

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)
South Island kokako: pp 194-195.

South Island Kokako (Koka) *Callaeas cinerea* (Gmelin 1788), Endemic
February 1770 Queen Charlotte Sound, Marlborough

During January and February 1770, Parkinson saw three kinds of birds with wattles in Queen Charlotte Sound. The Kokako would have most likely been one of these. A specimen from here was taken back to England by Banks, who gave it to his friend, Marmaduke Tunstall.

Cook (1777) described Kokako at Dusky Sound in 1773: "The wattle-bird, so called, because it has two wattles under its beak as large as those of a small dunghill-cock, is larger, particularly in length, than an English black-bird. Its bill is short and thick, and its feathers of a dark lead colour; the colour of its wattles is a dull yellow, almost an orange colour."

The last confirmed report of its existence was in 1967, but circumstantial reports continue until the present day. Ron Nilsson, after many years of searching, has reported a sighting recently in June 2004. There are also many recent unconfirmed reports of this secretive species, especially from Westland (see <http://www.nznature.co.nz/nwatch.htm>). A few may still exist, but the species is probably doomed unless a co-ordinated official effort is initiated. It is now officially regarded as extinct.