



Committee Secretary  
Senate Environment and Communications References Committee  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Friday, 15 September 2023

## **Impacts and management of feral horses in the Australian Alps**

### **Questions taken on notice**

Dear Secretary,

I write to provide a response to the question taken on notice on 7 September 2023 as a witness for the public hearing into the **Impacts and management of feral horses in the Australian Alps**.

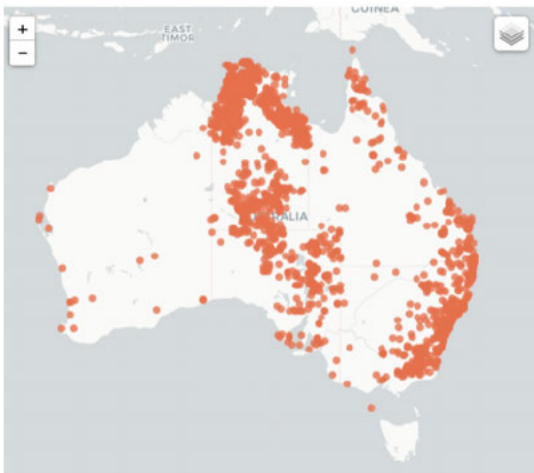
I was asked to provide maps like the one I referred to on the 7<sup>th</sup> September, that illustrate how there are many Australian native species which have all of their range, or important parts of it, within Kosciuszko. The small distributions of these native Australian species are in contrast with feral horses which are widespread across Australia (see map below). The maps make the point that these threatened native species depend partly, or wholly, on safe habitat within the Australian Alps. However, with the lack of action to control feral horses, and legislated protection of feral horses in Kosciuszko National Park, these native Australian species are threatened by the non-native horses.

The feral horses are not genetically distinct from horses found on farms (see [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)). They are not heritage horses. Heritage horses, like the Walers and Australian Stockhorses, are bred on farms, have studbooks, and have not had different bloodlines introduced for many decades (not since 1945 for Walers). The horses in the Australian Alps have had genetic exchange continuing over the decades (as reported [here](#)) so do not qualify as heritage breeds. Under current management and legislation in NSW, these feral horses, a non-Australian introduced species, and the same kind of horse as found anywhere around the country, are given precedence over threatened native Australia species. The native species are found in few places in SE Australia, many confined to the alps or even to just Kosciuszko. The few places that they depend on should be protected from feral horses.

In the maps that follow, prepared by Dr Desley Whisson at Deakin University, we show distributions of species already threatened with extinction and listed under the EPBC Act. Each map shows the predicted habitat extent from species distribution models, and actual records since 2000 in the Atlas of Living Australia database. These are mapped for Kosciuszko National Park, overlain by the horse retention and removal zones, as well as at the national scale. The national scale maps emphasise that all of these species have tiny distributions in the SE of



Australia. The data sources for these maps are listed below. Note that the point records for Broad-toothed rat are missing many records from within Kosciuszko National Park.



## Feral Horse Distribution across Australia

Atlas of Living Australia

<https://www.ala.org.au/>

Species or species' habitat likely to occur: Species of National Environmental Significance  
(<https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/environmental-information-data/databases-applications/snes>.  
Accessed 11/09/2023)

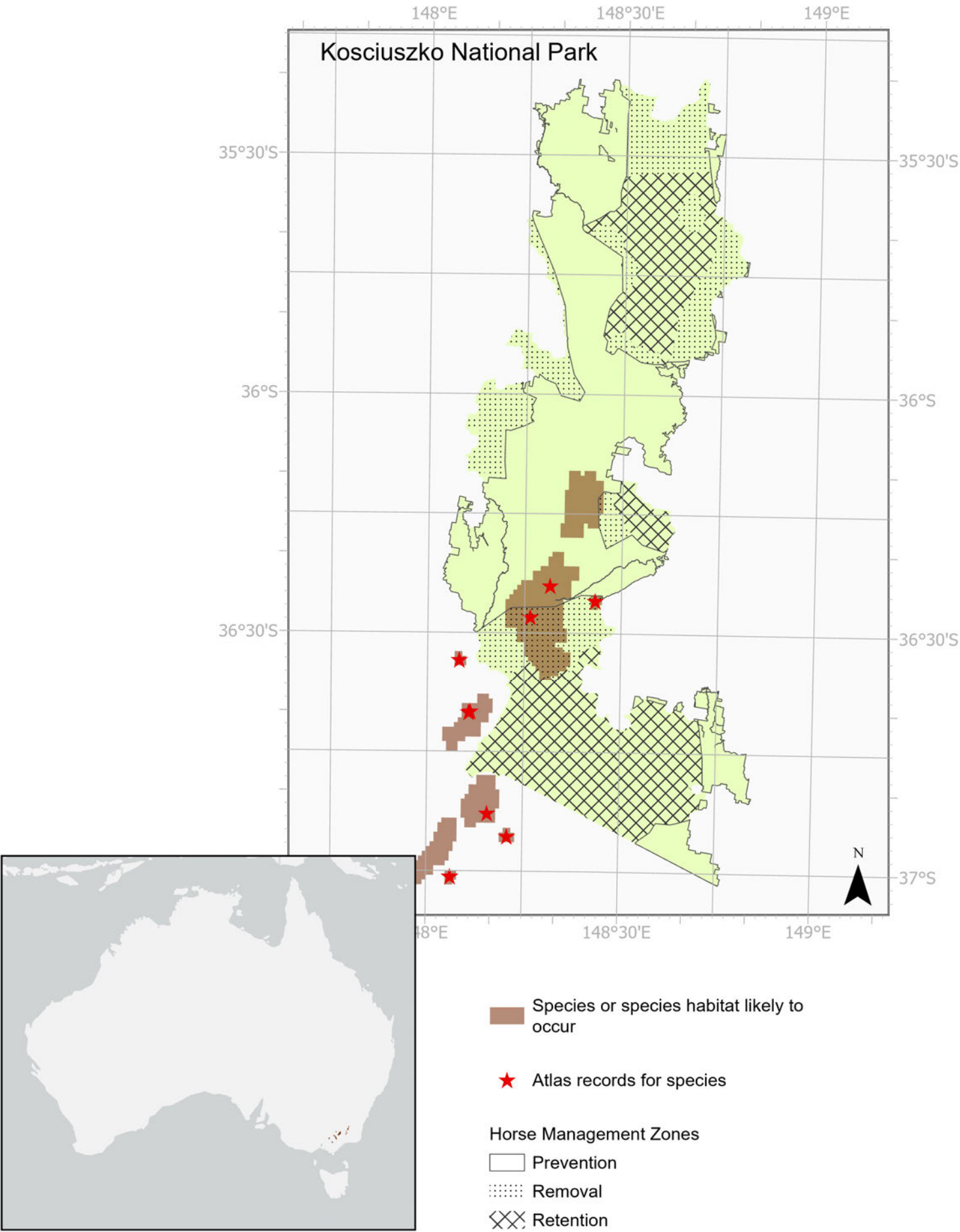
Alpine Bogs: MCAS-S Datapack for Alpine Bogs of the Australian Alps Bioregion  
(<https://rdp.utas.edu.au/metadata/f45ef310-4387-4016-a5c3-7c608399a496>. Accessed 18/09/2023)

Atlas records for species: Atlas of Living Australia (Atlas of Living Australia website at <http://www.ala.org.au>.  
Accessed 14/09/2023).

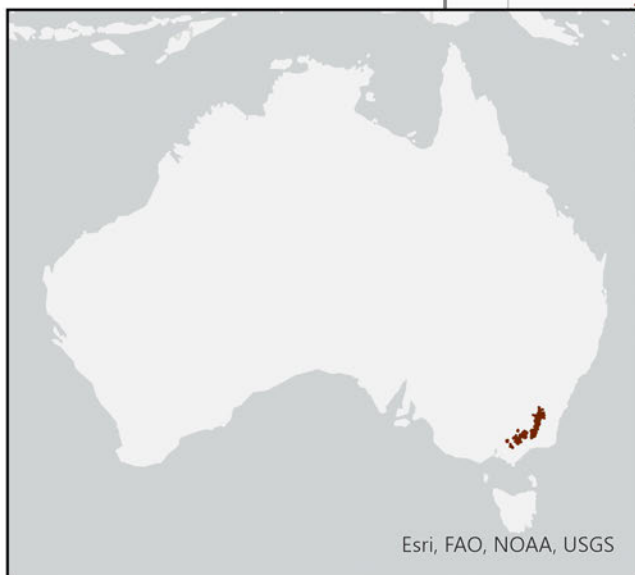
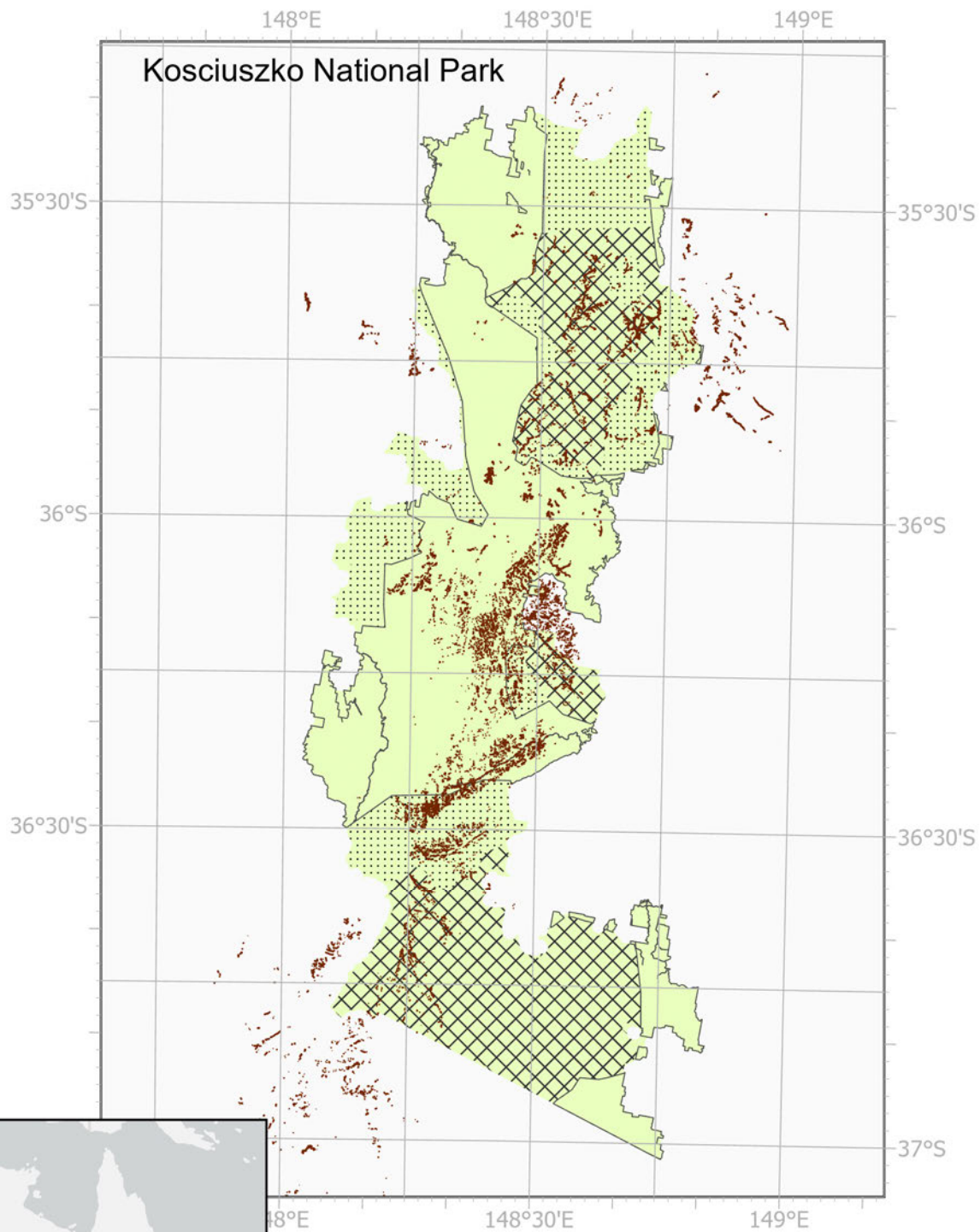
Professor Don Driscoll

<https://dondriscoll.com/>

# Alpine Bog Skink (*Pseudemoia cryodroma*)



# Alpine bogs



Alpine bogs

Horse Management Zones

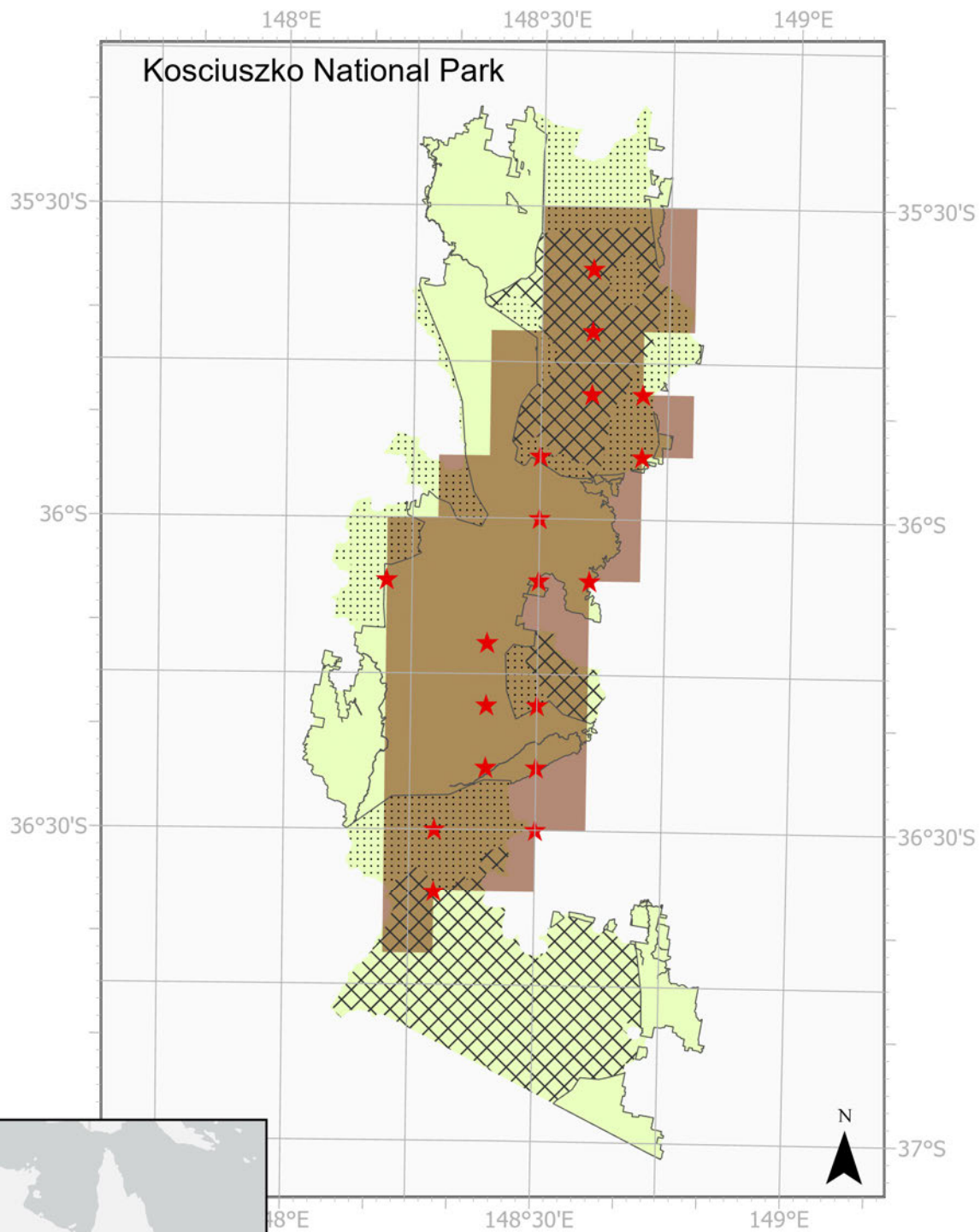
Prevention

Removal

Retention



# Alpine she-oak skink (*Cyclodomorphus praealtus*)



Species or species habitat likely to occur

Atlas records for species

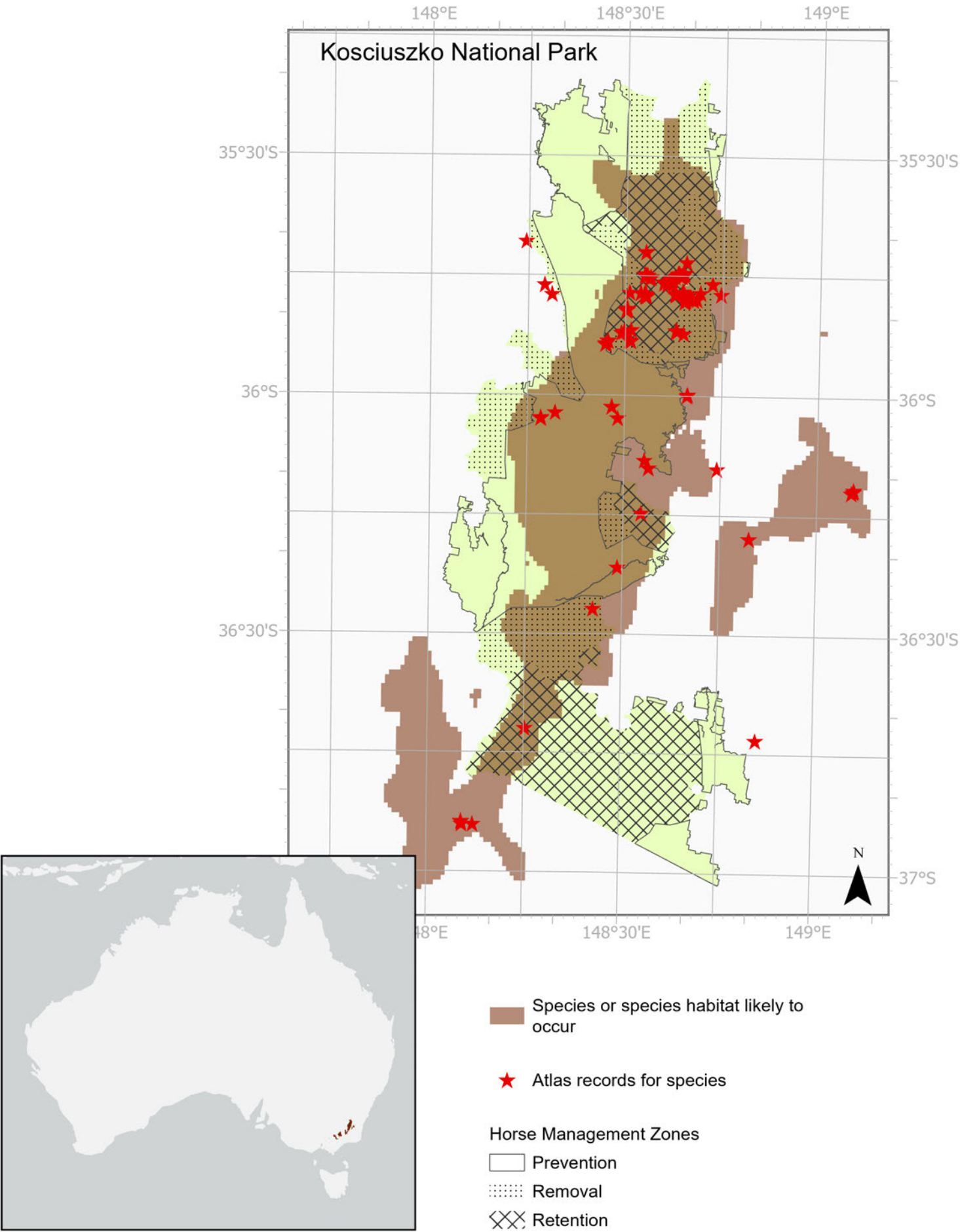
Horse Management Zones

Prevention

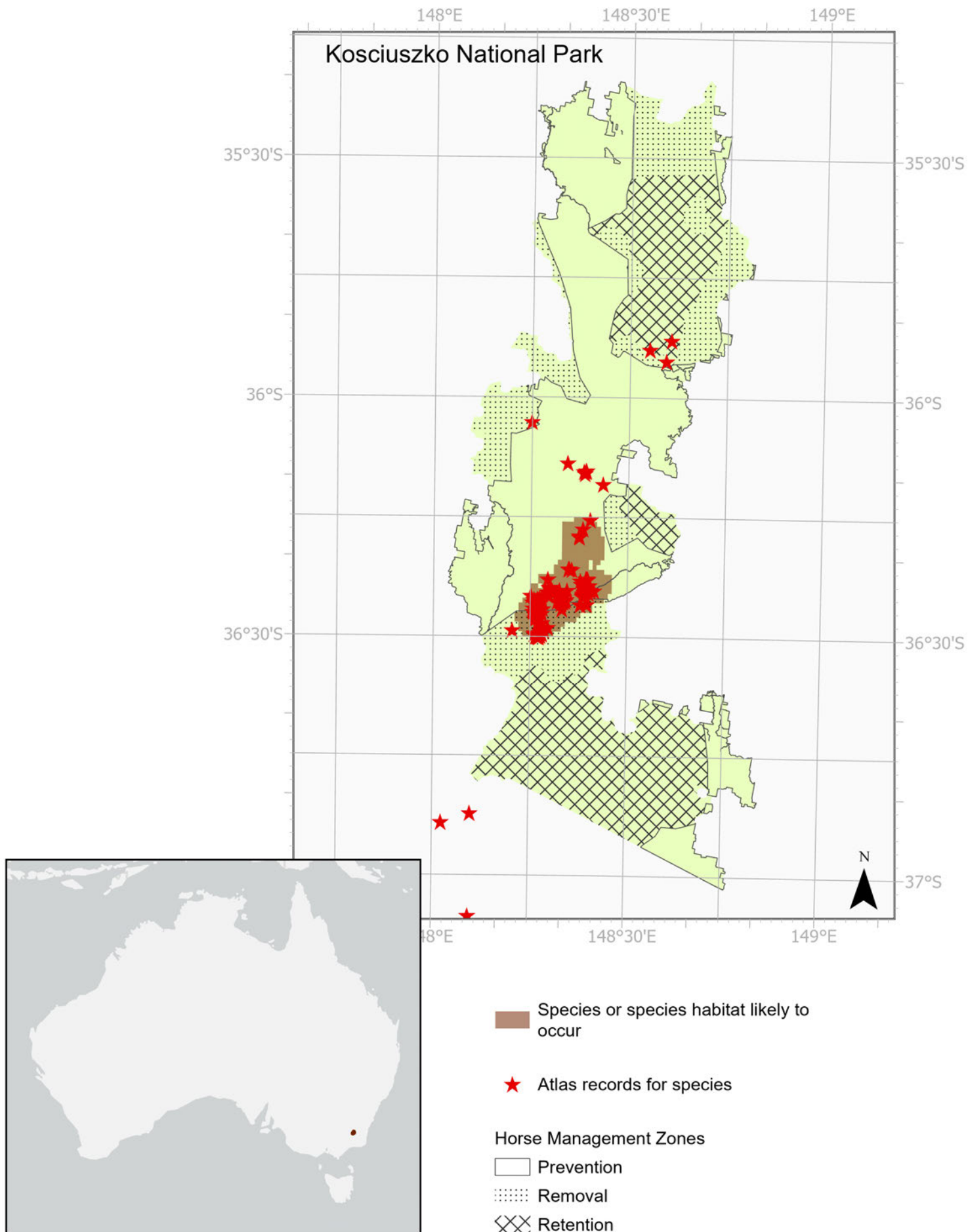
Removal

Retention

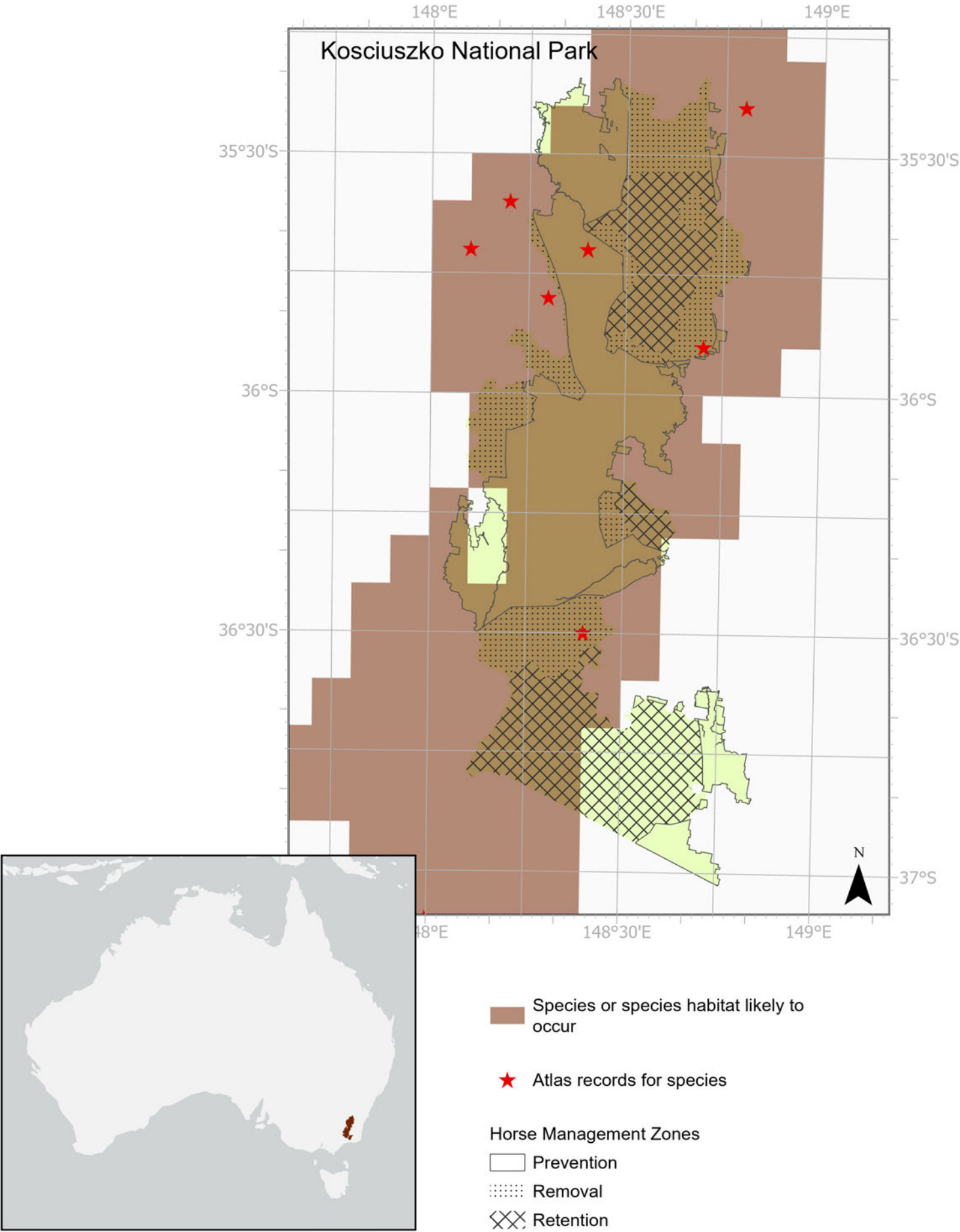
# Alpine Tree Frog (*Litoria verreauxii alpina*)



# Anemone buttercup (*Ranunculus anemoneus*)

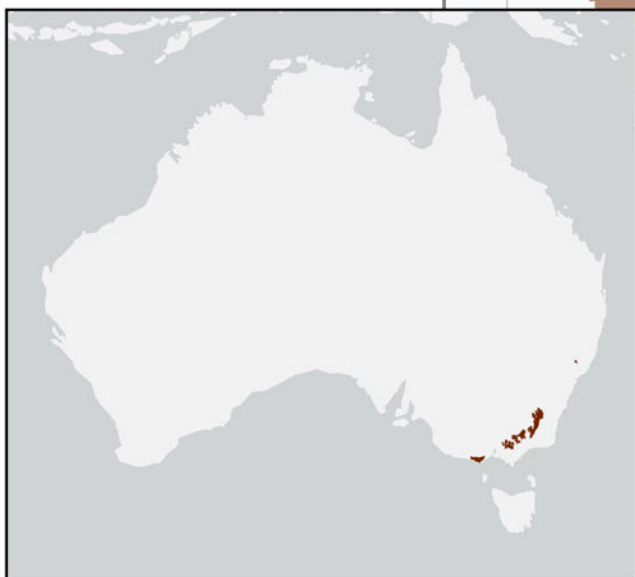
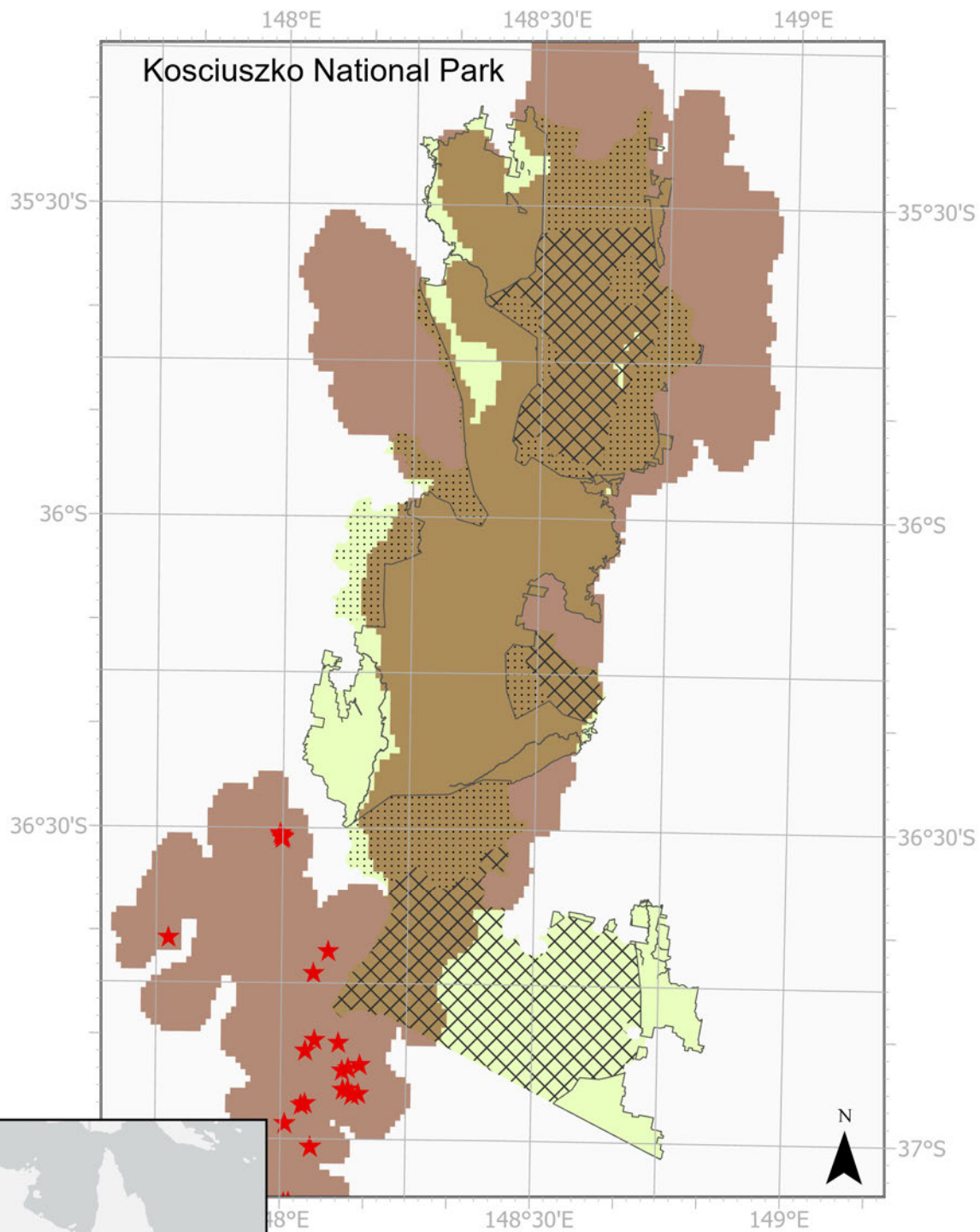


# Blue-tongued orchid (*Pterostylis oreophila*)

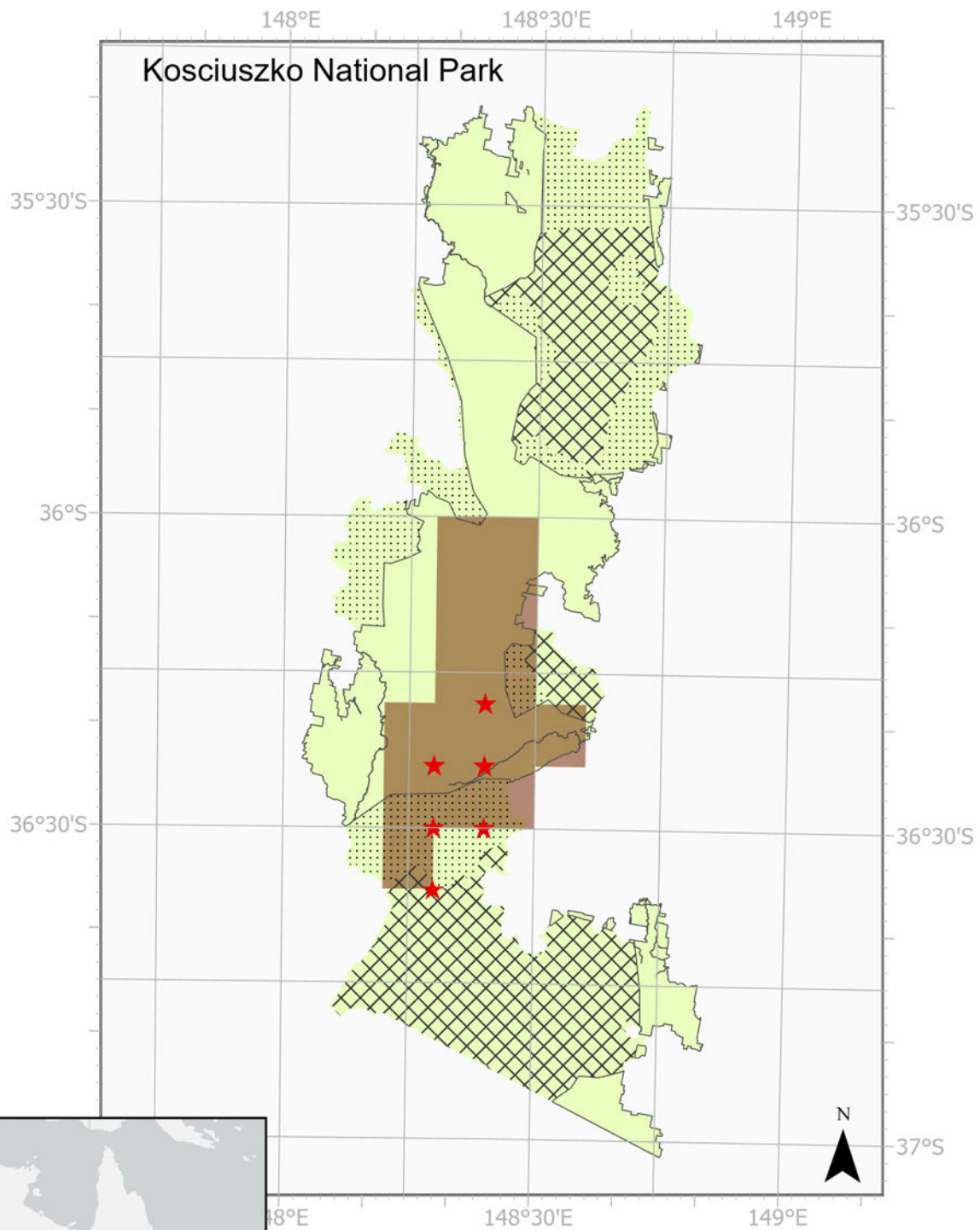




# Broad-toothed Rat (*Mastacomys fuscus mordicus*)



# Guthega Skink (*Liopholis guthega*)



Species or species habitat likely to occur

Atlas records for species

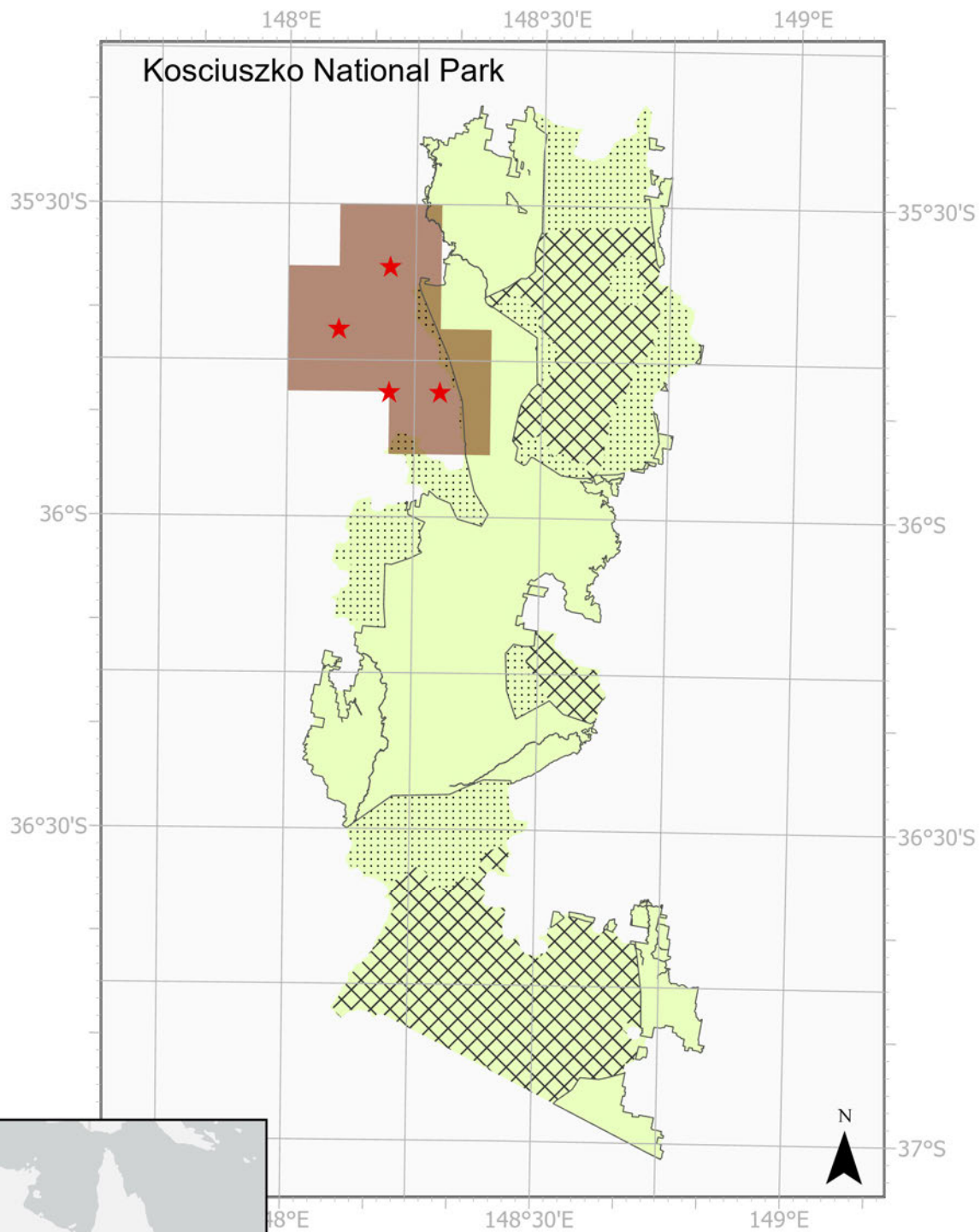
Horse Management Zones

Prevention

Removal

Retention

# Kelton's Leek Orchid (*Prasophyllum keltonii*)



Species or species habitat likely to occur

Atlas records for species

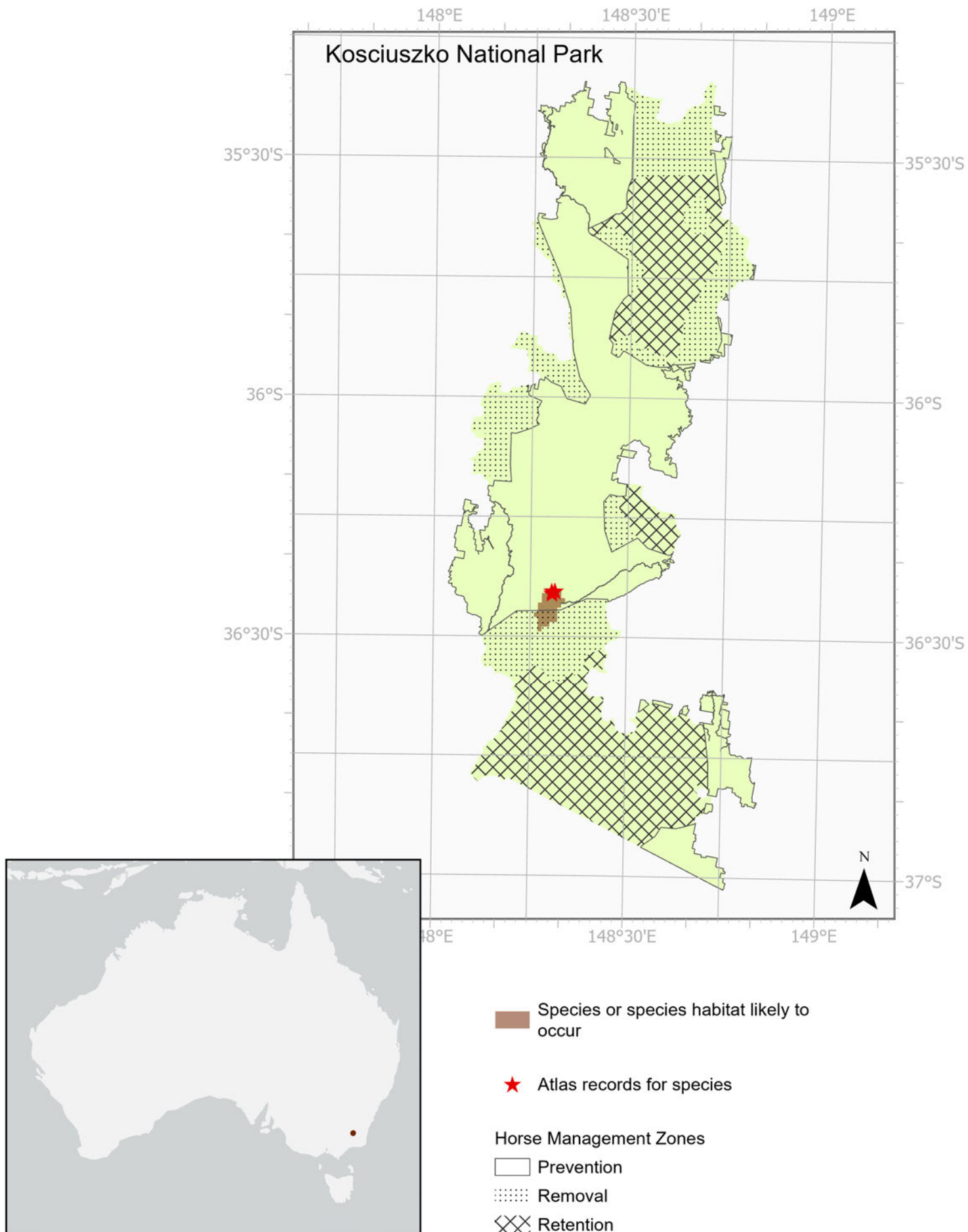
Horse Management Zones

Prevention

Removal

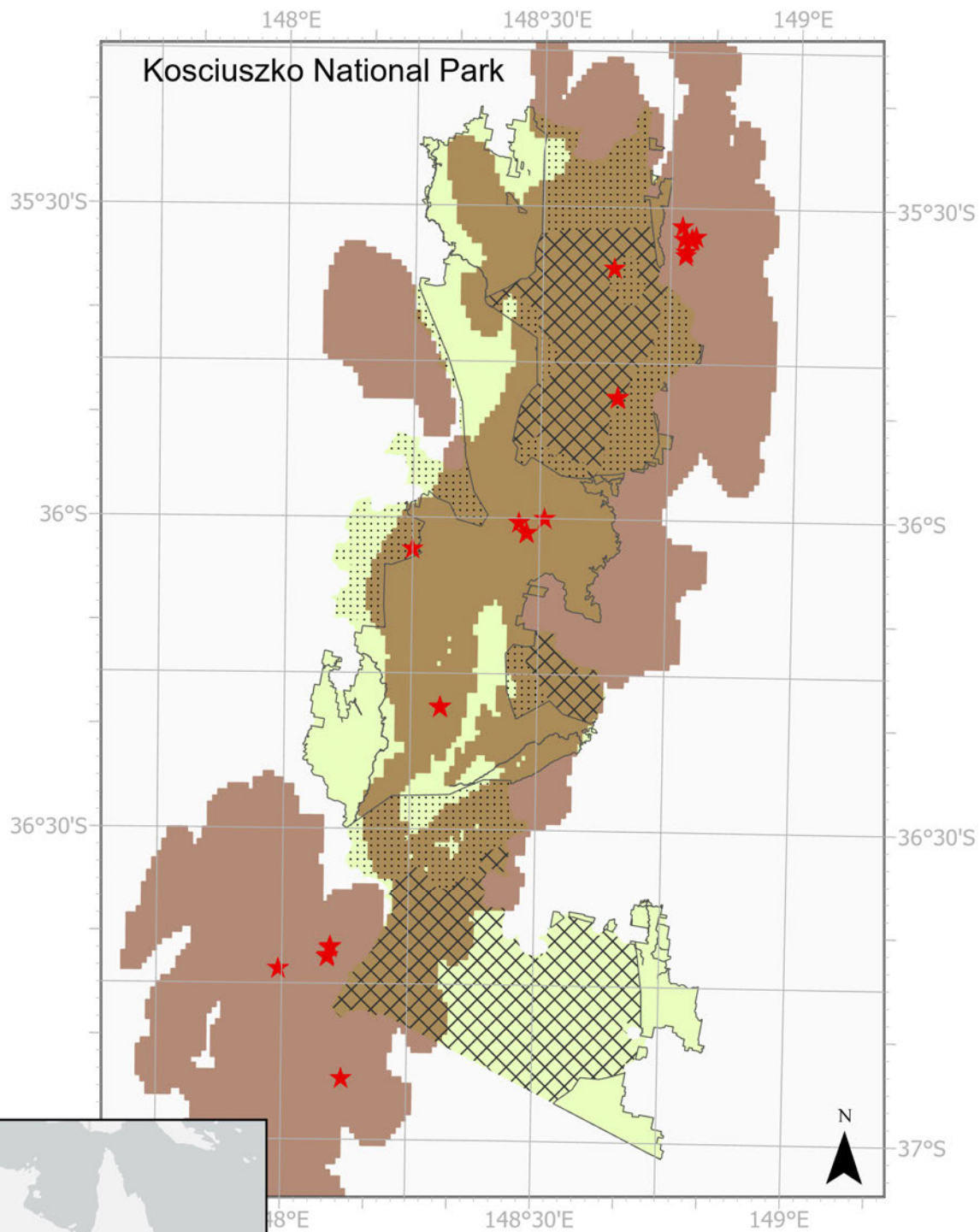
Retention

# Kosciuszko Galaxias (*Galaxias supremus*)

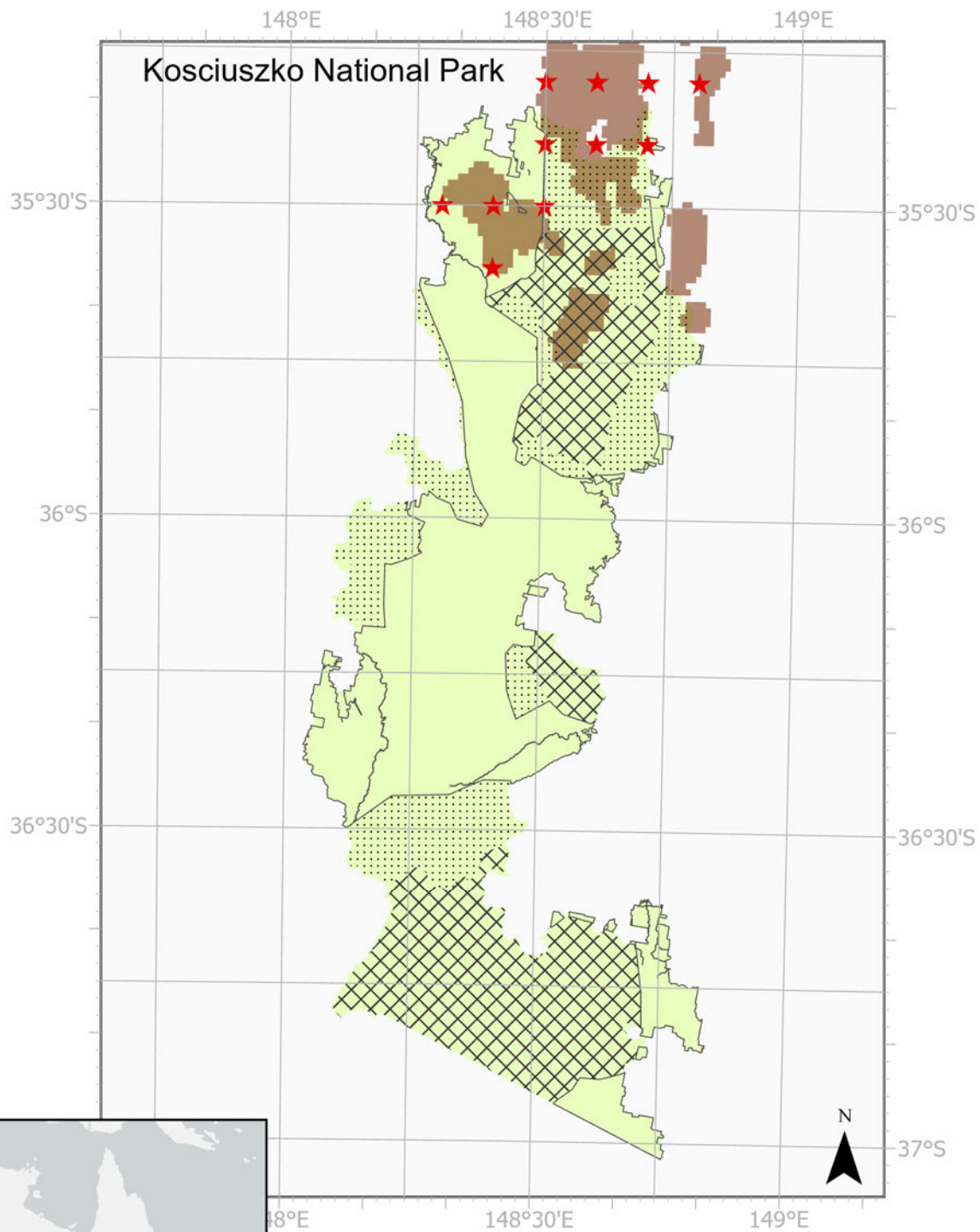





# Mountain Skink (*Liopholis montana*)



# Northern Corroboree Frog (*Pseudophryne pengilleyi*)



 Species or species habitat likely to occur

 Atlas records for species

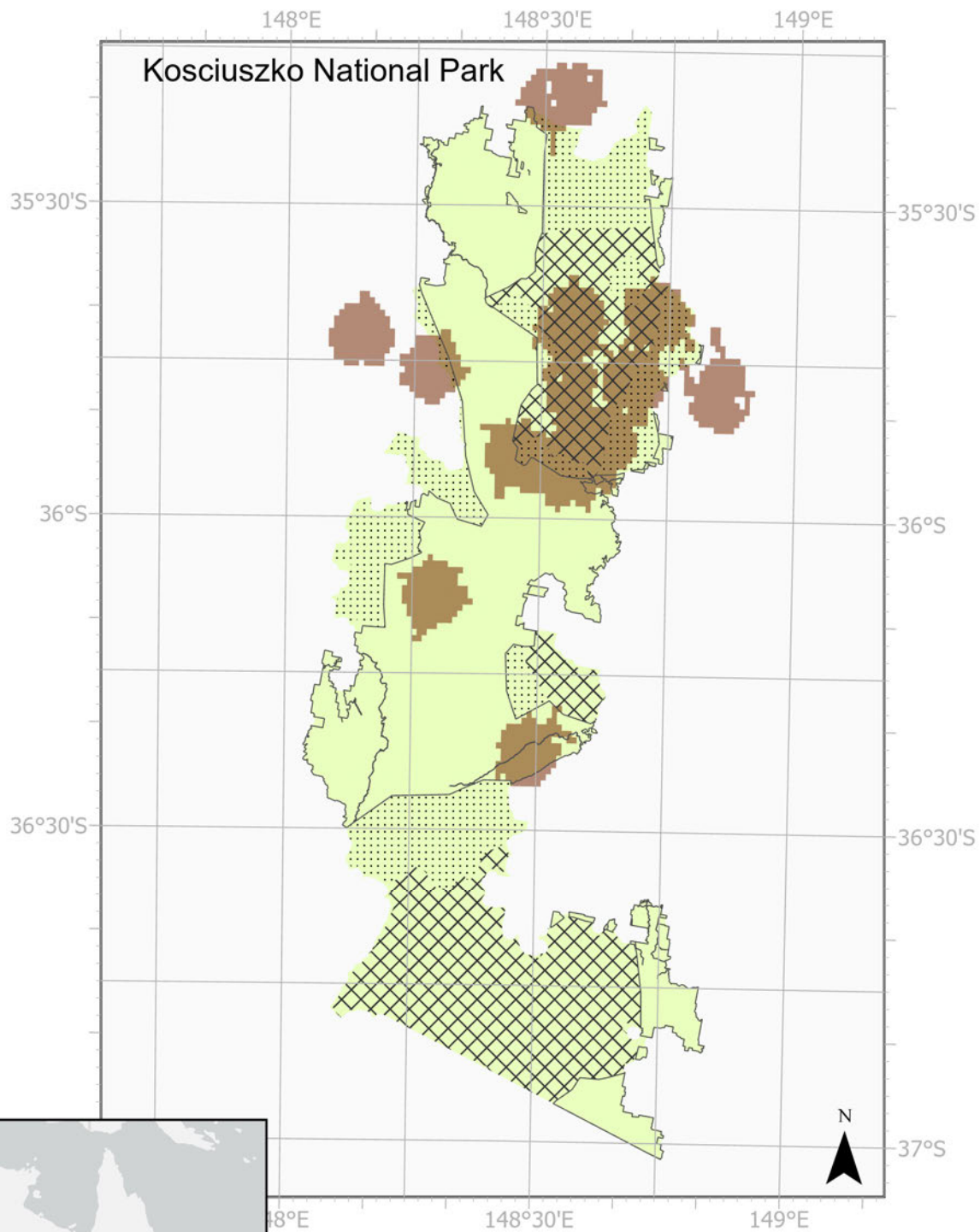
Horse Management Zones

 Prevention

 Removal

 Retention

# *Pimelea bracteata*



Species or species habitat likely to occur

★ Atlas records for species

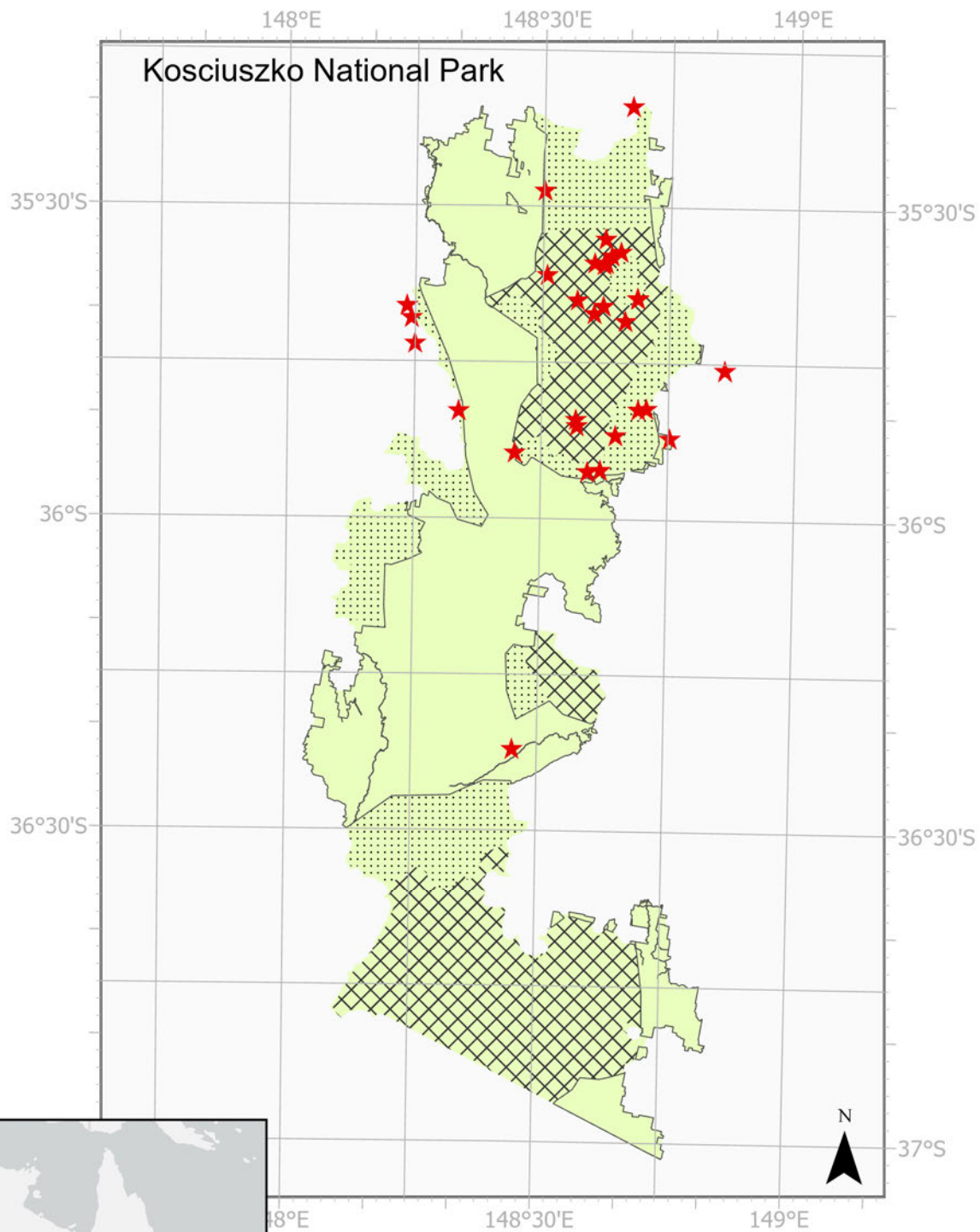
Horse Management Zones

Prevention

Removal

Retention

# Riek's Crayfish (*Euastacus rieki*)



★ Atlas records for species

Horse Management Zones

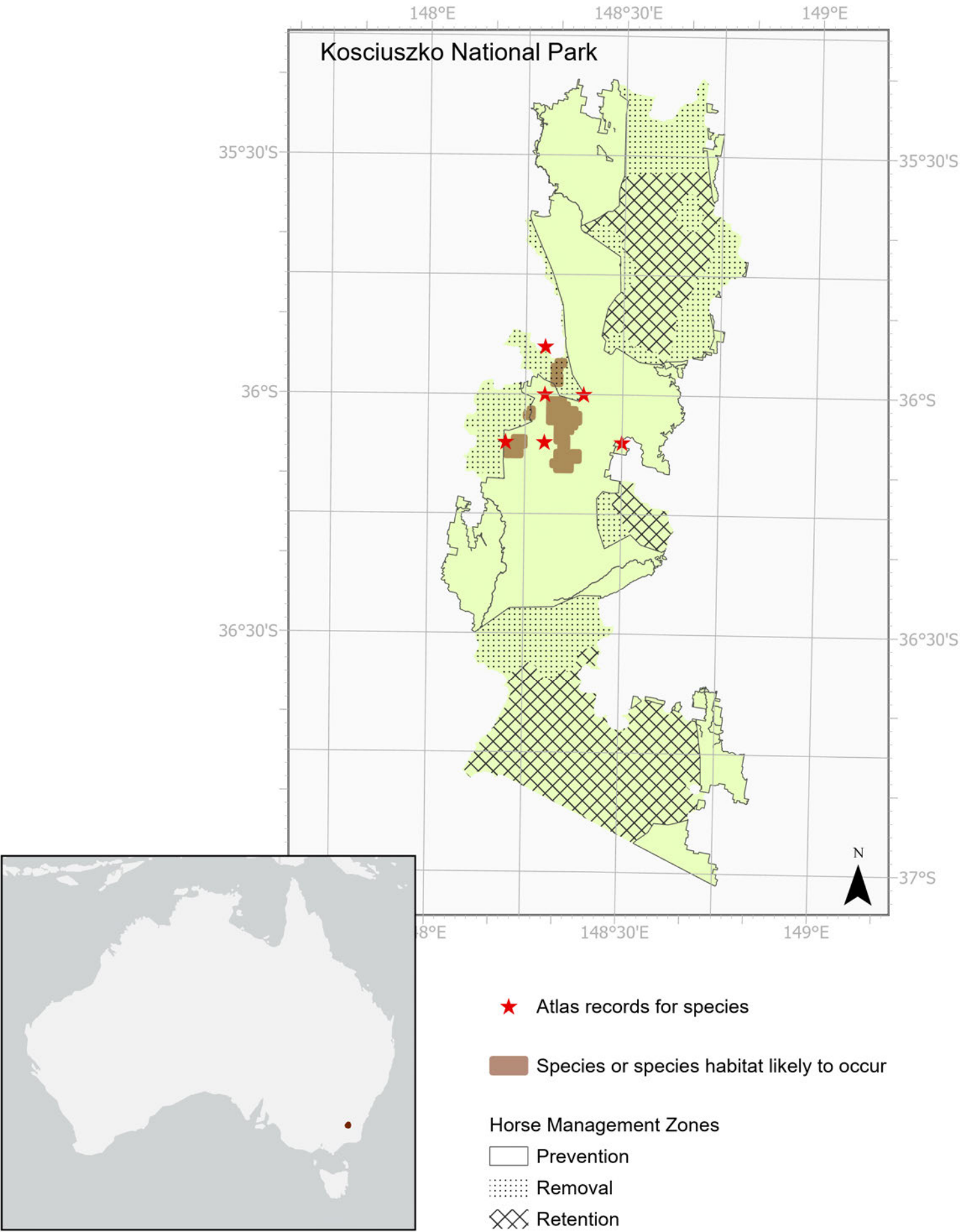
□ Prevention

⋯ Removal

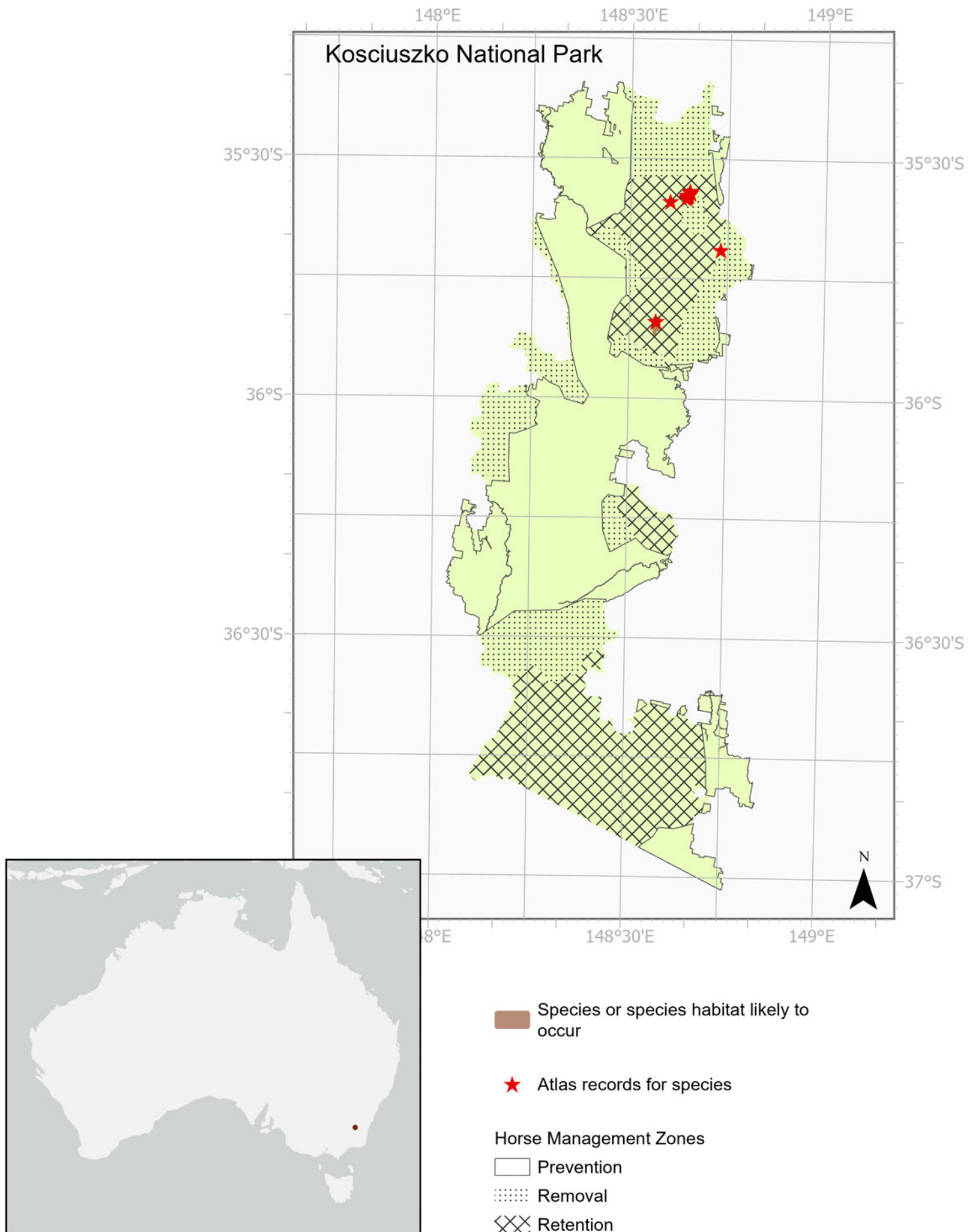
⊞ Retention



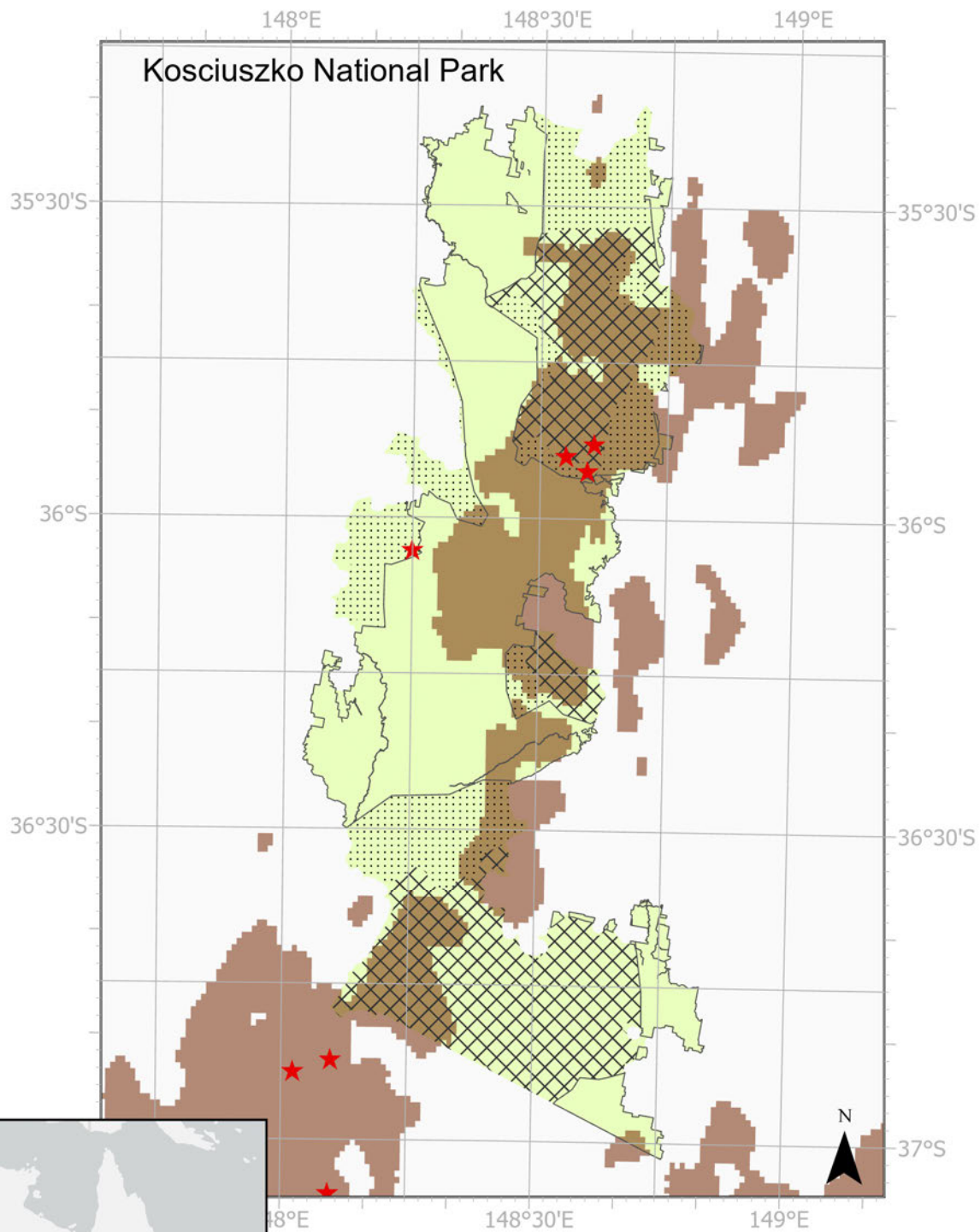
# Southern Corroboree Frog (*Pseudophryne corroboree*)



# Stocky Galaxias (*Galaxias tantangara*)



# Swamp Everlasting (*Xerochrysum palustre*)



Species or species habitat likely to occur

★ Atlas records for species

Horse Management Zones

Prevention

Removal

Retention