



FEATHERED WORLD

CANARY AND CAGE BIRD FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.



IN THIS MAGAZINE...

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- ◆ *Bird deaths linked to algae bloom*
- ◆ *New site for Night Parrot fond*



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Canary & Cage Bird Federation of Australia Inc.

MEETING DATES 2026

General Meetings 3rd September

Meeting commences at 8:00 pm

NOTE: All meetings will be by Zoom only unless otherwise advised

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NOTICE

As there was no General Meeting during April and May there are no Meeting Minutes' available for Publication in this period.

As a result this magazine for April/ May has been produced with a reduced number of pages.

Minutes for the meeting on 4th June Will be published in the June/July edition of the magazine





PETITION

DON'T TAKE AWAY OUR HOBBY



Victorian
Avicultural
Council



"Protect Bird Keeping in Victoria"

Your support is crucial at this time.

Background:

A review of the **Victorian Wildlife Act 1975** began in 2021, inviting submissions from community members and stakeholders. Bird clubs and peak bodies — including the **Victorian Avicultural Council**, **Avicultural Society of Australia**, **Mornington Peninsula Avicultural Society**, and **Animal Care Australia** — all provided detailed input, though this appears to have gained little traction.

The Review Panel delivered its report on **20 December 2021**, and the Government released its response in **October 2025**.

It is this response that concerns us. Several statements appear **unsupported by evidence**, including claims that *"wildlife and intensive breeding is cruel"* and that *"large wildlife collections adversely impact neighbours."* These comments do not reflect the reality of responsible, welfare-focused aviculture in Victoria.

Current Situation:

Bird keeping has a long and valued tradition in our community, bringing joy to thousands of Victorians and supporting important conservation and education programs. Recent government wording suggests new regulations may be introduced that could severely restrict responsible bird keeping. Such changes risk undermining the work of dedicated hobbyists and organisations that contribute significantly to animal welfare and community life.

This petition calls for the positive impact of ethical bird keeping to be recognised and for any new regulations to be developed in genuine consultation with experienced aviculturists. Supporting the petition helps safeguard a valued pastime, protect responsible keepers, and ensure future rules are fair and informed.

We encourage you to read and sign the petition. Your voice shows policymakers that this issue matters to a broad, engaged community. Please also share it within your networks to strengthen our collective effort.

Online Petition Link: <https://c.org/JgWcwBCftk>

SIGN THE PETITION TODAY

Protect the future of ethical aviculture in Victoria.



PROTECT RESPONSIBLE BIRD KEEPING IN VICTORIA



Have Your Say – Support Fair, Evidence-Based Wildlife Laws

CARE FOR SOME COMFREY?

Comfrey is a shrub native to Europe, Asia and North America. It can grow up to 5 feet tall, produces clusters of purple, blue and white flowers and has long, slender leaves and black-skinned roots.

The root and leaves of the comfrey plant has been used in traditional medicine in many parts of the world. In Japan, the plant has been harvested and used as a traditional treatment for over 2,000 years.

It was originally called "knitbone" and people used it to treat muscle sprains, bruises, burns and joint inflammation. Europeans have also used comfrey to treat



inflammatory conditions, such as arthritis and gout. Some traditional healers have also used it to treat diarrhoea and other stomach ailments. It can be used equally with birds, as it is a natural antiseptic.

Birds love comfrey. It is protein rich with 15 to 30% dry-weight content, rivalling some legumes. Poultry farmers have reported that egg quality will improve, and yolks will be brighter.

Comfrey propagates easily through root cuttings. Growing it from seeds takes about 4 years to make a plant as good as one a year old from taking a root cutting. This is because comfrey is a tough plant, which can be cut back multiple times within a season. It responds well.

Freshly cut leaves make good mulch because they have high nitrogen content. Its high potassium content makes it especially beneficial for vegetables such as tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers, berries, and fruit trees.

It is suggested to feed comfrey in small amounts and not as a regular food, Comfrey may also be carcinogenic.

FORAGING FOR FOOD

Foraging for food can involve sight, hearing and even smell. In almost all cases learning is involved. Magpies are ground foragers, setting one foot before the other looking for food while walking, called walk-foraging. It looks like this:



Finding food on the ground, such as beetles and other insects, is not as easy as it may sound. The ground can be uneven and covered with leaves, grasses and rocks. Insects may be hiding, camouflaged, or staying so still it is hard for a magpie to notice them.

Detecting a small object on the ground requires keen vision and experience, to discriminate between the parts that are important and those that are not.

Magpie eyes, as for most birds, are on the side of the head (humans and other birds of prey, by contrast, have eyes that face forward).

To see a small area in front of them, close to the ground, birds use both eyes together (scientists call this binocular vision). But birds mostly see via the eyes looking out to the side (which is called monocular vision).

This picture gives you an idea of what a magpie can see with its left eye, what it can see with its right eye and what area it can see with both eyes working together (binocular vision).

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You asked about underground foraging. Some of that foraging can also be done by sight. Worms, for instance, may leave a small mound (called a cast) on the surface and, to the experienced bird, this indicates that a worm is just below.

Magpies can also go a huge step further. They can identify big scarab larvae underground without any visual help at all.

Scarab larvae look like grubs. They munch on grassroots and can kill entire grazing fields. Once they transform into beetles (commonly called Christmas beetles) they can do even more damage by eating all the leaves off eucalyptus trees.

Here is the secret: magpies have such good hearing, they can hear the very faint sound of grass roots being chewed.

We know this from experiments using small speakers under the soil playing back recorded sounds of scarab beetle larvae. Magpies located the speaker every time and dug it up.

So how do they do it? Several movements are involved.

To make certain that a jab with its beak will hit the exact spot where the juicy grub is, the magpie first walks slowly and scans the ground. It then stops and looks closely at the ground – seemingly with both eyes working together.

Then, holding absolutely still, the magpie turns its head so the left side of the head and ear is close to the ground for a final confirming listen.

Finally, the bird straightens up, then executes a powerful jab into the ground before retrieving the grub.

That is very clever of the magpies. Very few animals can extract food they can't see. Only great apes and humans were thought to have this ability. Clever magpies indeed. And farmers love them for keeping a major pest under control.



TEFLON TOXICITY IN BIRDS

HOUSEHOLD ITEMS THAT CONTAIN TEFLON

Non-stick pans.	Rice cookers
Air fryers.	Self-cleaning ovens
Space heaters.	Toasters
Irons	Hair dryers
Heat lamps	Straightening Irons



SYMPTOMS OF TEFLON POISONING IN BIRDS

Open-mouth breathing	Sudden collapse
Tail bobbing	Death with no warning
Weakness or falling	
Lethargy	
Wheezing or raspy breathing	

HOW TEFLON BECOMES TOXIC

- Normal PTFE cookware →
- High heat (500°F+) →
- Breakdown of coating →
- Invisible toxic fumes released →
- Bird inhales the fumes →
- Rapid, often fatal respiratory damage



Teflon fumes

WHY BIRDS ARE EXTRA VULNERABLE

Birds Have a Super-Efficient Respiratory System

Humans breathe in → breathe out.

Birds? They have a one-way airflow system that keeps oxygen flowing continuously.



TOP PREVENTION TIPS

DO:

- ✓ Switch to stainless steel
- ✓ Ventilate while cooking
- ✓ Use PTFE-free appliances
- ✓ Keep birds in a separate, sealed room while baking.
- ✓ Educate family/guests

DON'T:

- ✗ Use non-stick cookware around birds
- ✗ Preheat empty pans
- ✗ Use self-cleaning ovens with birds indoors
- ✗ Assume "non-stick" means PTFE-free

EMERGENCY RESPONSE: WHAT TO DO IMMEDIATELY

1. Move bird to fresh air
2. Turn off offending device
3. Ventilate home
4. Call avian vet
5. Document the source for prevention





NATURAL SUPPLEMENT FOR
FINCHES



PRIMA
1 KG NET



THE STORY OF ALEX THE GREY PARROT

Alex the African Grey parrot looked at Dr. Irene Pepperberg on his last night in the lab and said "You be good. See you tomorrow. I love you." Then he died in his sleep. Those were not random sounds. They were not trained responses triggered by a cue. They were the final words of a mind that had spent thirty years proving it understood what it was saying, spoken to the one human who had listened when everyone else heard only mimicry.



Alex did not just talk. He reasoned. When shown a tray of objects and asked "what color is the square," he would scan the items, identify the square, and answer correctly. If you asked him how many blue blocks were on the tray, he would count them. If you showed him two keys and asked "what's same," he would say "color" or "material" or "shape," depending on what matched

He understood zero. When researchers showed him a tray with no objects of a certain type and asked how many, he would answer "none." Parrots are not supposed to grasp absence as a concept. Alex did.

When he got bored during testing sessions, he would demand to go back to his cage. When he got an answer wrong and researchers corrected him, he would snap back with the right answer, annoyed. He had preferences. He asked questions. Once, while being shown different colored papers as part of a study, Alex looked at himself in a mirror and asked Pepperberg "what color?" She told him grey. He asked the question six times across multiple sessions until he learned the word for his own feathers.

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That is not mimicry. That is a mind encountering itself and wanting language for the encounter

The research was not anecdotal. It was thirty years of rigorous experimental repetition, documented with the kind of scientific precision that makes dismissal impossible. Pepperberg did not teach Alex tricks. She taught him a communication system, and he used it to demonstrate that a brain the size of a walnut could do things we reserved for humans.

What haunts people about Alex is not that he could identify colors or count objects. It is that he seemed to know what those words meant. That when he said "I love you" on his last night, it felt less like a trained phrase and more like a goodbye from something that understood goodbye.

If a parrot can reason, ask questions, understand its own reflection, grasp abstract concepts like zero and sameness, and express what looks unmistakably like affection and intention, then where exactly does the boundary sit between animal and person? Between communication and consciousness?

Maybe intelligence is not the rare thing we thought it was. Maybe it has been here all along in forms we did not recognize because we were not paying attention, because it came in feathers and did not look like us.

What else are we standing next to, assuming it is simpler than it is?



COUNCIL DECLARES WAR ON BACKYARD INVADER

An Aussie council has declared all-out war on a common backyard pest that's breeding at such an alarming rate just two could spawn a staggering 90,000 offspring in just six years.

The Mackay council has sounded the alarm over the Indian myna which has taken over backyards, suburbs, parks and nature reserves – killing off native competition.

Mackay Mayor Greg Williamson said Indian myna birds had established large populations all along Australia's eastern seaboard with a number of councils now using trapping programs to reduce the number of pest birds in their area.

According to the Australian Wildlife Society, the "little brown bird might look harmless, but the World Conservation Union (IUCN) takes it very seriously. They put it on the list of the 100 most invasive species in the world and describe it as an extreme threat to Australia".

It said the Indian myna is an introduced pest and different to the native bird noisy miner. Mackay Indian myna Bird Action Group committee member and Birdlife Mackay's John Morris said there was now stronger awareness of the scale of the problem.

"These pests pose significant threats to native bird species – harassing and evicting them from their nests, killing native young and destroying eggs," Mr Morris said. "They also pose a significant biosecurity and economic threat to our local agricultural sector and human health."

In Mackay residents are being urged to join a community initiative to eradicate the highly invasive species – by installing traps in their backyards to broaden its success.



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MIMBAG has several traps built by members of the Mackay Men's Shed Inc which will be loaned to residents free to try and catch as many myna as possible.

Mayor Williamson said "like the cane toad, the species was brought into Australia to try and control insects. They first arrived in the 1860s to control pests in market gardens in Melbourne".

"They were then introduced to northern Queensland to try and control pests in sugar plantations."

The result has been a nightmare for native wildlife, with the myna species a prolific breeder, seeing each mating pair lay up to 15 eggs per year, overtaking entire towns.

He said modelling shared by the Dubbo Indian myna Control Program detailed the exponential population growth from just one breeding pair.

"From those two birds, their young and future generations can produce more than 90,000 birds within six years," he said.



"Those figures are really alarming and show the importance of community action."

Mr Morris said "what we need now is for members of the community to come along to learn more about how to trap the birds and get involved in our community trapping program".

He said MIMBAG was in the process of becoming an incorporated group, which could allow it to access funding for things like additional traps and cover the costs of humane euthanasiation.

BIRD DEATHS LINKED TO FISH LOST IN ALGAL BLOOM

Birds are starving and dying along metropolitan Adelaide beaches, caused by a lack of fish as a result of the algal bloom, the South Australian government says.

SA Research and Development Institute (SARDI) executive director Mike Steer on Thursday said testing has been done on bird carcasses collected.

"What we're finding now is that many of those birds that we're seeing are in poor condition and looked like they're starving," he said. "That sort of makes sense because of the impact we've seen in the food web disruption as a result of all these dead fish dying."



He said necropsy results would be published on the Department for Environment and Water website when available, but acknowledged there has been a "backlog" of reports to be updated.

"Sometimes it takes a number of months to get the bio-toxin information," Professor Steer said. "There's about 90 investigations that are ongoing at the moment that would eventually end up on the website."

In the weekly algal bloom government update, SA Environment Minister Lucy Hood said the "only active bloom area" in the state remained in the south-west of Yorke Peninsula, with elevated counts of *Karenia* detected at Hardwicke Bay, Point Turton and Port Rickaby.

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She said algal levels have reduced at Seal Bay on Kangaroo Island while all 21 metropolitan onshore sites have maintained low or no levels of *Karenia*.

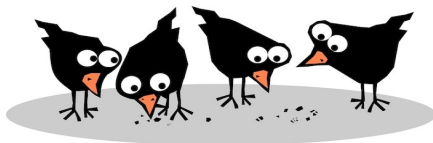
Professor Steer said seasonal conditions were bringing nutrient-rich cold water to the surface along parts of the southern coast, "particularly southern Kangaroo Island, along Bonney Coast around the south-east off of Robe and also southern Eyre Peninsula".

He said the "significant upwelling" has caused a fresh wave of foaming events — such as a recent report in Port Lincoln — but the foam is not from *Karenia* species causing the algal bloom.

"We've tested those foaming areas and we've indicated that *Karenia* isn't present. There's a number of other phytoplankton species that are contributing to that mix," he said.

He said the upwelling would not push the bloom to other clearer parts of the state.

"The algae that we've dealt with likes calm, stratified water where we don't have a lot of movement," he said. "We're getting the big turbulent, deep water mixing, which is more favourable for other species."



DID YOU KNOW...

The Budgie ***Dilute mutation*** reduces the bird's color intensity by up to 90%.

- **Body color:** Extremely faint, pastel wash (about 10% of normal).
- **Wing markings:** Very light, sometimes nearly invisible.
- **Cheek patches:** Pale lavender or washed out.
- **Throat spots:** Extremely faint or absent.
- **Tail:** Very pale blue or green, sometimes nearly white.



Dilutes are often confused with *Clearwings*, but the key difference is that *Clearwings* keep a strong body color, while *Dilutes* look soft and ghostly all over.

NEW SITE FOR NIGHT PARROT FOUND

A NEW population of one of the world's most elusive birds may have been discovered according to researchers who say they have captured recordings of the parrot's call in Queensland's Outback. Ecologist Steve Murphy said dozens of fresh audio recordings revealed the presence of critically-endangered night parrots.

Only a few hundred birds are believed to remain in around two dozen inland colonies. Dr Murphy said it was not easy to find evidence of the bird which was thought to be extinct for almost 70 years until 1979.

"The fact that you've got a nocturnal parrot is very unusual," Dr Murphy said. "And the fact you've got one that disappeared also generates a lot of interest."

Murphy said the exact location was being kept secret to protect the birds from disturbance and to respect the wishes of the landholder where the recordings were made. The site was more than 150 kilometres from the other known Queensland population, discovered at Bush Heritage Australia's night parrot exclusion zone a decade ago. He said he believed the new flock was distant enough to be considered a separate community from the Pullen Pullen birds.

"They are still genuinely rare," he said. While he has not seen a night parrot at the new site Murphy said the recordings supported earlier, unconfirmed sightings in the area. The new finding meant conservationists may not need to consider moving night parrots to other habitats to establish insurance populations elsewhere in Australia's interior.

He said the discovery added urgency to further research with heavy rain in south-west Queensland earlier this year likely to trigger grass seeding and potential breeding activity.

"When night parrots are breeding we know that they call a lot more which makes them more detectable," he said. "So we are very keen to get back out there as soon as we can."

The Conservation Partners researcher said they had recorded the equivalent of 20 years' worth of recordings if played back-to-back through 120 automated acoustic recorders and validated by specialised software.

Murphy said he struck gold earlier this year while analysing flagged recordings from September 2025 as part of the study.

"I listened to it over and over and over again," he said.

IMPORTANT NOTICES!

NOTICE TO ALL AFFILIATES

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.

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2026 RING ORDERS

Supplementary orders will be ongoing during 2026, However delivery time frame and cost for transshipment, will vary.

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

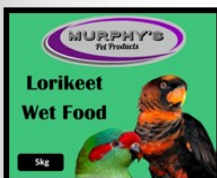
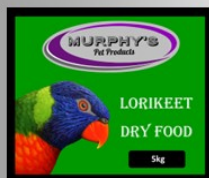
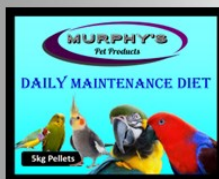
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Please send in any club detail changes, including changes of position to the secretary asap. Thank you.

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