

# Preface

Welcome to the world of Australian katydids. These insects occur almost everywhere across the country from the highest mountains to the seashore, and on continental and oceanic islands. The loud calls of some katydids are often mistaken for the sounds of cicadas. With a little practice you will be able to distinguish one from the other without even seeing the singers!

Katydids range in size from tiny species, 5 mm or so in length, to monsters that approach 130 mm. Many are secretive and have to be searched out in order to see them. At times, however, normally common species can be extremely abundant and cause public concern. We see this phenomenon in many Australian insects and in many grasshoppers. Some species can be agricultural pests and a number can cause problems to horticulturists because of their propensity to feed on developing flowers.

This book is primarily an identification manual to be used in the manner that you might use a bird guide. As a result, information on the many other aspects of katydids is scant. The book by Daryl Gwynne, *Katydids and Bush-crickets: Reproductive Behavior and Evolution of the Tettigoniidae*, published in 2001, provides many details and references to the vast literature available on this subject.

Naskrecki and Otte (1999) estimated that there are more than 6000 described species of katydids and that their diversity

within the Orthoptera was second only to the grasshoppers which comprise some 12 000 species. There has been a trend in recent years to escalate subfamilies and tribes to family status. This has been accepted to some degree but a more conservative approach has been followed in the Orthoptera Species File (OSF). This catalogue is kept current and its scheme is what is followed in this book. Any serious student of Orthoptera taxonomy should become familiar with the OSF, a most useful tool.

Currently 19 subfamilies are listed in the OSF. These form major, easily recognised groups of a few to many species. Of the 19 subfamilies five, the Saginae, Acridoxiinae, Bradyporinae, Hetrodinae and Lipotactinae do not occur in Australia. Five subfamilies are endemic to Australia. They are the Microtettigoniinae, Phasmodinae, Zaprochilinae, Austrosaginae and Tympanophorinae. In addition, all of the genera of the Tettigoniinae are endemic to Australia, as well most of the genera in the other subfamilies. Shared katydid genera (in the Mecopodinae, Conocephalinae, Phaneropterinae, Pseudophyllinae and Listrosclidinae) are usually found also in New Guinea. As far as we know, there are no introduced katydids in Australia.

This book includes species that occur within mainland Australia and Tasmania, Norfolk and Lord Howe islands, and the islands of the Torres Strait. The fauna of the