New Zealand. Like many other isolated island groups, it has a long history of bird extinction. About 32 species died out in the 19th century between the arrival of Polynesians and the arrival of Europeans, mostly for all the major species. In the 20th century European contact, about 20 species have become extinct, 5 species probably died since 1990. The main factors that contributed to extinction were loss of habitat, introduced mammalian predators and exotic Lesser New Zealand. Birds in the image are not the same as those listed for the New Zealand Wrens. The New Zealand Wrens are a group of small birds with no close affinity to other groups of birds. They have short, rounded wings and a longer tail, compared to most South Island thrushes.

BUSH WREN Xenicus longipes
Probable extinction endemic
9, c., larger and darker than R. kershawi but easily mistaken in the ghost of the forest. They are essentially sedentary, but they do move about in search of food. They are generally found in pairs or small groups.

New Zealand Wrens Acantizetes
total area of 1000 km², which is smaller than the South Island.

All 4 species are endemic to New Zealand. 1 species is the Stephens Island Wren (Acantizetes) that became extinct in 1884. It is probably extinct, and may not have survived.

248. BUSH WREN Xenicus longipes
Other name: Macu BUSH WREN Xenicus longipes

All 4 species are endemic to New Zealand. 1 species is the Stephens Island Wren (Acantizetes) that became extinct in 1884. It is probably extinct, and may not have survived.

248. BUSH WREN Xenicus longipes
Other name: Macu

Bush wren size 9.1 cm, 9.1 cm Geographical variation: Three subspecies: the North Island Bush Wren subspecies of the North Island, the South Island Bush Wren longipes of the South Island, and the Bush Wren carolae of Stewart Island and its outliers.

Distribution: New Zealand. Softfern remains are scarce, but Bush Wrens were apparently widespread both before European settlement. The North Island Bush Wren was probably absent from Northland but was widespread in the forest until the late 1800s, though not common in the Ruffins. In the 19th century, the only significant records were from the southern Rarumata Range (1910) and the Wheroa Range (1933). The North Island Bush Wren was described as common throughout the forested forest of the country, especially that of the Beech Forest, from northeastern Nelson to the Richmond Range and the Kaikoura Range. They were probably found in the Alps to Flinders. By the early 1800s, these populations were declining rapidly, and by the 1900s they were recorded only sporadically, and mainly in Fiordland; however, the two authentic records are from the Little Wairarapa River and the Wairarapa River. They were also recorded in Nelson Lakes National Park in 1968. Subsequently, there have been few records of birds in the Nelson Lakes area and Fiordland.

Bush Wren (Xenicus longipes) is a species of bird endemic to New Zealand. They are found in Stewart Island and the coastal 'mulberry' shrubs of the Chiro and Heke valleys on several isolated islands. They survived on Stewart Island up to 1951, Arataki (Whitianga) Islet up to the early 1940s, and the South Shaw Island up to 1935. In 1964, ship rats invaded Big South Cape Islet, and 8 birds were transported to Kakanui Islet, where they persisted until the last sighting in 1972.

Population: Probable extinct. Some hope exists for the recent discovery of Ruffins in the dense forest of Nelson, where they are thought to have been extirpated. The most likely places that a few birds could persist are in the Ureweras, Nelson Lakes area, Fiordland or Stewart Island.

Conservation: Probably extinct endemic. The Bush Wren declined around the time of European settlement with the loss of much of the forest, and disappeared from most of the country in the late 1880s with the arrival of ship rats and muskrats. The situation of the Bush Wren is directly attributable to the arrival of ship rats at Kotukawa and Big South Cape Islands in the early 1900s. The attempt to relocate its birds to predator-free land failed, probably because of chance in such a small predator population.

Breeding: The nest was often built low to the ground among the roots of standing or fallen trees, but in a hole or fork of a tree, among clumps of ferns or its petiole bays. It was spherical with a small side entrance near the top, built of moss, fern roots and leaves, and lined with feathers. Eggs were found in November-December. They lay 2-3 eggs, which are white, speckled or mottled with red. Egg-laying periods were not known, but both birds were known to be present on Atiu.

Diet: Birds from Big South Cape Island at least 3 days after the first. Behaviour: Parrots were territorial during the breeding season, but could be found in large flocks of one year-old birds, pairs and small family parties were recorded. The common call was a "squall" or a loud, "squall", sometimes associated with the "whirlwind" call of the Rock Wren and the "quen" of the Rock Wren.

Feeding: Diet was almost entirely insectivorous, with moths, flies and spiders recorded being fed to chicks. On the South Shaw Island, Bush Wrens by turning along the branches of trees, and not close to the trunk like the Ruffins; however, on the "muttonbirds" they often fed close to the ground, which probably made them especially vulnerable to mammalian predators. They moved swiftly and habitually, while searching for insects in the forest floor, among plants on the forest floor or around the bases of trees, with a characteristic hopping or bobbing movement. Brook, Edith; Blackwood, Stead, E.F.E. 1976. Trans Roy Soc NZ 27: 375-374.