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Bush wren: pp 184-186.

**South Island Bush Wren** (Matuhi) *Xenicus longipes longipes* (Gmelin 1789), Endemic  
21/4/1773 Dusky Sound, Fiordland

The Bush Wren was not mentioned specifically in Forster's journal, but the elder Forster's description of *Motacilla longipes* is dated 21/4/1773, when the *Resolution* was in Dusky Sound. Gmelin again named the bird, based on Latham's description of the younger Forster's painting. The last reliable record was in 1968, from the Nelson lakes.

**Stead's Bush Wren** *Xenicus longipes variabilis* Stead 1936, Endemic  
November 1931 Big South Cape

H. Guthrie-Smith (1925) was the first ornithologist to see this subspecies, when he visited Big South Cape and Solomon Islands off Stewart Island in 1913. However it was left to E.F. Stead, when he visited during 10th November–14th December 1931, to distinguish this form as different.

“ON some of the islands to the south-west of Stewart Island there is to be found a wren allied to the bush wren, *Xenicus longipes longipes*, of the mainland, but distinct in many respects. It was first brought to the notice of ornithologists by H. Guthrie-Smith, who described it under the name of bush wren (*X. longipes*) in “Birds of Land and Shore”. In 1931 I spent five weeks on these islands and saw that the bird was not the same as *X. longipes*, and I now propose to describe it as a new subspecies under the name of *Xenicus longipes variabilis*.

In point of size it is slightly smaller than *X. longipes*, but on comparing it with a series in the Natural History Museum, South Kensington, I found that the measurements overlapped. Besides the differences in size and colouration, there is a considerable difference in habit between *X.l. longipes* and *X.l. variabilis*. The former is chiefly arboreal in habit and nests in trees; the latter is largely terrestrial and often nests in holes in the ground, though sometimes in prostrate logs or in clumps of fern.

Perhaps the most remarkable difference between the two birds is in the size of their eggs, those of the larger, *X.l. longipes*, being  $18 \times 13.5$ , while those of *X.l. variabilis* are  $21.5 \times 15.5$  and  $21 \times 15$ —very nearly half as bulky again.

*X.l. variabilis* is fairly abundant on at least three of the islands to the south-west of Stewart Island and possibly on two others” (Stead 1937). This Bush Wren persisted on Stewart Island until 1951, Solomon until the early 1960s, and Big South Cape until 1965. An invasion of ship rats finished them off. Six were transferred to Kaimohu Island, but they had disappeared by 1972.

**North Island Bush Wren** *Xenicus longipes stokesii* G.R. Gray 1862, Endemic  
1862 Rimutaka Range, Wellington

Two specimens of this Bush Wren were collected by either Lyall or Strange in 1850, and forwarded to the British Museum. An adult specimen was thought to be the South Island form, but the other specimen, a juvenile, was described by Gray (1862). It has not been reliably recorded since 1955.