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Australasian harrier: pp 107-108.

Swamp Harrier (Kahu) *Circus approximans* Peale 1848, Native
1835 Bay of Islands, Northland
1850 Norfolk Island

The Harrier was supposedly collected by the Forsters in 1773 at Dusky Sound and Queen Charlotte Sound, according to Oliver (1955). These records probably referred to the New Zealand Falcon. Yate (1835) wrote: "Kahu - A large and powerful bird, of the hawk species. It has great strength of wing and talon; and alights with such force upon its prey, as at one blow to sever the head from a duck, or to slay outright a full-grown turkey. When one of these birds makes its appearance, the whole of the poultry-yard is put in agitation, and continues in a state of great restlessness till it has retired out of sight.

The general food of this rapacious bird is rats and young wild-ducks. It rarely visits the barn-door, and never attacks domestic fowls, except when much pressed by hunger. This bird, though to appearance large, is actually very small, and is remarkably lanky in its body. The sinews are so strong, as almost to resist, or to blunt, the edge of a good knife".

It was also recorded by Polack (1838). Specimens were collected by Percy Earl at Waikouaiti in 1840. Oliver (1930) stated that Peale had collected it in the Bay of Islands in (March) 1840, followed later by Earl. It is apparently a recent immigrant to New Zealand as the pre-human Harrier records are all of the endemic extinct *C. eylesi* (= *teuteensis*) (Holdaway et al. 2001). A. von Pelzeln recorded it on Norfolk Island before 1850.