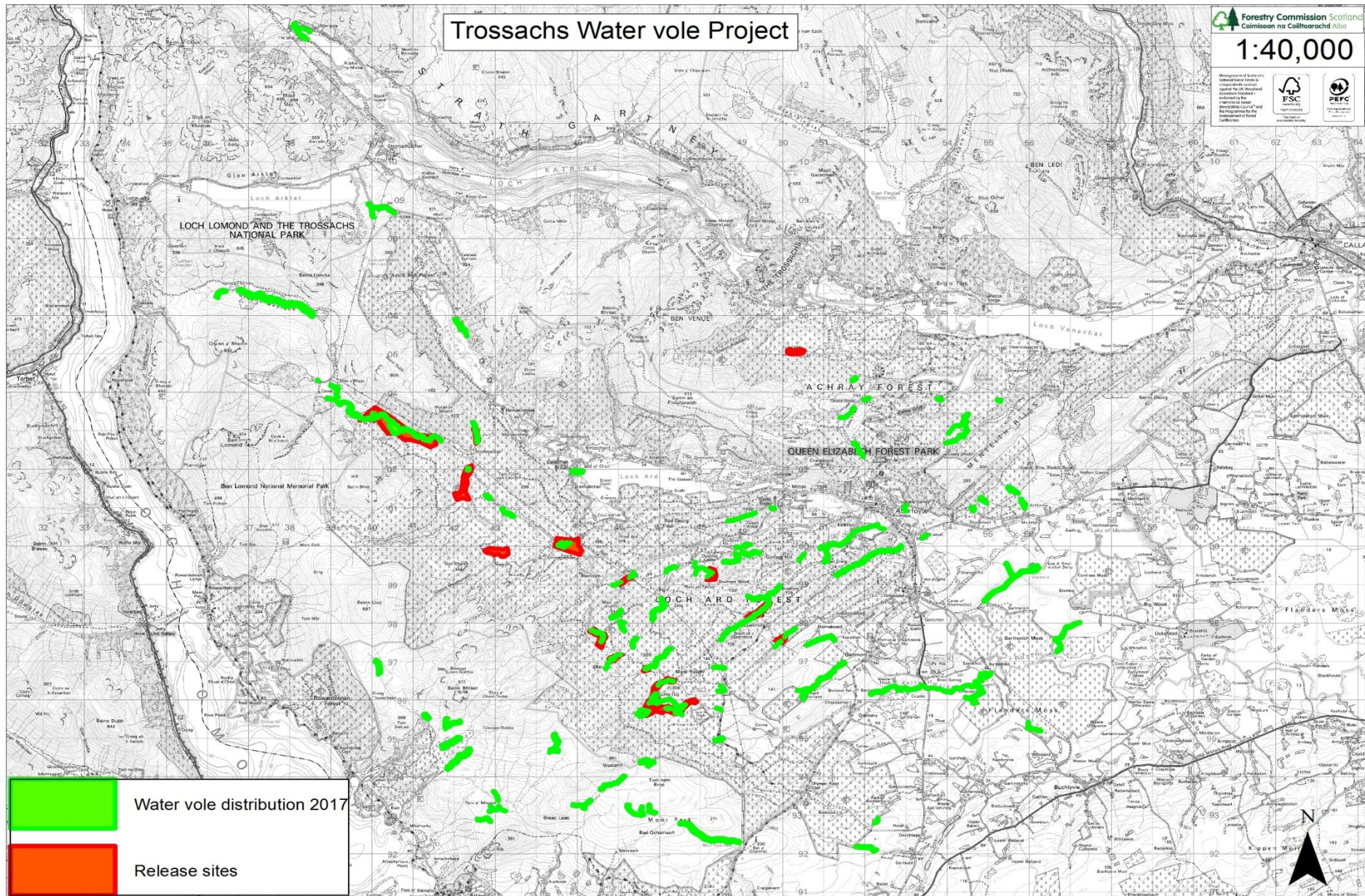


# How can we monitor?



Initially carried out full surveys including latrine counts  
Moved to presence / absence after year 5 to cover  
more ground.....

# Water voles thriving 😊



# Survey results



- Many new breeding sites have been naturally colonised up to 12km from release areas.
- New sites found every year since release – now over 60 sites.
- WVs now found in over 100 KM squares!
- Habitat assessments are ongoing and new suitable areas are surveyed each year.

# Thanks to LLTNP volunteers



- NP have coordinated volunteer program
- Annual training event in spring
- 100s of KM surveyed each year
- Volunteers now checking rafts too

# Working forest



# Challenges going forward



- Continued support both internal and external
- Attitudes/ priorities
- Need more Money!! – seeking sources of funding
- Time!!
- Where are the WVs now?
- Targeting mink control effort
- Expanding the project area
- Recruiting new PO!



There is no exit strategy!!

# Thank you! Another PO says farewell 😞



# Questions?



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