FEATHERED WORLD

CANARY AND CAGE BIRD FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.

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Canary & Cage Bird Federation of Australia Inc.

MEETING DATES 2025

General Meetings 4th June, 3rd September, 5th November
AGM 4th March 2026
Meeting commences at 8:00 pm

NOTE: Meetings at Anzac Room, Ashfield RSL, Liverpool Road, Ashfield
Zoom meetings will be confirmed (or advised) in advance

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NOTICE

As there has been no meeting during this period there are no minutes to publish.

Minutes of the next meeting on 4th June will be published in the June—July edition of the magazine

FALCON BEAK ADAPTION

If you have ever stuck your head out the window of a car moving at high speed, you may have noticed that you had difficulty breathing.

Well, the engines of some airplanes that move at extremely high speeds have a similar problem. To remedy this, the engineers decided to introduce cones in front of the engines which, like a hand in front of our nose, allow them to "breathe", while maintaining a high speed.

Basically, the cone interrupts the direct flow of air into the engine thus reducing the air velocity to subsonic levels.

What's even more extraordinary is that a similar design was already present in nature "as seen in the design of the peregrine falcon"

This bird can reach almost 400 kilometers per hour in a dive. The air pressure that enters directly into the nostrils at very high speed would damage the small lungs if it were not slowed down by a particular cone-shaped bone structure (tubercle) that acts as an air deflector.

Nature is amazing!

Source: Daily Fact Finder

MY STORY—Graham Wellstead

Graham *has enjoyed an extraordinary career in birdkeeping. Here he pays a valedictory tribute to the wonderful song canaries that have given him decades of pleasure, and shares his determination to still enrich his life with his beloved birds of prey.*

I had my first caged birds in 1947. My father bred budgies and I added a few things of my own; nondescript canaries, British finches and various injured birds in need of rescue. By my mid-teens, I had branched out into a staggering variety of species, from Australian and Asian finches to African softbills and nectar feeders.

Altogether I have kept more than 200 species during my lifetime. Short break came during my military service and the early years of my marriage, but even in the late 50's I kept some birds back home and bred canaries in a mate's married quarters in Dusseldorf.

So I think it's fair to say I am an experienced bird keeper, although rarely an exhibitor. I di show early one and most years had birds in the National at Olympia.

My real passion was for birds of prey, and it still is. However, early on I was taken by the song of the roller canary. My first bought as a hen as I could not afford a cock on my 7/6d a week paper round money – came by train from Bristol. (Yes, the railways carried small birds as well as racing pigeons, which I also kept and raced). The hen turned out to be a cock, and for the first time I heard the song of a German-bred roller, I was estatic.

Even them I did not take up rollers seriously. The fancy was almost a secret society, as rollers do not exhibit in cage bird open shows. The fear of the song being spoilt is paramount. The birds that are contested are still in their first year and hence are able to pick up any new song that takes their fancy, until about late January after which the song is fixed. In that regard rollers are difficult, and certainly

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young birds could not attend CBS summer shows. So we rarely met.

I began to breed rollers for competition in the early 1980's and, having spent a long time starting with quality birds, I soon graduated from beginner to Champion. I also fulfilled my ambition to learn the song properly, sitting with a judge at every opportunity. Contesting meant travelling. With only one club in the South all the other contests were held in the Midlands. I would take all my club's birds, spend the whole day with the judge (for a class of 60 birds takes eight hours) then drive home with my head full of song.

I must have sold hundreds of birds to people who vowed to join the club and contest their birds, but only one ever did. He had birds from me, built his own contest cages (not an easy task) and put his birds in the first contest of the year. In spite of being warned he had left them all summer with goldfinches and, come the day, they sang pure goldfinch song and never reached the judge.

A southern pioneer

I took my judges exam and passed, the first to do so in the South of England for more than 40 years. I took my duties very seriously giving the birds before me a fair and honest opinion. Sadly, since than time the fancy has struggled and there have been no contests for the past two years and almost no new people joining. My club, once thriving with 50 plus members attending the monthly meetings, and a strong camaraderie, is now reduced to single figures, with no sign of any contest in the immediate future.

We invariably used primary schools to hold our contests. They were convenient, because each judge - and there were usually upwards of 6 classes. – needed a separate room to avoid hearing birds that were being listened to by another judge. The only problem that primary schools meant small chairs and back ache at the end of the day. It seems those days are gone, and with our low numbers, we have been priced out of suitable venue. Most recently, a scout hut that had been used, closed during the Covid restrictions, and is now a block of flats.

The fancy is struggling, and so am I. Age brings its restrictions, and keeping up to 100 birs with little chance of giving them the opportunity to do their stuff made it all rather without purpose. The cleaning and management were so much a part of it. Time spent with the birds was welcome and valuable for them and me, became minimal.

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At the start of the 2022 breeding season, I reluctantly decided to give up, and by the end of September they were all gone.

My late wife hated my canaries, but the rest of the family supported me, saying my birds were my life. Yet, to my surprise, I do not miss them and the relief is palpable.

However, there has always been another string to my bow: falconry. Realising that, like so many of my age group, I have dodgy knees, I had also cut down on my birds of prey. I had given several to a younger friend and not replaced the old birds. However, to my total horror, that younger, strong and indestructible friend was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. I just had time to bring my birds home before he passed. Additionally, another friend left m his falcon in his will, he too lost to the Big C. In all in the past two years I have lost eight friends with cancer but although it has been touch and go, I have had five checks, two positive, now sorted. As I write after a ghastly 2022, I am looking ahead to a better 2023. I am preparing to restart my teaching and guest-speaking roles.

Bing Crosby was, like so many, an avid golfer. He died, as he would have wished, on a golf course. Me? I hope I breathe my last with a falcon 1,000 feet overhead. But there is till life in this old dog yet.

DID YOU KNOW….Roller Canary Enthusiasts

For those who breed Roller Canaries or any of your Roller friends are interested there is a Roller Club in America that has monthly Zoom meetings (usually Sundays in California)
Steve Billmire is the contact spbillmire@gmail.com

LITTLE BIRD GETS SWARMED BY ANTS — BUT IT'S ALL A CLEVER TRICK

This bird knows exactly what she's doing:

Birds have several ways of keeping their feathers neat and tidy — like by preening them with their beaks, or taking soothing baths in water or fine dust. But those aren't the only tools in their cleanliness toolkits.

Some birds are known to enlist armies of little helpers for the job in a process known as 'anting'.

The other day, staff at the South African Umkumbe Bush Lodge shared fascinating footage captured by one of their safari guides.

In the clip, a small hornbill bird is seen exhibiting some "very rarely seen" behavior — resting on an active ant colony and allowing her body to be swarmed by the tiny insects.

Though this might seem like nightmare fuel, it's actually a clever trick.

She knows exactly what she's doing. Turns out, the bird is practicing a behavior known as "anting." As the Umkumbe Bush Lodge describes it:

"This is when birds purposely sit atop an ants' nest and allow ants to crawl all over and this assists with cleaning the bird of parasites! Ants secrete formic acid as a form of deterring predators, but some birds absolutely love it."

Some birds, like the hornbill above, simply sit still and let the ants passively do their work. Others take a more active approach, rubbing ants across their feathers themselves:

Birds, of course, aren't the only animals to enlist the help of others when it comes to keeping clean — sharks do it, rhinos do it, and even warthogs, too.

Perhaps there's really nothing better than getting a little help from a friend, whoever that might be.

Source: https://www.thedodo.com/daily-dodo/

THE LAST MEMBER OF THIS BIRD SPECIES DIED IN CAPTIVITY IN FEBRUARY 1918

Prior to the early 1900s, Americans could look into the sky and see small birds adorned with bright green and yellow feathers. They were Carolina parakeets, the only bird in the parrot family native to the eastern United States.

For reasons scientists still don't totally understand, these beautiful and mystical birds went extinct on February 21, 1918. That day marked the death of the last Carolina parakeet in captivity.

Part of the intrigue around the Carolina parakeet is its unusual nature. Parrots are typically native to tropical and subtropical climates rather than the continental U.S. However, bird lovers around the country reported sightings as far as Texas and upstate New York.

Over time, though, these sightings dwindled. The last confirmed wild member of the species was killed in Florida in 1904, leaving just a few treasured birds in captivity. Incas, the final of his kind, died on February 21, 1918, at the Cincinnati Zoo.

The Cincinnati Zoo had purchased Incas and 15 other birds in 1885 for $40, in hopes of saving the declining Carolina parakeet population. Incas was mated to a parakeet named Lady Jane and died just a year after her passing.

Unfortunately for the species and for conservationists, Incas and Lady Jane were not model parents. Although Lady Jane laid many eggs during her 32-year partnership with Incas at the zoo, the duo kicked and pushed the eggs out of their nest before they hatched. It's unclear if zookeepers ever tried to save these eggs.

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Adding to the Carolina parakeet mystery is not only the cause of death of Incas—with possible explanations including illness, old age and heart-break over the death of Lady Jane—but also the unclear reasons the population went extinct. Scientists now believe that a confluence of factors ultimately brought about their demise.

Large swaths of forest in the eastern U.S. had been cut down, and milliners sought out the parakeet's bright feathers for women's hats. Farmers also played a role in the extinction, killing the birds that many saw as pests. Given the uncertainty over the reasons behind the extinction, scientists didn't declare the Carolina parakeet officially extinct until 1939.

Some bird watchers claimed to spot members of the species in the wild as late as 1955, but experts at the American Ornithologists' Union dismissed those sightings, surmising observers actually saw a different species of non-native parakeets.

But in the future, scientists hope Americans may see the Carolina parakeet once again. That's because the species is one of many on a list prioritized for eventual de-extinction, a process that may one day recreate the parakeets using preserved genetic materials.

As for Incas, the tragic figure has left bird lovers with one final mystery. The Cincinnati Zoo had promised to send his body to the Smithsonian to display. However, he never arrived, and his final resting place remains unknown.

Source: www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news

Notification on the club's letterhead , or if required a hard copy or electronic copy of the Office Bearer's Information Form is available from the Secretary.

WHAT THIS GRUESOME STORK TAUGHT US ABOUT BIRD MIGRATION

Long before tracking technology, the most concrete testament to bird migration was a stork impaled by a spear.

On May 21, 1822, a hunter on the Bothmer Estate near Mecklenburg, Germany, shot and killed a white stork.

When he collected his kill, though, he found the bird already had a 30-inch wooden spear lodged in its neck.

Intrigued, he had the spear analyzed, only to find that it was made from wood that could only have come from Central Africa, some 2000 miles away.

Today,the *pfielstorch* (German) for “arrow stork”) is on display — with the spear still *in situ* — in the zoological collection at the University of Rostock.

Before the discovery of the *pfielstorch*, little was known about why some birds disappeared during the winter, as a science writer and ornithologist Rebecca Heisman explains in “Flight Paths:

How a Passionate and Quirky Group of Pioneering Scientists Solved the Mystery of Bird Migration” (HarperCollins

In the 4th century BC, the Greek philosopher Aristotle propagated the idea of transmogrification, suggesting that birds magically changed into different types of birds during the winter and also suggested they might hibernate in trees or underwater.

One theory from the English educator Charles Morton in the late 17th century contended that birds actually flew to the moon when it turned cold.

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The book reveals the extraordinary lengths that the scientific and bird-watching communities have gone in their attempts to crack the code of bird migration, which we can now attribute to “a range of complicated triggers including changes in weather and day length as well as genetic programming,” according to Heisman.

In the 1880s, naturalist Ernest Seton marked the breasts of all of his beloved snow buntings on his farm in Manitoba, Canada, with printer’s ink — to see whether the same birds would remain there during winter.

They didn’t — Seton never saw them again.

“Wild Goose Jack” Miner, meanwhile, opened a waterfowl sanctuary in Ontario in the early 1900s to try and discover just where all the geese and ducks that passed through each year were going.

By 1915, he had devised a way of catching the birds using a specially-designed canal with trap doors at either end.

Once the birds were trapped, he tagged them — but he also used the bird bands for his own purposes, stamping them with short Bible verses such as “Have faith in God” in the hope that the Lord’s word would be spread far and wide.

Yale University lecturer Leon Cole began banding birds at around the same time as Miner.

It didn’t always end well however. In 1922, for example, he was excited to receive a letter from far afield telling him about one of his banded night herons. Then he read it: “Your bird was shot here today by me, Albert Bailey . . . I took it for a hawk. Beg pardon.”

Monitoring migrating birds has never been easy — but it’s getting easier. One of the earlier methods employed was simply counting the silhouettes of birds migrating at night as they passed by a full moon.

That research was undertaken in 1952 by George Lowery from Louisiana State University, who recruited 2,500 volunteers to count them but — without a computer — it took another 10 years to analyze the data he had collected.

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Today we know that most birds migrate when it's dark.

Traveling at night has multiple advantages; if it's clear, the moon and the stars can help with navigation. There also tends to be less turbulence in the air, making for a smoother, less taxing flight.

"Fewer predators are out and about looking for a feathery snack," writes Heisman.

Scientists can now pinpoint where a bird may have spent the winter by looking at the levels of carbon, hydrogen, and sulfur isotopes in its feathers.They can tell which region of North America a bird is from by analyzing its DNA.

As Heisman writes: "[It's] sort of like how you can get an idea of where your own ancestors came from by swabbing the inside of your cheek and sending the sample off."

They can even monitor certain birds from space, using the Icarus antennae on the International Space Station.

"We live in an era when you can go online and track the latest movements of an albatross via satellite nearly in real-time."

NIGHT PARROT FORCES RIO TO ALTER MINING PLANS

The Rio Tinto mining company has adjusted its plans for a major copper-gold mine project in Australia due to the discovery of a rare bird, the night parrot, in the project area. Following the discovery, Rio Tinto notified regulatory bodies and revised its water drilling program to minimize any potential impact on the bird's habitat.

The company conducted surveys to determine the extent of the night parrot habitat, which is located in a localized area near the Winu project, some distance away from the planned mining operations.

Rio has cut all identified night parrot habitat from the project's development envelope to minimise any possibility of disturbing the critically endangered bird. The call of a lone night parrot was detected in an area Rio had earmarked for a borefield, some distance away from the mine.

Canary & Cage Bird Federation of Australia
in conjunction with
The Border Fancy Canary Club of Australia
80th Young Bird Show Anniversary

Guests of Honour

Bob Barnes & Colin Isbister

Where?
Panarama House, Princes Highway, Bulli Tops

When?
12 noon, Saturday 19th July 2025

Cost?
$70 per head, discuss special dietary requirements on booking
Payment required with booking

RSVP by 13th July 2025

Bookings

Christine Grunter: M: 0418 239 507 E: chrisakaclissy@gmail.com
John Walker M: 0417 044 654 E: whiskyjc@optusnet.com.au

EFT Payment:

Please ensure your name is noted in the reference, and also advise of payment by emailing ccbfa@aapt.net.au

Account name: Canary & Cage Bird Federation of Australia
Bank: Westpac Banking Corporation
BSB: 032 298
Acc No: 135 990

Two course buffet including beer, wine, soft drinks.
Private reception room
Easy parking

Federation Luncheon 2025

SUSPECTED CORELLA POISONING IN NEWCASTLE

Vets and wildlife volunteers say more than 100 corellas that survived a suspected mass bird poisoning in Newcastle are regaining strength after hundreds died on Monday.

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is investigating the bird deaths that occurred across the inner city suburbs of Carrington, Hamilton, and Broadmeadow.

While some of the birds were euthanased, at least 100 survivors have been nursed back to health by local vets and wildlife carers.

Robyn Cragg is from Hunter Wildlife Rescue and said she had more than 30 birds in her care.

"I started with 24 on the first night, and then on the second night, I picked up another 10," she said.

Birds were treated with vitamin K and given water to ride out the impacts. Many of the other carers were taking in six, seven, eight and we've had them spread all over Newcastle.

"Many of the other carers were taking in six, seven, eight and we've had them spread all over Newcastle. We're getting close to a hundred [birds]

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Life-saving vitamin

To keep the corellas alive, the initial treatment involved injecting them with Vitamin K — an effective antidote for poisoning. However, Ms Cragg said sourcing the life-saving vitamins had not been easy.

"There was not an extensive supply in the Newcastle area, so initially we did run out of the supply," she said. "It's one injection every four hours over a period until they show signs of improvement. "We then provided them with large quantities of water for drinking."

She said the birds needed five days of vitamin therapy

The Hamilton Veterinary Clinic has had 14 corellas they save in care, attracting an audience on social media. Clinic nurse Bronte Wilkinson has shared the in-house flock's progress on social media.

"This is a small, yet deeply significant win, and it wouldn't have been possible without the dedication of our amazing team and the support of our community," Ms Wilkinson said. "We're continuing to monitor their progress closely, and we're hopeful that, with further care, these resilient birds will be on their way to recovery."

A new flock

Once treatment ended, Ms Cragg said all surviving birds would be grouped together at an undisclosed location. She hoped the corellas would bond and form a new flock.

"So now those that have pulled through are starting to feed and they're starting to groom and do the normal preening of themselves," she said. "Now they're at that stage where we're moving them to one location, corralling them together, and they will become a major flock."

Ms Cragg said establishing a family unit would be important.

"In many instances, it has been the parents that have died because they're they're not as resilient as the younger ones," she said. "They will form a lovely flock and support one another because that's what they need to do until they're at the point they can be independent to breed and mature."

Earlier this week, wildlife carers picked up hundreds of dead birds across Newcastle. *(Supplied: Hunter Wildlife Rescue)*

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Testing to take weeks

EPA's acting director of operations Claire Miles said testing of bird samples would take time.

"The toxicological testing can take a few weeks, so we are waiting for that," she said.

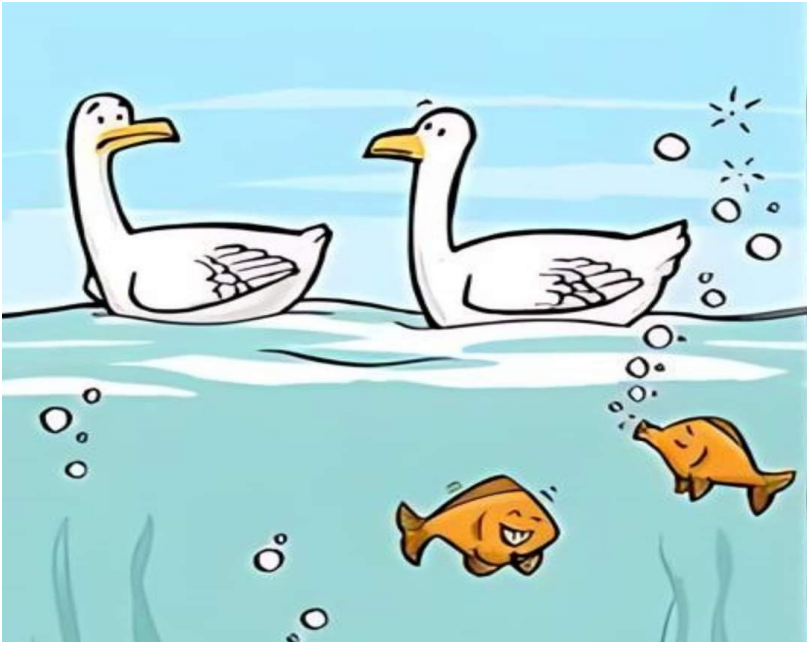
"In the interim, just having EPA officers out there, looking for some of that physical evidence that might be a clue to lead us to the cause."

Testing includes ruling out bird flu and inspecting impacted locations for evidence of potential pesticide misuse.

Ms Miles stressed it was not clear if the suspected mass poisoning was "deliberate or unintentional".

Hunter Wildlife Rescue volunteers have spent this week in inner-city suburbs collecting dead birds and ferrying sick ones to local vets.

Source; https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-03-20



ANOTHER RARE BIRD SIGHT IN AUSSIE BACKYARD STUNS

The incredible black kookaburra appears to have melanism which changes it's usually white or grey feathers to a shade of black.

It's not every day you come across a 'one in a billion' find sitting in your backyard. But that was the reality for one woman who recently spotted a rare black kookaburra – with the close encounter sparking envy among Aussies.

"Is this an extremely dirty blue-winged kookaburra or is there something else going on?" she questioned on social media alongside pictures of the "stunning" and "amazing" native bird this week. And she wasn't alone in questioning why the usually white or grey feathers appeared to be a deep shade of black.

Australian bird expert Britt, known online as, well, 'Britt the Bird Expert', agreed it's "pretty rare" when speaking to Yahoo News Australia about the images shared online. The bird "looks to be melanistic", she said.

"Melanism is when excess melanin pigment is produced in an animal's fur, feathers or scales," she explained. "Melanism is usually something they are born with and it is pretty rare."

She described it as a "random genetic fluke" with famous Aussie vet Dr Chris Brown previously suggesting it's possibly a "one in a billion" phenomenon. "Only a handful of black kookaburras ... have ever been reported in the world," he previously shared after a Perth sighting in 2018.

MYSTERY OF A PINK CORELLA HAS SCIENTISTS, RESIDENTS BAFFLED

Kelly Smith was outside hanging her laundry when a pink flourish appeared in her backyard at Gundagai in southern New South Wales.

Ms Smith and her daughter initially had no idea what they were looking at until they got closer and realised it was a pink corella.

"We thought we were seeing things at first and then waited for them to land and then we got a better look at it," she said.

Kelly Smith and her daughter had no idea what they were looking at when they first saw the corella.

"I didn't even think for a minute it would be a galah in amongst [the corellas]. It was just pure pink."

With no idea why or how it occurred, she posted pictures on social media to find an answer.

As it happens, there are many different ways that ordinarily white birds can change colour. Evolutionary biologist Lucy Aplin from the University of Canberra said there were a few possibilities behind the colouration.

"People [could be using] paintballs to colour the birds as a way of deterring them because often they're pests," Dr Aplin said. "The second hypothesis is it could be agricultural spray dye."

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But Jim Pratley, professor of agriculture at Charles Sturt University, said the use of dyes to mark where weeds had been sprayed was "becoming obsolete" because of GPS technology, and this example seemed like a "quirk of nature".

"The uniformity of the colour on the bird doesn't make any sense in relation to dyes … they'd have to be dunked in it and, of course, none of that would be conducive to good health," Professor Pratley said.

The NSW Environment Protection Authority confirmed they have not received any complaints or reports and therefore are not investigating.

This pink corella has made experts question how it became to be so thoroughly covered. Tania Bishop is a wildlife vet for WIRES and agreed that it was likely some sort of dye had turned the corella pink.

"Obviously, we can't be completely sure but that's what it's most consistent with," Dr Bishop said. "I would've expected more birds to be affected if it was agricultural spraying because of their flock behaviour."

Dr Bishop said the bird could have had it directly applied if it had trusted someone while feeding.

"Somebody's gone and placed food dye or something like that in a bird bath, which is a prank most of the time." What we don't want though is those birds being susceptible to this sort of thing or things being used that could affect the bird's health long term."

She said it did not appear the bird was in immediate distress and in need of rescuing.

Pink cockatoos have also been spotted in New South Wales. Dr Aplin said cockatoos and corellas could also be naturally dyed by nature.

"[They] often nest in tree hollows in river red gums or ironbark, which stain their feathers red and orange," she said. "You can usually tell because it's very much more on the front because as the bird goes in it rubs its feathers on the wet bark."

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Dr Aplin said her team dyed birds for research, but not the whole bird.

"We do sometimes put little paint dots on the birds to mark them so we can identify them," she said. "We would never fully colour a [bird] bright pink."

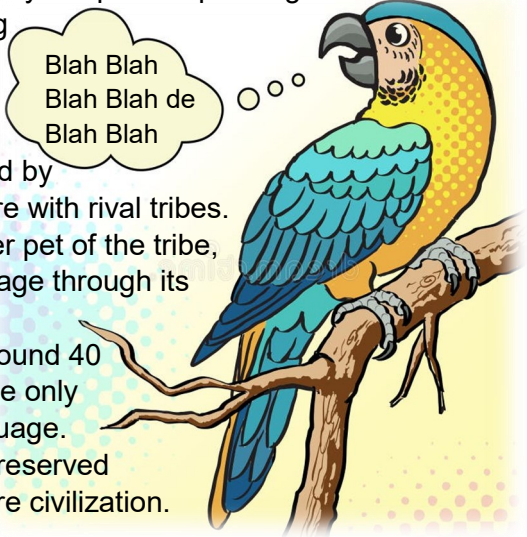
Ms Smith said she might just need to be content with not knowing the answer.

"No-one seems to know the real reason," she said. "I would just like to think it's a beautiful pink corella — not dyed or anything else."

Source: ***abc.net.au/news/pink-corella-found-in-nsw-experts-confused/104904964***

LOST LANGUAGE SAVED BY PARROT

In 1799, deep in the Venezuelan jungle, explorer Alexander von Humboldt encountered something extraordinary - a parrot speaking words from an extinct tribe. The bird was speaking Atures, the language of a people who had vanished just decades earlier.



The last of the Atures tribe had died by 1767, driven to extinction by warfare with rival tribes. But this single parrot, likely a former pet of the tribe, preserved fragments of their language through its remarkable memory.

Humboldt carefully documented around 40 words the parrot spoke, creating the only surviving record of the Atures language.

The words this feathered linguist preserved became the final echoes of an entire civilization.

In a twist of fate, a creature known for mimicry became an accidental historian, keeping alive the whispers of a lost culture through its gift of speech. Today, those transcribed words remain our only window into the language of the vanished Atures people.

WHAT IS MELANISM AND LEUCISTISM IN BIRDS?

Explaining melanism further, Britt said it's been documented in many bird species. It's common in ducks, game birds, and many birds of prey, but in rare cases, penguins, flamingos, egrets, and many small garden birds too.

It's also responsible for creating black leopards and black foxes. "The disruption of normal placement of the pigment melanin can make a melanistic animal, partially or entirely black, black and white, reddish, or oddly patterned," she explained.

While melanistic animals have an excess of pigment, the opposite is said of leucistic beings which lack pigment. Leucistism has been documented in several birds living in urban Aussie areas, particularly among magpies — but sometimes kookaburras as well.

Amazingly, a leucistic platypus and several kangaroos have also been reported in the past.

Different to albinism, leucistic animals have reduced pigmentation that can occur due to either environmental or genetic factors, making them white.

RARE HYBRID BIRD SEEN ON RURAL NSW PROPERTY

A man was stunned this week to find a sulphur-crested cockatoo and galah hybrid trying to mingle with other birds in his NSW yard.

The “truly gorgeous” and incredibly rare bird spotted hanging out on a rural property has astonished Aussies, leaving many questioning if the bright orange creature actually exists.

A man snapped several photos of the absolute “rippa” this week after it decided to join a group of other wild birds in their hunt for food at his home near Tenterfield in NSW’s Northern Tablelands. The yellow-orange crested animal with grey wings is “usually by itself” and appears to be “bigger than a galah and smaller than a cockatoo”, he explained.

“I feel bad for him/her — nobody seems to like it. In saying that, the cockatoos, galahs, king parrots and lorikeets all get out of the way when this one arrives. It screeches at all of them when it’s flying in and everyone scatters,” the man posted in a Facebook group dedicated to native birds.

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Bird revealed to be rare cockatoo-galah hybrid but thousands of Aussies disagreed, saying the images were so “stunning” that the “beautiful” visitor must be the work of AI. Shutting down the skeptics, bird specialist Dr Bob Doneley assured Yahoo News Australia on Thursday the unusual creature is indeed real — albeit scarcely seen outside of a cage.

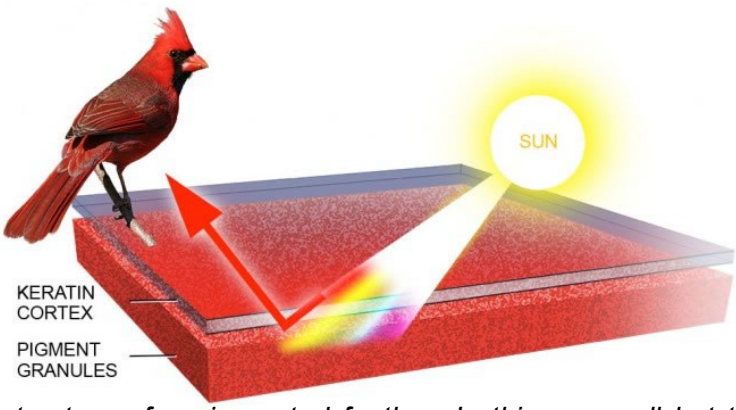
“This is a hybrid — a cross between a sulphur-crested cockatoo and a galah. I have seen these two to three times over the years, but always as aviary birds that paired and bred together,” he said.

"Very rare in the wild, but things happen, you know!”

Dr Doneley said very little is known about the cockatoo-galah crosses other than they occur. “It is often thought that these hybrids would be infertile, as they are in mammals, but no one has had the opportunity to test that.”

HOW BIRDS MAKE COLORFUL FEATHERS

As one might expect from the amazing diversity of colors and patterns exhibited by more than 10,000 bird species found in the world, birds can see color. The colors in the feathers of a bird are formed in two different ways, from either pigments or from light refraction caused by the structure of the feather. In some cases feather colors are the result of a combination of pigment and structural colors. The greens of some parrots are the result of yellow pigments overlying the blue-reflecting characteristic of the feathers.



The microstructure of a pigmented feather. In this case, all but the red wavelengths are absorbed by the pigment granules

Pigmentation

Pigments are colored substances that can be found in both plants and animals. The coloration created by pigments is independent of the structure of the feather. Pigment colorization in birds comes from three different groups: carotenoids, melanins, and porphyrines.

Carotenoids

The red of the Northern Cardinal comes from a class of pigments called carotenoids. Carotenoids are produced by plants, and are acquired by eating plants or by eating something that has eaten a plant. Carotenoids are responsible for the bright yellows seen in goldfinches and Yellow Warblers as well as the brilliant orangish yellow of the male Blackburnian Warbler. Carotenoids can interact with melanins to produce colors like the olive-green of the female Scarlet Tanager.

Melanins

Melanins occur as tiny granules of color in both the skin and feathers of birds. Depending on their concentration and location, melanins can produce colors ranging from the darkest black to reddish browns and pale yellows.

Melanin provides more than just coloration. Feathers that contain melanin are stronger and more resistant to wear than feathers without melanin. Feathers without any pigmentation are the weakest of all. Many otherwise all white birds have black feathers on their wings or black wingtips. These flight feathers are the ones most subject to wear and tear. The melanin causing the tips to appear black also provides extra strength.

Porphyrins

Porphyrins, the third pigment group, are produced by modifying amino acids. Although the exact chemical structure of each porphyrin differs, they all share a common trait. They fluoresce a bright red when exposed to ultraviolet light, much the way certain rocks and minerals are known to do. Porphyrins produce a range of colors, including pink, browns, reds, and greens. Porphyrins are found in some owls, pigeons and gallinaceous species. They can also produce the brilliant greens and reds of turacos.

Color Abnormalities

When pigments are present (or absent) at unusual levels the appearance of a bird can change dramatically. Color abnormalities, while not common, do occur on a regular basis. Bird species that commonly show aberrant white patches include Canada Goose, Crow, and House Sparrow.

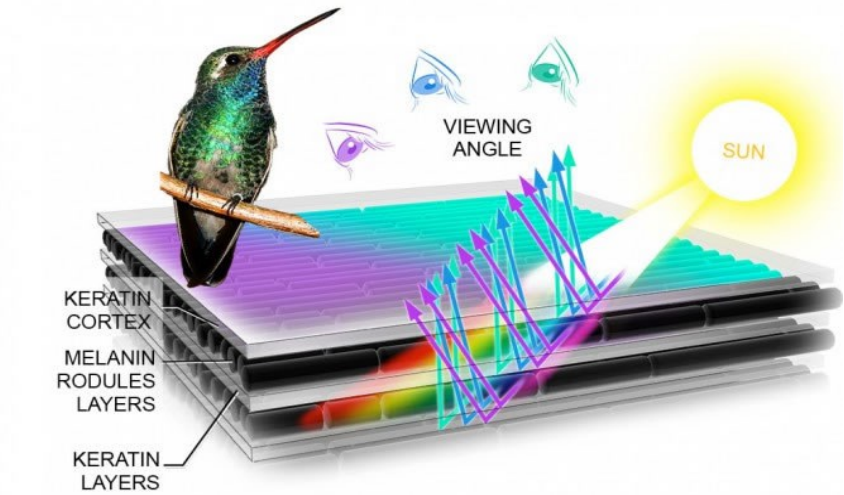
Source: https://academy.allaboutbirds.org/how-birds-make-colorful-feathers/

HOW BIRDS MAKE COLOURFUL FEATHERS—STRUCTURAL COLOURS

Adding to the diversity of avian colors are colors produced by the structure of the feather. Instead of pigments, these colors are produced as light is refracted by the proteins in the feather.

Iridescent Feathers

The best known example is the gorget (throat feathers) of many hummingbird species. The iridescent colors of the gorget are the result of the refraction of incident light caused by the microscopic structure of the feather barbules. The refraction works like a prism, splitting the light into rich, component colors. As the viewing angle changes, the refracted light becomes visible in a glowing, shimmering iridescent display. Many species of birds have feathers that exhibit iridescent colors, including the Purple Gallinule and Tricolored Heron.



Iridescent feathers change color with different viewing angles, an effect caused by the protein structure of the feather barbules

Non-Iridescent Feathers

Not all structural colors are iridescent. Tiny air pockets in the barbs of feathers can scatter incoming light, resulting in a specific, non-iridescent color. Blue colors in feathers are almost always produced in this manner. Examples include the blue feathers of bluebirds, Indigo Buntings, Blue Jays and Steller's Jays.

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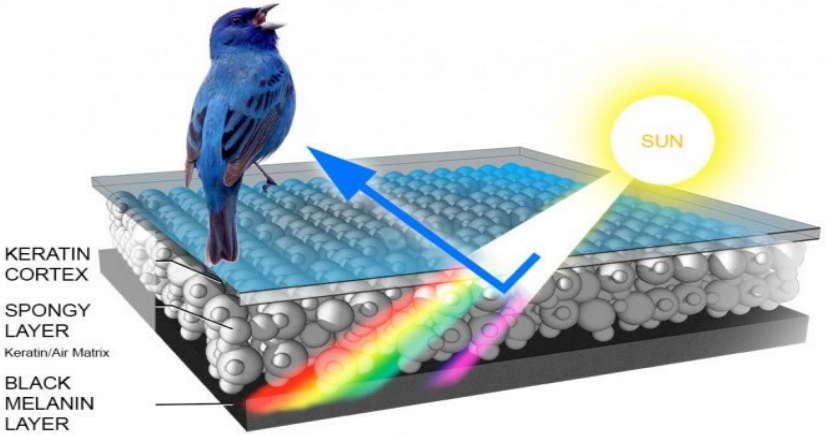
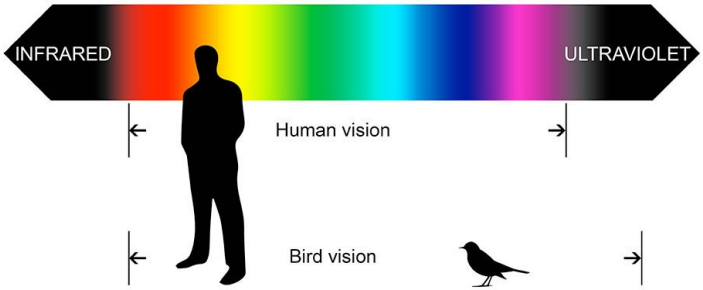


Feather color produced by the refraction of light by an organized structure of keratin proteins in the feather. Here, blue is refracted and the remaining colors are absorbed by a layer of melanin.

The blues seen in the feathers of Indigo Buntings, Mountain Bluebirds, and Steller's Jays are structural colors. If you find the feather of a Blue Jay or Steller's Jay you can see for yourself how this works. First, observe the feather in normal lighting conditions and you will see the expected blue color. Next, try back-lighting the feather. When light is transmitted through the feather it will look brown. The blues are lost because the light is no longer being reflected back and the brown shows up because of the melanin in the feathers.

Ultraviolet Feathers

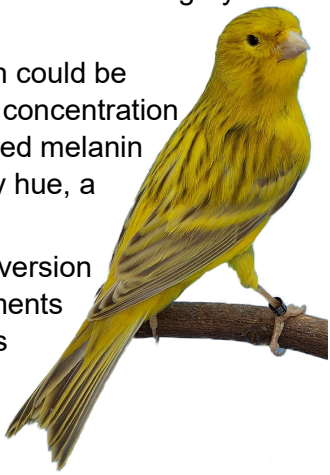
The feather structures of many species also reflect light in the ultraviolet range. Because many birds can discriminate a greater variety of colors than humans, including ultraviolet wavelengths, they can appear quite different to each other than they do to us.



FEATHERS MUTATIONS AND THEIR GENETICS

Certainly! Feather mutations in birds like canaries are fascinating examples of genetic variation, often tied to the inheritance of specific alleles influencing melanin and other pigments. Here's a breakdown of the genetics behind these feather mutations:

1. **Pastel Effect**: This mutation is likely linked to genes that regulate melanin production and distribution. The "dilution" of eumelanin (black pigment) suggests the involvement of alleles that suppress or modify the melanin pathways, leading to anthracite gray tones and the unique feather pattern.



2. **Greywing**: In black canaries, this mutation could be associated with genes controlling melanin concentration at specific feather regions. The concentrated melanin at the feather edges creates the pearl gray hue, a result of localized pigment expression.

3. **Opal Effect**: This mutation involves the inversion of melanin deposition, where melanic pigments are deposited in the lower layer of feathers instead of the upper layer. This structural arrangement likely interacts with light, creating the opalescent bluish hue. Genes influencing feather structure and pigment layering may be responsible.

4. **Isabel Pastel**: This mutation leads to a very light beige coloration due to reduced eumelanin and pheomelanin levels. The genetic mechanism might involve alleles that downregulate the production of these pigments, resulting in the elegant, subtle appearance.

Such mutations often follow Mendelian inheritance, meaning they can be passed down through generations depending on whether the alleles are dominant, recessive, or codominant. Breeders often aim to understand and manipulate these genetics to achieve desired feather patterns and colors.

It’s incredible how genetics, pigment biology, and even light interaction create these visually stunning traits.

IMPORTANT NOTICES!

NOTICE TO ALL AFFILLIATES

For legal and insurance requirements, affiliates are requested to notify the Federation Secretary of changes in office bearers, public officer and delegates, also changes of the club's meeting location, email and postal address.

Notifications should be on club's letterhead or if required a hard copy or electronic copy of the *Office Bearers' Information and Privacy Provision Consent Form* is available from the Secretary.

Ron Robertson, Secretary, The Canary & cage Bird Federation of Australia Inc. PO Box 230, Frenchs Forest, NSW 1640; Phone 0402 888 291: Email: federationbirdclubs@aapt.net.au

2025 RING ORDERS

Supplementary orders will be ongoing during 2025, but delivery time frame and cost for transshipment however, will vary.

Clubs requiring an order form to be completed, should contact the Secretary

Send in reports on your club's activities and news.
Feathered World is your magazine, so contributions are welcome.

Have you updated your club details?

Please send in any club detail changes, including changes of position to the secretary asap. Thank you.

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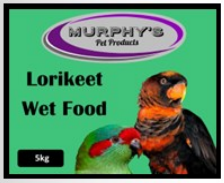

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