

Watola, G. 2011. The Discovery of New Zealand's Birds. (3rd Edition in prep.)
Based on: Watola, G. 2009. The Discovery of New Zealand's Birds. (2nd Edition)
Arun Books, Orewa, New Zealand.
Updated and amended text supplied by George Watola, October, 2011.
Page numbers follow Watola, G. 2009 (2nd Edition)
Black robin: pp 206-207.

Black Robin *Petroica traversi* (Buller 1872), Endemic
September 1871 Mangere Island and Pitt Island, Chatham Islands

H. H. Travers collected four specimens when he visited the Chathams in 1871. He obtained two specimens from Pitt Island on 16/9/1871, and two from Mangere Island, in September and December 1871.

“I only found this bird at Mangare, where it is not uncommon. It is very fearless, possessing in other respects the habits of *Petroica albifrons* and *P. longipes*. Its ordinary note is also the same, but I did not hear it sing. It appears to be specially obnoxious to *Anthornis melanocephala*, which always attacks it most savagely when they meet. There is no apparent difference in the plumage of the sexes” (Travers 1872).

Hutton then sent two specimens to Buller in London as a courtesy, on Hector's instructions. Buller (1872) published a description in June 1872, although Hutton had already described the bird as *P. traversi*. This was the cause of some ill-feeling between the two men.

A population of 254 birds was estimated in 1999, from the low of one breeding female (the famous 'Old Blue') in 1979. Only 180 were estimated in 2007, possibly due to lower productivity or a change in survey methods. Miller & Lambert (2006) found the Black Robin grouped with the tomtits based on DNA sequences.