

Watola, G. 2011. The Discovery of New Zealand's Birds. (3rd Edition in prep.)
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Huia: pp 196-197.

Huia *Heteralocha acutirostris* (Gould 1837), Endemic
1835 Wainuiomata Hills, Wellington

Yate (1835) wrote: "Huia --This bird is found only in the mountainous districts of Taranaki, and farther south than Waiapu or the East Cape. It is a black bird, about the size of a nightingale, with long slender yellowish legs and feet. The plumage is of a glossy black, and very fine: it has, for its tail, four long broad black feathers, tipped with white at the extremity, which gives it a very lively appearance: these feathers are much valued by the natives, and are sent as presents to the natives of the Bay of Islands, to ornament their hair on grand occasions, or when going out to battle. The most remarkable feature in the appearance of this bird is the form of its beak, which is slender, and resolves itself into an exact semicircle. It resides in deep long grass: its food is worms and insects, with a small berry called ponga".

Two specimens were obtained by a sea captain from a Maori chief, and forwarded to Gould, also in 1835. Gould described the male and female as two distinct species. Gray (1862) refers to the Huia as being recorded from Port Nicholson and the Tararua Range ("Torirua range"). It had been hunted out of existence by 1907, though rumours still persist of its survival. They were reported by trampers as late as 1949.