



## THE FEATHERED TRIBES OF VAN DIEMEN'S LAND

Sarah Lloyd

Tympanocryptis Press, Birralee 2015

ISBN: 978-0-0646-94414-2

Paperback 104 pages

Recommended retail price \$30.00

*'Whether it's about birds in the bush, on the coast or in the paddock, this book offers us something new and interesting. Every section is clearly written, easy to understand and woven with historical insights, numerous tips and messages of conservation.'* (From the foreword by Dr Sally Bryant)

This book is more than just about Tasmania's birds. It draws on knowledge gained through the author's extensive field work, her interest in bird song and her passion for the continuing survival of birds and their habitats wherever they occur.

The book's title, *'The Feathered Tribes of Van Diemen's Land'* is taken from a report written in 1832 by James Bischoff. Further quotations from the report included in the book reveal the attitudes of the British settlers to the avifauna they encountered: the land birds were regarded as *'all of them curious and beautiful'*, the bronzewings *'delicious to eat'*, the quail *'afforded the sportsman capital shooting'* and, a common misconception of the early settlers, that Tasmania was *'entirely without singing birds'*.

What makes *The Feathered Tribes* much more than a field guide—although it can be used as such because it includes photographs of over 70 of the common bird species likely to be seen in the backyard, bush or on the farm—are its descriptions of different vegetation communities and why some habitats are richer in bird species than others; and where different bird species feed and their importance to ecological integrity and the continuing health of the environment. It includes hints on how to find and identify birds by their calls, describes the function of bird song and the role of sex in the spring dawn chorus, the practical and aesthetic importance of feathers and other intriguing aspects of birds' lives seldom included in field guides.

Other topics include the impact of introduced species on the native avifauna; some of the hazards experienced by birds such as window strikes, cats, poisons, and fire and how they can be avoided or eliminated; and a section on good ecological practices that outlines the importance of retaining large old trees, coarse woody debris and patches of native bush. It concludes with a plea for the retention, restoration and proper management of bird habitats whether in city, town, country or on the coast.

Sarah Lloyd has had a lifelong interest in birds and has lived in a eucalypt forest in northern Tasmania for the past thirty years where she has observed and recorded bird movements as well as undertaking a year long study of the dawn chorus. She has also monitored birds on numerous properties across the island state gaining insights into their extensive vocal repertoires and regional variations in their calls—their 'dialects'. In 2008 Sarah initiated *A Sound Idea*, a project to monitor acoustically Tasmania's terrestrial birds assisted by over ninety volunteers using small digital sound recorders. Participants mostly recorded in their backyards or local bush resulting in species lists from over 100 locations that had not been surveyed previously for birds.

Reviews:

<http://www.disjunctnaturalists.com/articles2/feathered-tribes.htm>

<http://www.gardensforwildlife.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/gfw.nsf/news/1E82A5FE1A6BFDCDCA257F4D00823E9D>

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