

155 Main Road, Austins Ferry, Tasmania, Australia, 7011

Phone: (03) 6249 1579 - Email: [bobhroddam@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bobhroddam@yahoo.co.uk)

2 January 2013

Mr Stuart Wright  
Committee Secretary  
Legislative Council  
Parliament House  
HOBART Tas. 7000  
[tfacommitee@parliament.tas.gov.au](mailto:tfacommitee@parliament.tas.gov.au)

### **Submission: *Tasmanian Forests Agreement***

**I submit that the *Tasmanian Forests Agreement* should be ratified by the Legislative Council.**

**My reasons for this submission are as follows:**

The following information is from the book, *Forests for the Future* by David Young (June 2002). I originally used this information to produce an information sheet in December 2002. Whilst some of the figures may no longer be up-to-date, the general details are correct. Although widely circulated, the material has never been challenged, to the best of my knowledge.

#### **Reserved land in Tasmania**

Forestry industry supporters claim that 40% of forests are reserved from exploitation. But, only 24 % is protected from logging and mining, the other 15% is protected from logging only.

When Europeans arrived in Tasmania about 200 years ago, there were 4,822,000 hectares of forest. Now there are only 1,246,000 hectares left (i.e. only 25%)

#### **Figures for specific tree types**

<b>Tree type</b>	<b>Year 1800 ha</b>	<b>Year 1996 ha</b>	<b>% of original left</b>	<b>Reserved ha</b>	<b>% reserved</b>
Swamp Gum <i>E. regnans</i>	99,900	13,290	13%	6,320	6.3%
Stringy Bark <i>E. obliqua</i>	606,800	83,490	14%	44,970	7.4%
Gum-topped Stringy Bark <i>E. delegatensis</i>	316,800	104,420	32%	57,980	18%

**Note:** much of the reserved forest is in small areas or streamside reserves. With the Swamp Gum, only 35% of the reserved 6.3% is in formal reserves.

Forestry Tasmania claims that 86% of old growth forest is 'locked up' - but this is a narrow definition which excludes forests logged since 1950, or those affected by natural bushfires.

Forestry Tasmania claims that 95% of Tasmanian wilderness is protected from logging. But this excludes extensive non forest areas, such as button grass plains. Only 70% of wilderness forest is protected.

### Logging practices

In the year 2000-2001:

17,8005 ha of State Forest was harvested. 7,640 ha. (mainly dry forest) was by selective logging - the rest, 10, 210 ha by clear felling.

This forest was replaced by:

- 3,220 ha. regenerated native forest (31%)
- 2,220 ha. pine plantations
- 4,270 ha. eucalypt plantations
- 500 ha. left as cleared land

### Forestry employment

Ref. ABS:

	1989 - 1990 jobs	1999 - 2000 jobs	Difference
Forestry & logging	1,730	1,980	+ 250
Wood and paper products	7,450	3,430	- 4,020
Totals	9,180	5,410	- 3,770

## Wildlife Needs Holes in Trees!

Tasmania is one of 218 Endemic Bird Areas in the World. Others include the Galapagos Islands, Argentina, Brazil and Mauritius.

Forestry Tasmania likes to show us photographs of recently clear felled and burned areas, compared with photos of the same area a few years later showing regrowth. The claim is that forests quickly regenerate and become suitable habitat for our wildlife. For example, their leaflet *'New forests in 2002'* has a photograph with the caption: *'This area was clear felled and regenerated by a planned burn. After 20 years eucalypts flourish above a diverse understorey'*.

### Don't believe it!

If we look at these areas shown in the photographs we will find few of the natural features required for a sustainable habitat. For example:

- There are no fallen trees on the forest floor decaying to provide food and habitat for insects, birds, reptiles, small mammals and fungi.
- There are no holes in trees for nesting birds, possums, etc. (These typically result from disease and bushfires and probably need about 120+ years' regrowth to develop.)

### What the research shows

Philip Gibbons and David Lindenmayer of the CSIRO published their research findings in *Tree Hollows and Wildlife Conservation in Australia*. They cite previous studies, including one by Ambrose (1982) that concludes that about 400 Australian species use

tree hollows for shelter, nesting, etc. [Multiple copies of this book are available for loan through State Library of Tasmania branches.]

The journal *Wingspan* for Dec. 2000 (vol. 10, no. 4) published a Survey of sustainability guidelines for bird habitats.

Guideline no. 7 is to maintain a range of tree ages:

*“Large, old trees carry a tangle of bark and leaves through which birds forage for food and when they flower, will draw birds from many kilometres away. The increase in bird diversity where large, old trees occur is associated with an increase in the diversity of mammals, such as bats, gliders and possums as well as lizards, frogs and bark invertebrates.”*

Critical tree age for woodland dependent ground-forage was around 35 years.

For every 10 fallen trees present, the diversity of ground foraging birds increased by 30% and bark foraging birds by 70%.

In farms sites where understorey shrubs were present, there was 31% increase in diversity of woodland dependent birds. Small woodland dependent foliage gleaners - birds that help control the spread of eucalyptus dieback - increased by 24%.

The principal published field guide to the identification of Tasmanian birds is ‘*Field Guide to Tasmanian Birds*’ by Dave Watts, published by Reed New Holland.

Information includes the nesting characteristics for each species of bird. Twenty eight species of Tasmanian birds nest in tree stumps or in holes in trees. In other words, they require trees that Forestry Tasmania would consider as having no commercial value.

The species which require these nest sites include six of our ten species of ducks, both species of true owls and 11 out our 12 species of parrots. Three species are listed as being uncommon (Australasian Shelduck, Australian Shoveller and the Australian Owlet-Nightjar). A further two species are listed as being rare and endangered (Orange-bellied Parrot and Forty Spotted Pardalote). A complete list is attached as an appendix.

In Tasmania all our bat species depend upon suitable holes in trees for roosting and for rearing young. In addition, all of our possum species (except the ring-tailed) use holes in trees for shelter and nesting.

I close this submission with a quote from the late Gerald Durrell, author and founder of the Jersey Zoo, which he developed into the **Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust**:  
*“... you must conserve the places in which they [wildlife] live, for you can exterminate an animal just as successfully by destroying its environment as with gun or trap or poison”.*



Bob Holderness-Roddam

M. Env. Mgmt.

Associate, School of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Tasmania.

## Appendix

### Birds listed by Watts as hole or stump nesting:

1. Australasian Shelduck (uncommon)
2. Australian Wood Duck
3. Pacific Black Duck
4. Australian Shoveler (uncommon)
5. Grey Teal (fallen trees)
6. Chestnut Teal
7. Nankeen Kestrel
8. Yellow Tailed Black Cockatoo
9. Galah
10. Long Billed Corella
11. Little Corella
12. Sulphur Crested Cockatoo.
13. Musk Lorikeet
14. Green Rosella
15. Eastern Rosella
16. Swift Parrot
17. Blue Winged Parrot
18. Orange-Bellied Parrot (rare and endangered)
19. Southern Boobook Owl
20. Masked Owl
21. Australian Owlet-Nightjar (uncommon/rare)
22. Kookaburra (introduced)
23. Forty Spotted Pardalote (rare and endangered)
24. Striated Pardalote
25. Satin Flycatcher
26. Welcome Swallow
27. Tree Martin
28. Common Starling (introduced)