

## HUMAN UTILISATION OF FEATHERS

Feathers are both soft and excellent at trapping heat; thus, they are sometimes used in high-class bedding, especially pillows, blankets, and mattresses. They are also used as filling for winter clothing, such as quilted coats and sleeping bags; goose and eider down have great *loft*, the ability to expand from a compressed, stored state to trap large amounts of compartmentalized, insulating air.

Bird feathers have long been used for fletching arrows. Colourful feathers such as those belonging to pheasants have been used to decorate fishing lures.

Feathers of large birds (most often geese) have been and are used to make quill pens. The word **pen** itself is derived from the Latin "*penna*" for feather. The French *nom-de-plume* for pen name has a similar origin.

Feathers are also valuable in aiding the identification of species in forensic studies, particularly in bird strikes to aircraft. The ratios of hydrogen isotopes in feathers help in determining the geographic origins of birds. Feathers may also be useful in the non-destructive sampling of pollutants.

The poultry industry produces a large amount of feathers as waste, and like other forms of keratin, these are slow in their decomposition. Feather waste has been used in a number of industrial applications— as a medium for culturing microbes, biodegradable polymers, and production of enzymes. Feather proteins have been tried as an adhesive for wood board.

Eagle feathers have great cultural and spiritual value to American Indians in the USA and First Nations peoples in Canada as religious objects. In the United States the religious use of eagle and hawk feathers are governed by the eagle feather law, a federal law limiting the possession of eagle feathers to certified and enrolled members of federally recognised Native American tribes.

In South America, brews made from the feathers of Condors are used in traditional medications. In India, feathers of the Indian Peacock have been used in traditional medicine for snakebite, infertility and coughs.

Source: Wikipedia