

Watola, G. 2011. The Discovery of New Zealand's Birds. (3rd Edition in prep.)
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Kakapo: pp 169-170.

Kakapo *Strigops habroptila* G.R. Gray 1845, Endemic
1845 Dusky Sound, Fiordland

Dieffenbach mentioned the Kakapo, although he did not see a specimen. He obtained some tail-feathers “of a green metallic lustre”, and thought it might belong to the cuckoo family (*Centropus*).

Dr. Dieffenbach further remarks that: “the living birds, nor even an entire specimen, have not been seen by any of the missionaries, nor by the natives, for manj’ years past. Its destruction he considers to be owing to the introduction of cats and dogs, as the bird used to perch only on the lower branches of trees, and therefore was easily obtained by those animals. The natives caught it by means of the glare of a torch during the night. Mr. P. Earl is induced, from information which he obtained during his recent travels, to suppose that this rare bird still exists in the southern parts of the South Island, and that it seldom visits the northern portions. He was informed by Mr. Gerard, many years resident in New Zealand, that he had seen the bird in the bay in which he lived, and described it as a climbing bird; and by Mr. Hughes, a whaling master at Moiraki, that he had had a living specimen in his possession some years ago. Mr. H. said that it had a long tail; the bill was hooked like a hawk or a parrot’s; and that it was very strong on the wing, and would attack other birds, even the *Nestor meridionalis*, to which it was little inferior in size” (Gray 1844).

One was collected at Dusky Sound in 1845, and forwarded by a dealer, Turner, to England where Gray (1845) described it.