

# Emptied, not empty:

21st Century wild land in a 19th Century cultural  
landscape

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# Outline



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- Historical patterns of wild land in Scotland
- Data sources
- Method
- Analysis and results
- Discussion
- Conclusions

# Historical patterns



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- Assertion: contemporary patterns of wildness in Scotland are underlain by a rich cultural history of subsistence agriculture and later settlement desertion
  - The Highland Clearances 1760-1860
  - A period of resettlement/migration for sheep farming/sporting estates
  - Landscape as “Emptied, not empty” (Aitken et al., 1996)
- Counter assertion: pre-Clearance settlement pattern influenced by environmental factors (climate, soil, topography)
  - Settlement favoured alluvial soils in valley floors (Davis, 2007)
  - Some areas have always been “wild land” (Smout, 2000)

# Artistic reconstruction



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# Archaeological evidence



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# Landscape evidence



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# Concept of wild land



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*“Wild land in Scotland is relatively remote and inaccessible, not noticeably affected by contemporary human activity, and offers high-quality opportunities to escape from the pressures of everyday living and find physical and spiritual refreshment...”* (NTS, January 2002) [http://www.nts.org.uk/web/FILES/wild\\_land\\_policy\\_2002.pdf](http://www.nts.org.uk/web/FILES/wild_land_policy_2002.pdf)

# Data sources



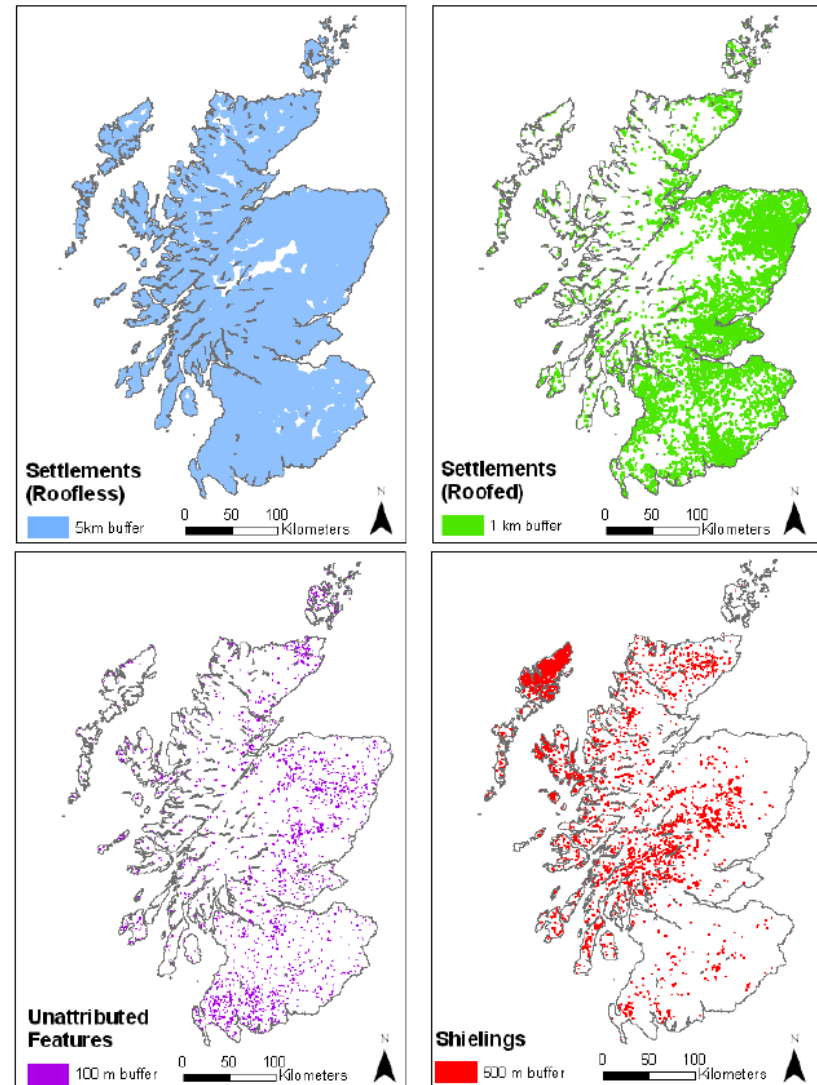
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- Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland
  - Point data set (n~42,000)
  - Attributes:
    - Post-medieval
    - Roofless in 1860
    - Roofed in 1860



Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland

Evaluation of Empty Areas





# Data sources

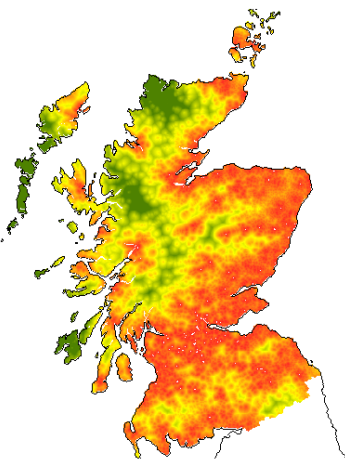
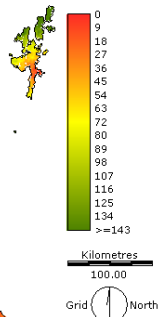


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- Wildness attributes
  - Remoteness: settlement and access
  - Naturalness: apparent and biophysical

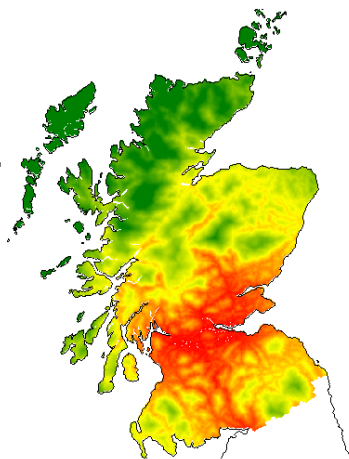
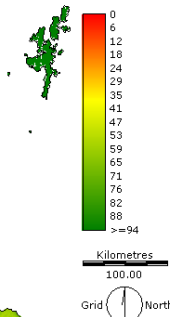
## Remoteness from settlement

Based on weighted distance from towns and villages (Standardized scale)



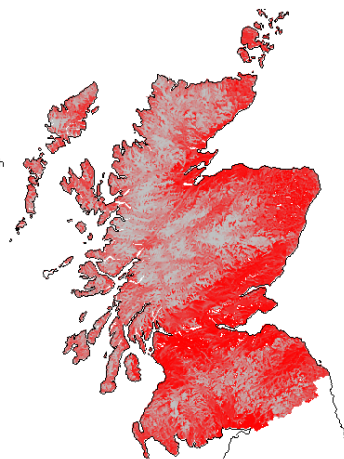
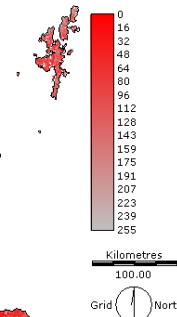
## Remoteness from access

Based on distance from roads weighted by capacity (Standardized scale)



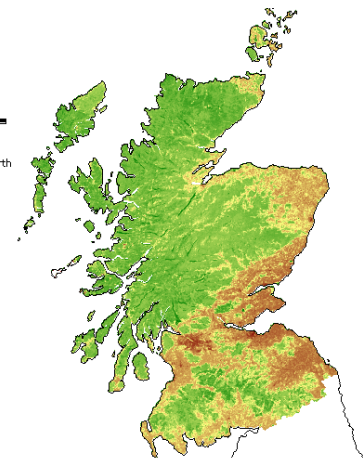
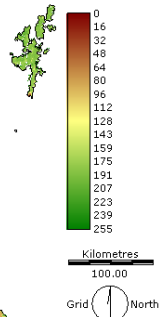
## Apparent naturalness

Based on cumulative distance weighted visibility analysis of human artefacts (Standardized scale)



## Biophysical naturalness

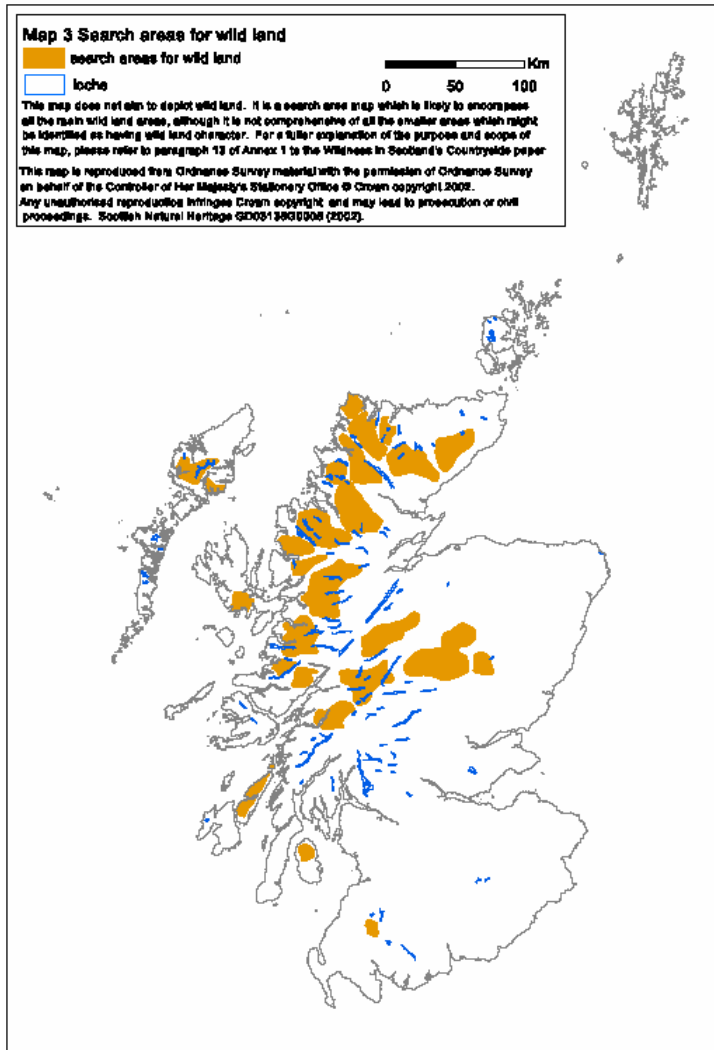
Based on reclass of CEH Land Classification (Standardized scale)



# Wild land patterns

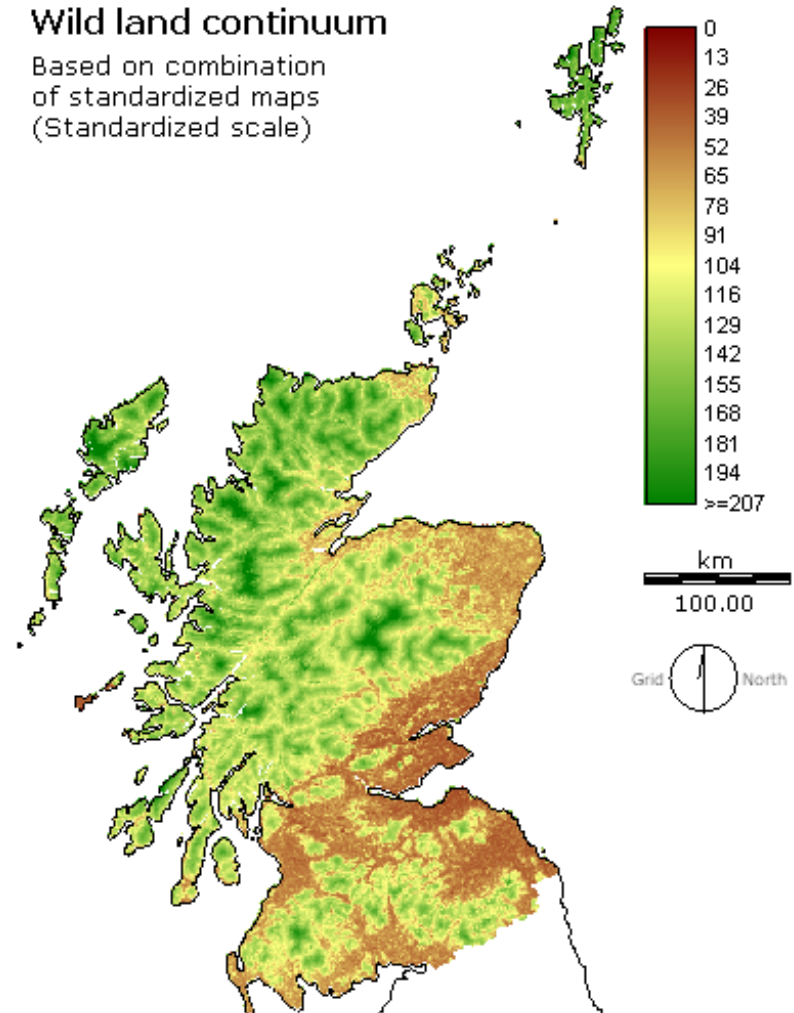


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## Wild land continuum

Based on combination of standardized maps (Standardized scale)



# Visual comparisons



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Figure 4. Wild land and indicative search areas

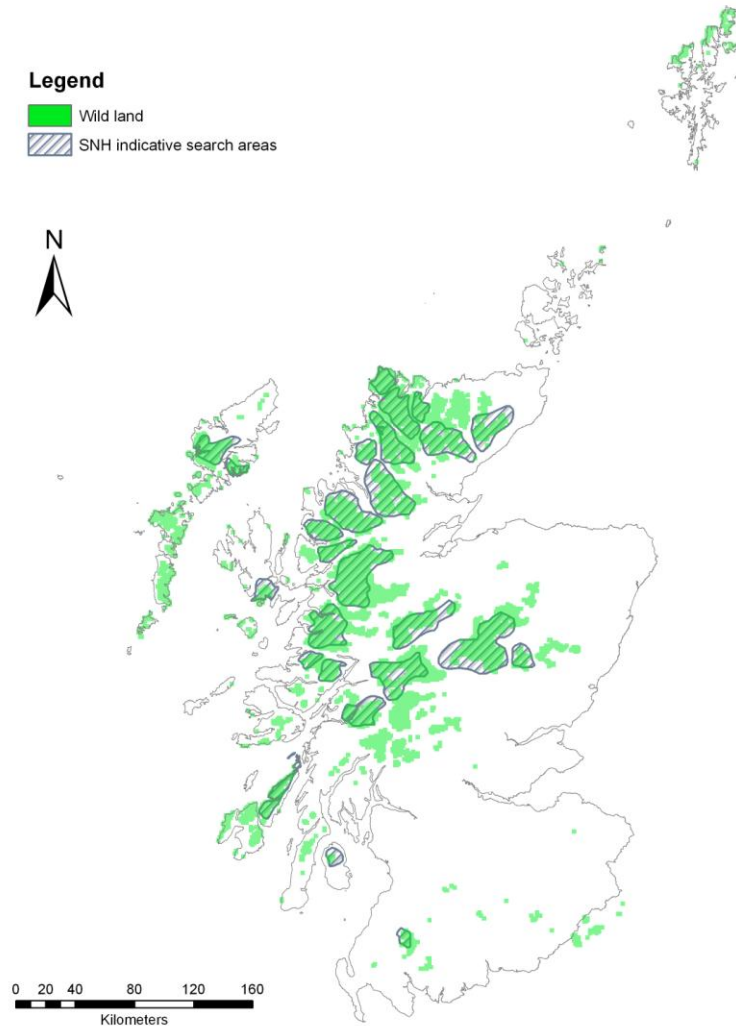
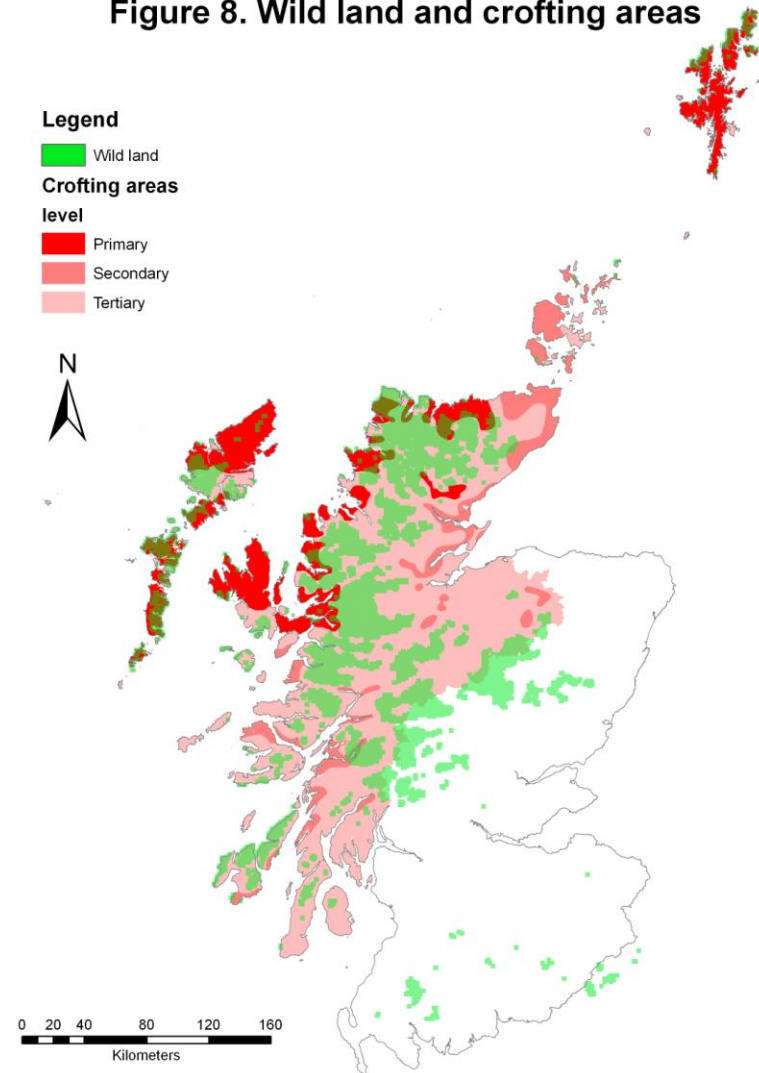


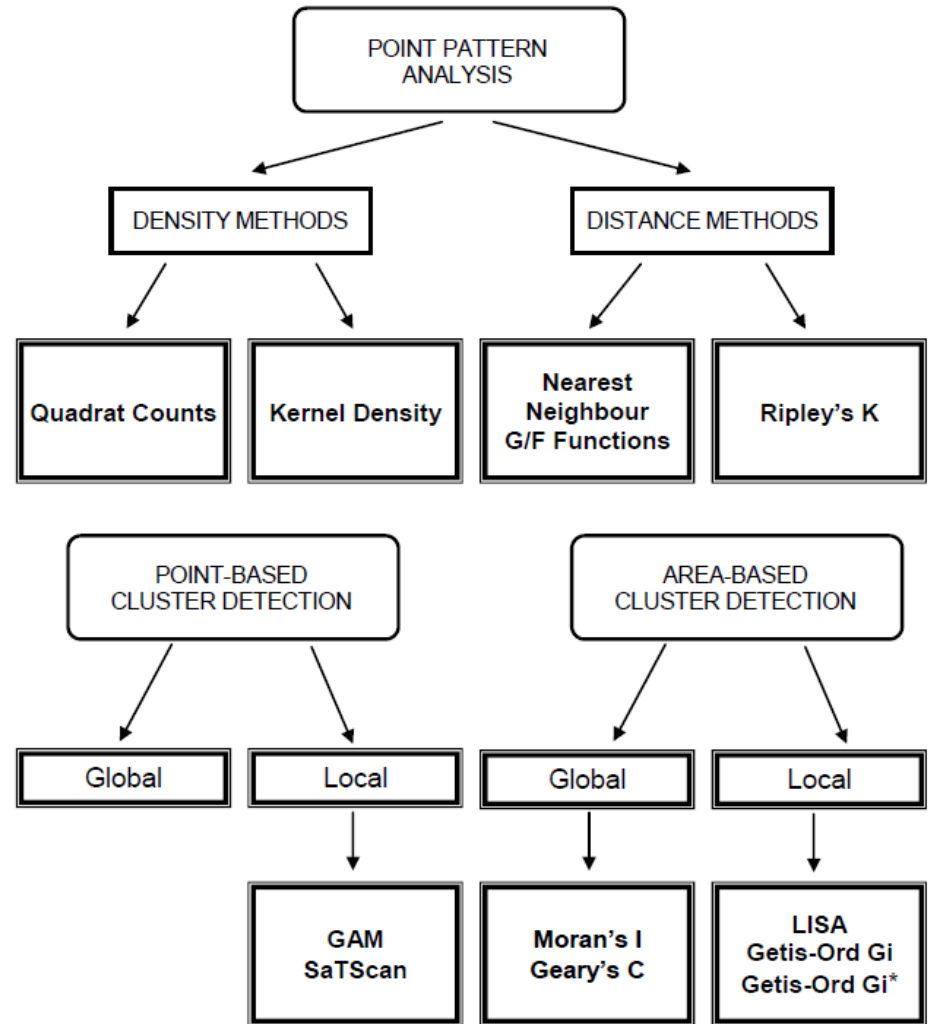
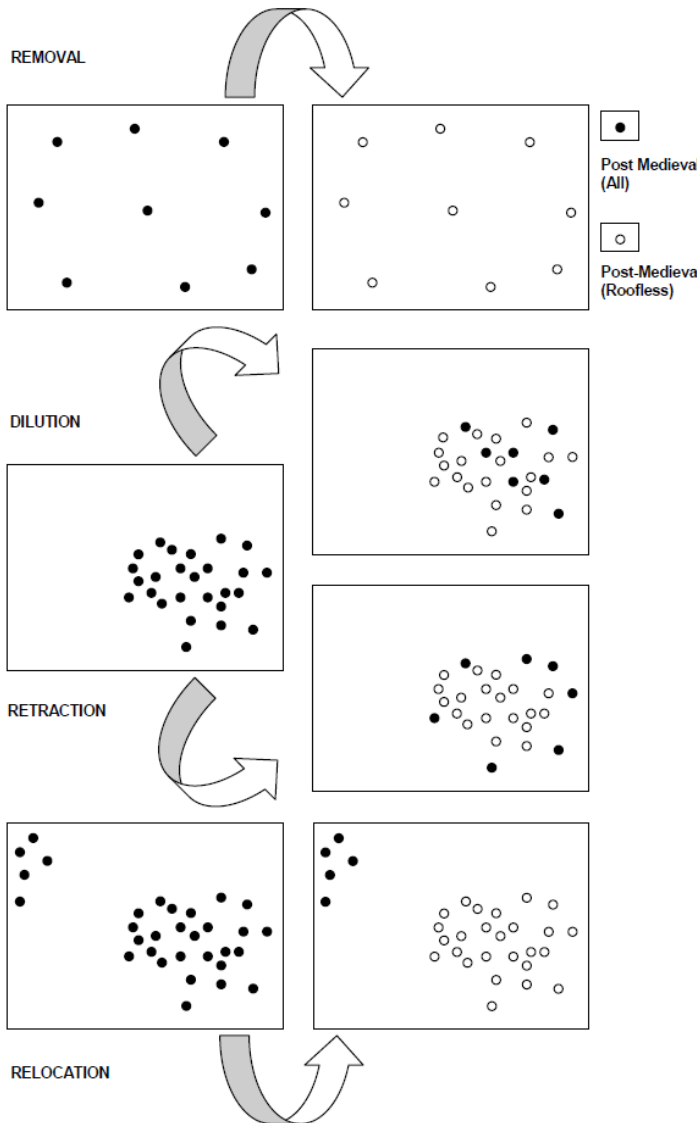
Figure 8. Wild land and crofting areas



# Methods of analysis



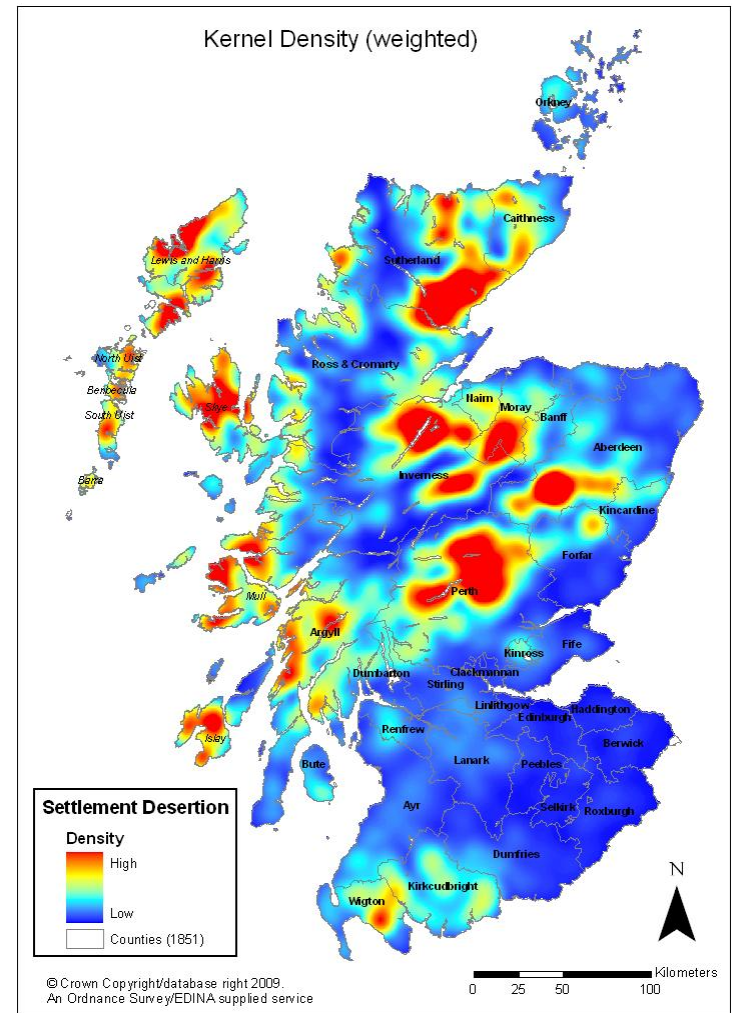
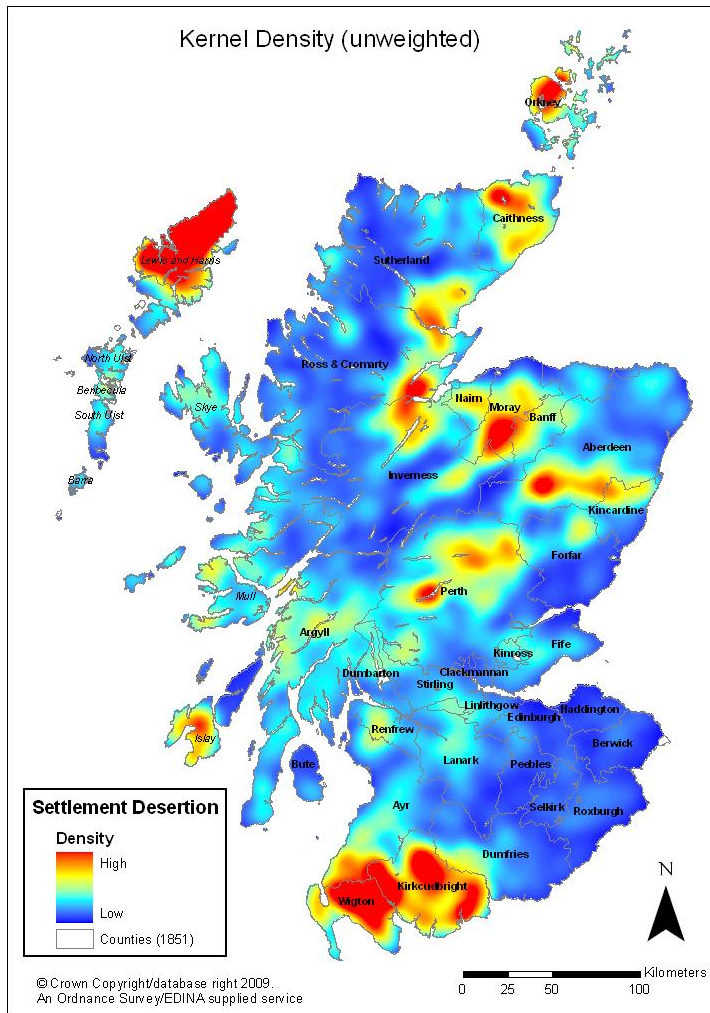
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# Settlement desertion



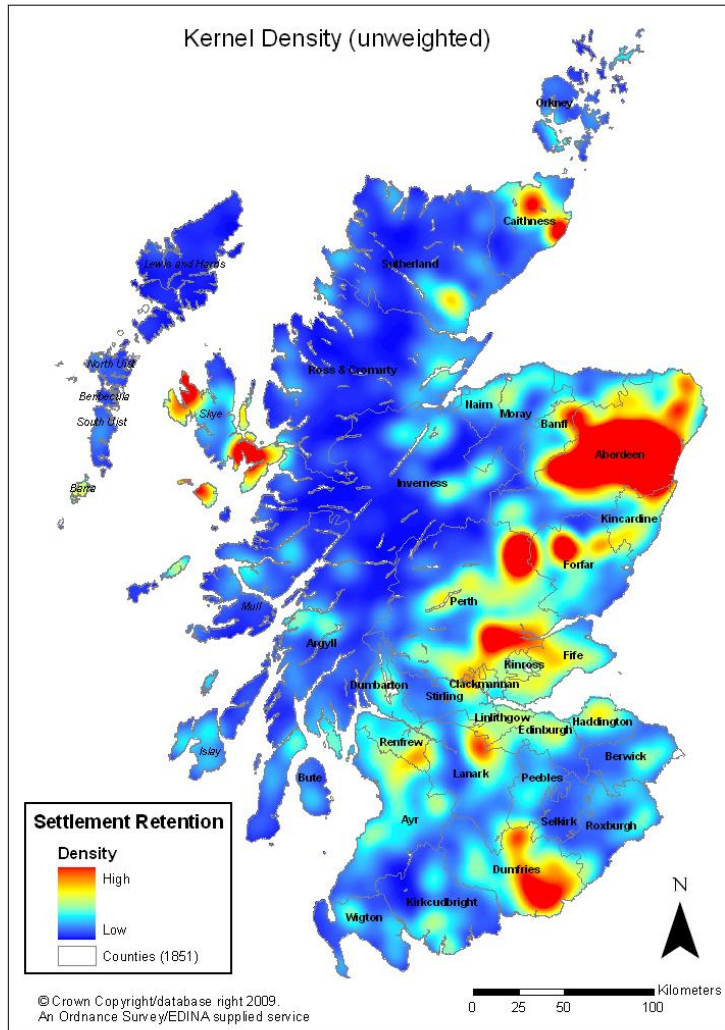
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# Settlement retention



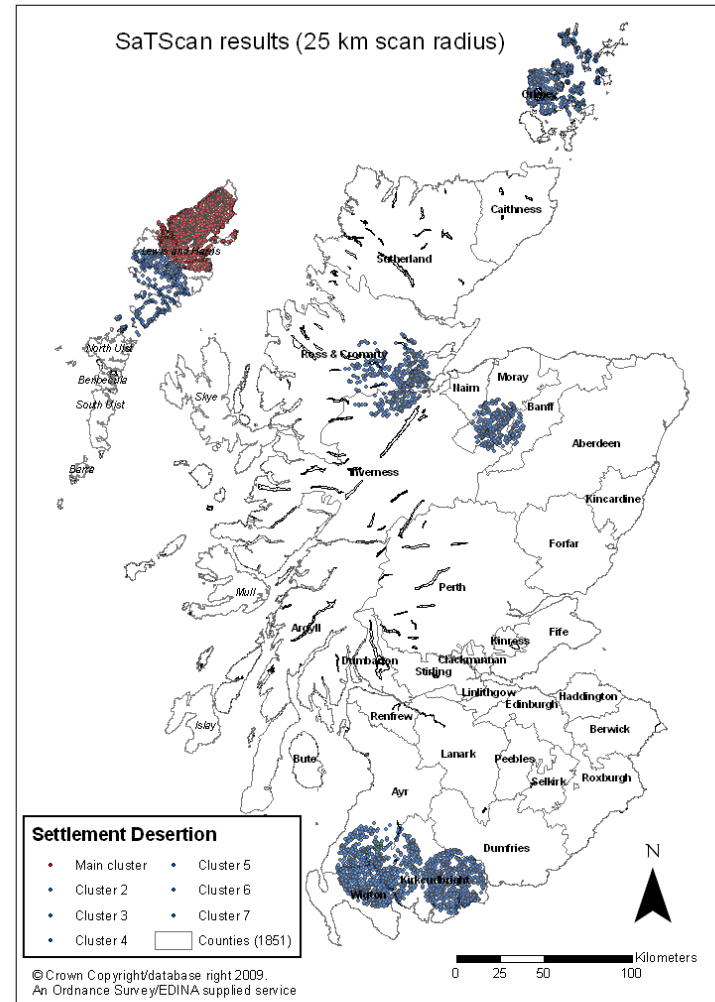
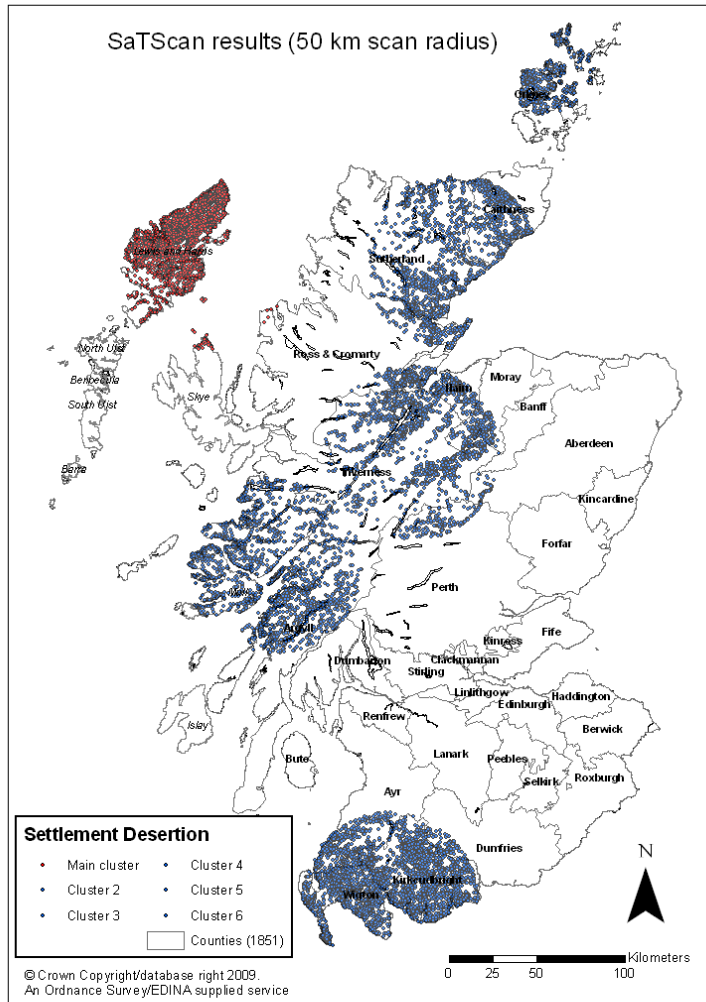
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# Settlement desertion



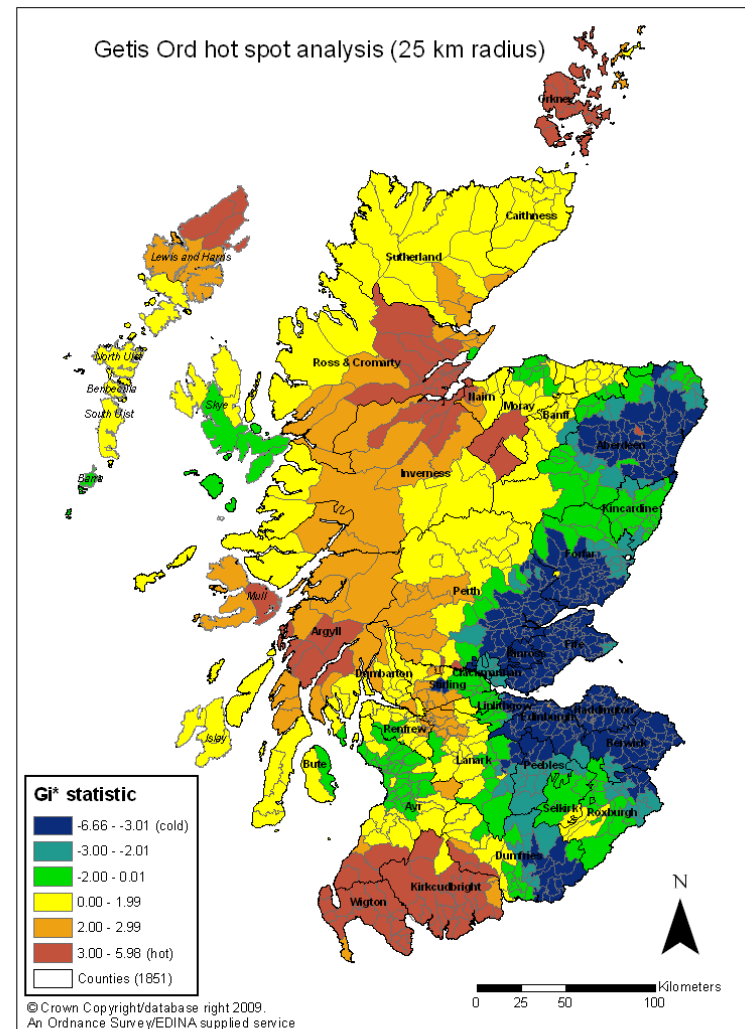
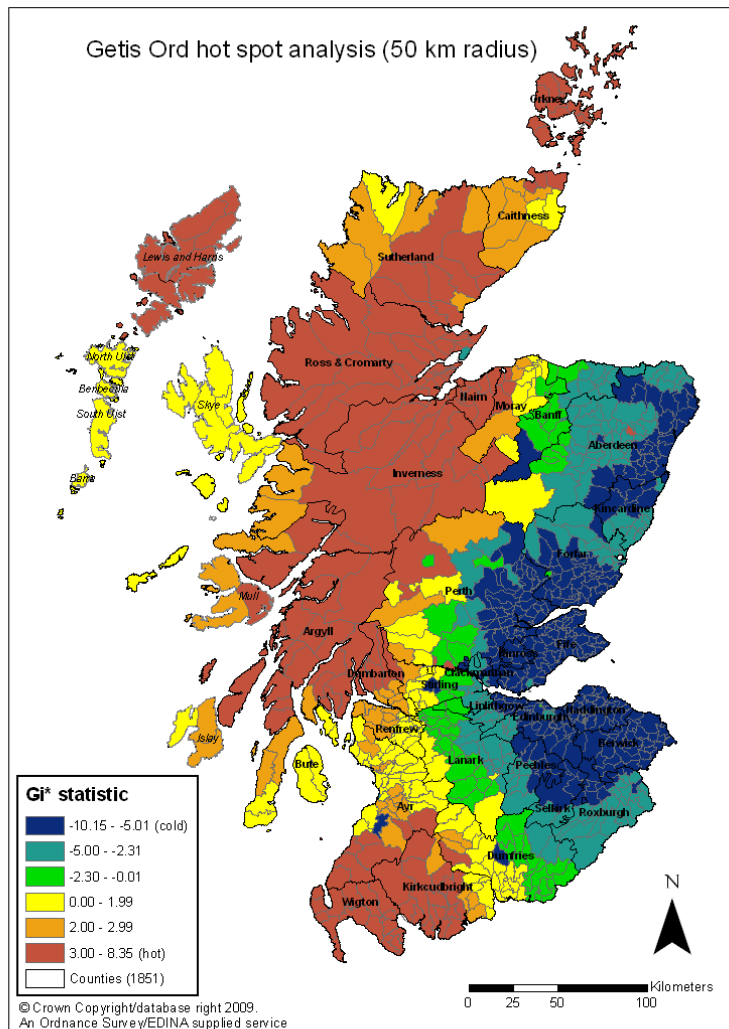
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# Hot spot analysis



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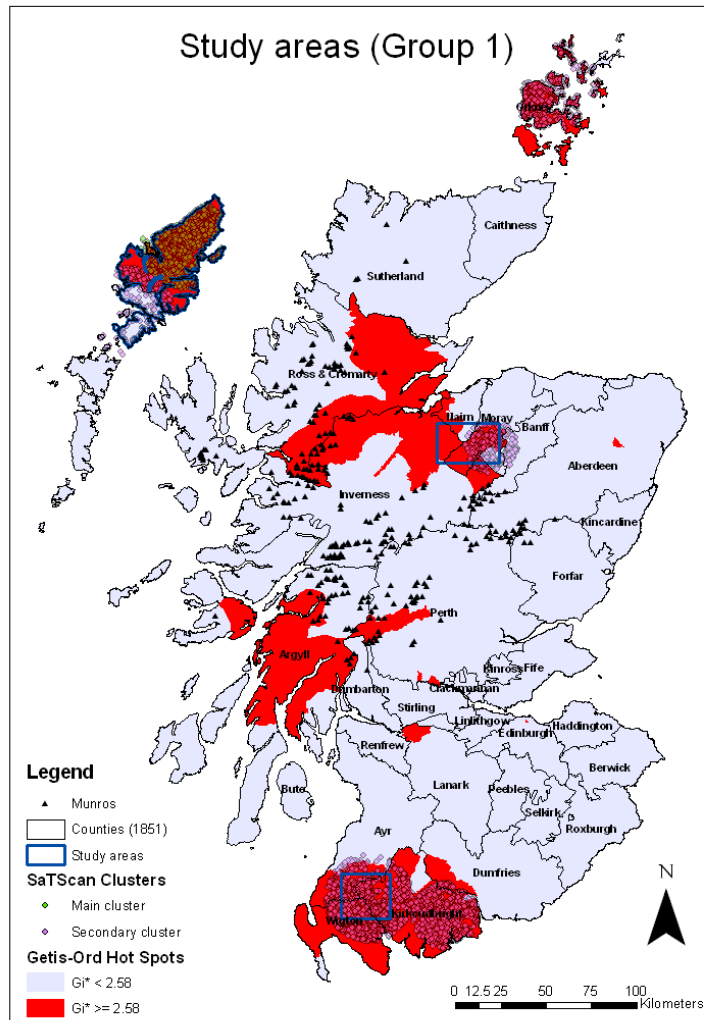




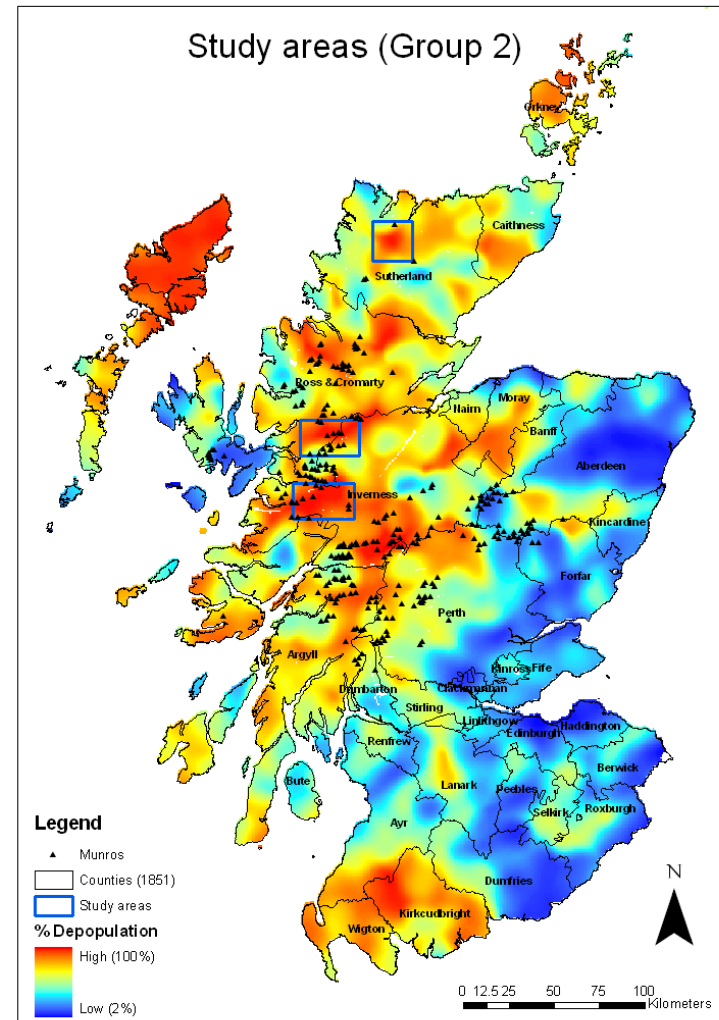
# Study area selection



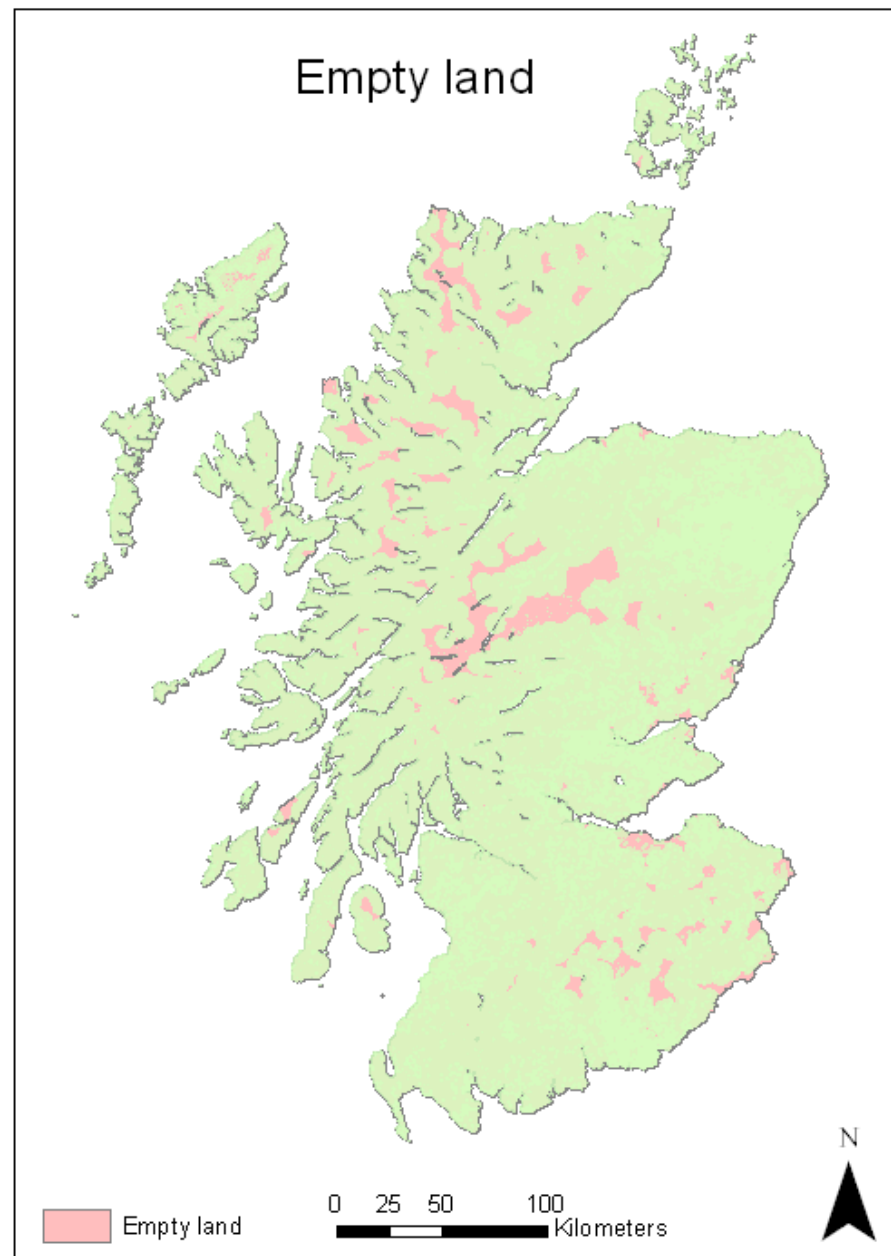
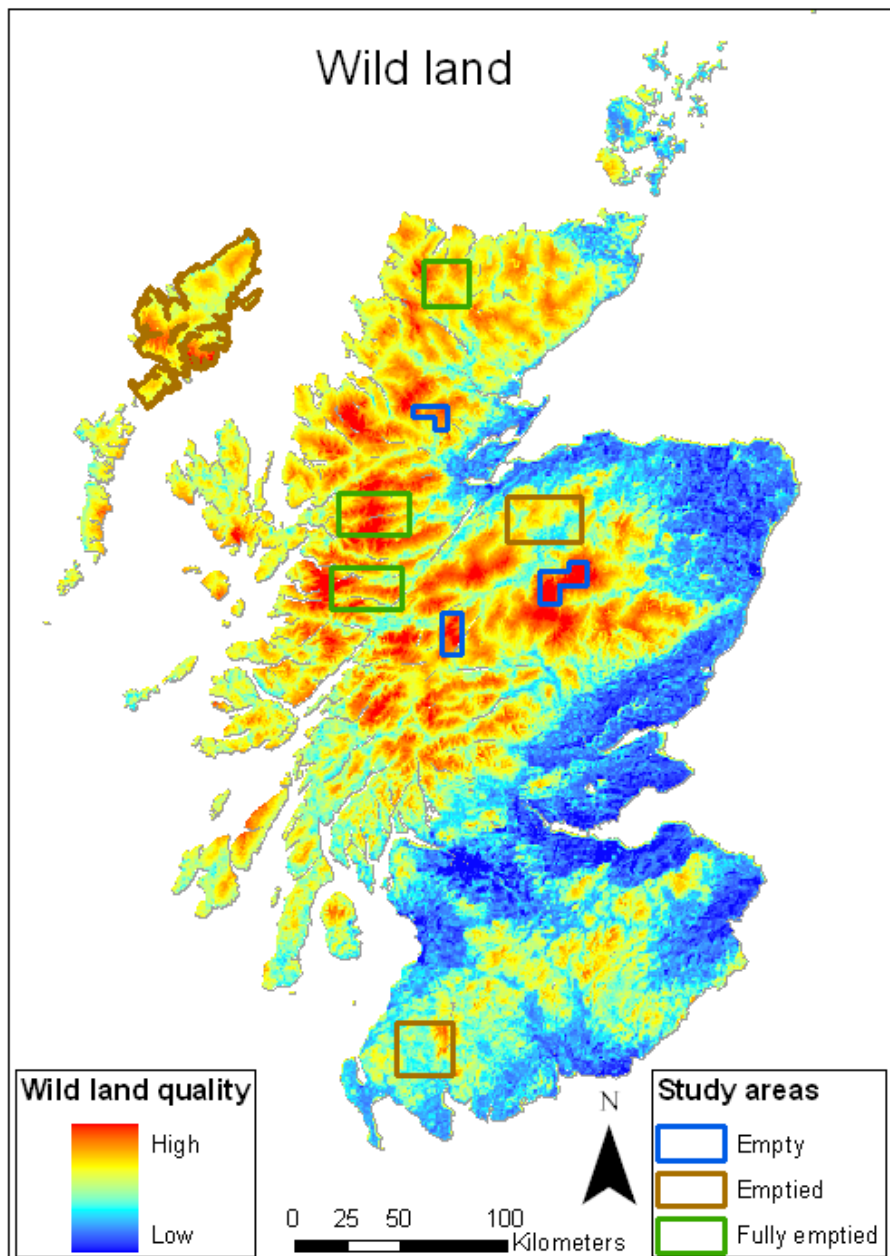
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# Conclusions



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- Evidence to support both assertions
  - Spatially constrained
  - Both empty and emptied areas
- Basis for wild land designation and re-wilding projects?
  - Politically sensitive to cultural histories of indigenous population
  - Extendable to other regions and cultures
  - Combine with fuzzy methods?

# Any questions?



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