



## 12 Huia Birds by Julian Stokoe, illustrated by Stacy Eyles

**Publisher: Oratia Books** **RRP \$24.99**

This picture book reverses the usual order of a counting book that starts from the number one. Instead, *12 Huia Birds* counts down from twelve toward the extinction of New Zealand's beautiful bird, the huia.

The novel approach traverses a broad sweep of history from the dense forest of early Aotearoa, through to the arrival of humans and pests who decimate the wildlife and the environment. Told in rhyme, the message is clear that predators, animal and human, take what they want without constraint.

*One hungry possum  
drops by without a sound.  
'Huia chicks are delicious  
and there are lots to go around.'*

Stylised, bold illustrations showcase the stunning huia, their habitat, and behaviours. Attention is drawn to the differences between the short beak of the male bird and the female's long curved beak. A rare white huia features amongst the glossy black plumage of the majority of huia. Predators are shown as sinister, slinking creatures, while the greedy-eyed humans plunder resources with no concern for the consequences.

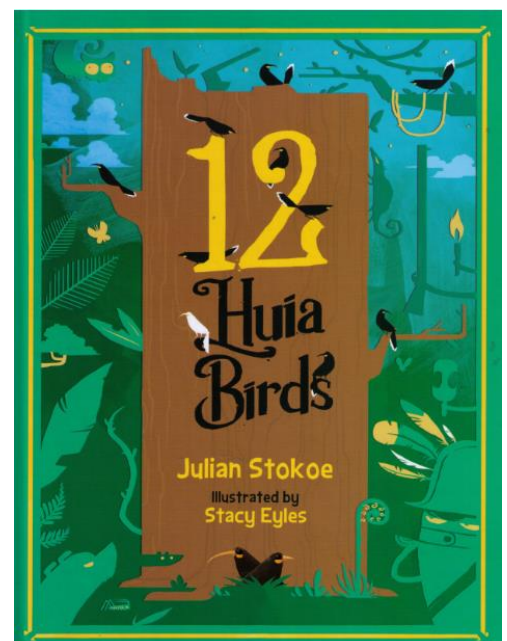
This is a handsome hardback publication with an educational message. An app is available with links to games and further information about the huia and other native birds.

**Author's website:**

[www.kilopop.com](http://www.kilopop.com)

**Illustrator's website:**

[www.fightstacy.com](http://www.fightstacy.com)



Reviewed by children's book author, Jean Bennett

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