

Chatter

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Welcome to the Summer Edition of Chatter!

Welcome to the Summer edition of Chatter! In this issue, we shine the spotlight on a fancier who has quietly but consistently made his mark in the hobby—John Mulley. As one of this year's ANBC judges for Cairns,, John has dedicated years of hard work to the budgerigar fancy in South Australia. His commitment is evident, with his young birds frequently earning spots in the State team. We take a closer look at John's setup and the regimen that enables him to produce state representatives year after year.

In *Genetics Corner*, we explore the fascinating world of Rainbows—an apt focus given the recent workshops held by both the BSSA and NEBS. With Rainbows now part of the ANBC show as an AOSV promotional class, it's the perfect time to delve into their genetics and growing presence in the exhibition scene.

For those new to the show bench, *Novice Corner* offers practical advice on getting started in the exhibition side of budgerigars. Success in breeding doesn't happen overnight—it requires knowledge, experience, and, above all, patience. This article highlights common pitfalls, such as overcrowding and accumulating more birds than one can realistically manage, offering valuable insights for newcomers eager to establish a strong foundation in the hobby.

Our *Overseas Corner* features Robert Marshall, a highly successful exhibitor from the USA. As our first interviewee from the American circuit, Robert shares unique insights into the US budgerigar exhibition scene, offering a fresh perspective on international competition.



Meanwhile, *Pet Corner* tackles a common but easily treatable issue—scaly face mite. Recognizing the symptoms early is key to ensuring your birds remain healthy, and this article provides practical guidance on identifying and addressing the condition before it becomes a major concern.

In *You Be The Judge*, we highlight the crucial role of stewards in the judging process. A good steward not only assists the judge and show manager but also helps maintain the integrity and smooth running of competitions. Stewarding is an excellent way to gain hands-on experience in the exhibition scene, deepen your understanding of show standards, and contribute to the success of your club. Whether you're considering a future as a judge or simply looking to support the community, stewarding is a rewarding and essential role.

We also take *A Look Around the Clubs* to catch up on all the happenings in South Australia since the end of November.

As we move further into the breeding season, I hope your efforts are proving successful, and that you're beginning to identify the standouts for your 2025 show team. The first major event of the year, the Novice & Intermediate Show – Murphy Classic, takes place in late March. For Novice and Intermediate breeders, this is a fantastic opportunity to showcase your birds and gauge them against your peers. I encourage you all to take part!

Enjoy the read, and best of luck with your birds this season!



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John Mulley

This season, *Fancier in Focus* shines a spotlight on a dedicated figure in the North East budgerigar community—John Mulley. A quiet achiever with a long history of success at the state level, John has continually demonstrated his commitment to the fancy. This year, his expertise has been recognised on the national stage, as he becomes one of just four ANBC judges entrusted with the prestigious role of presiding over the National Titles in Cairns this May.

John's contributions to both club and state affairs have been extensive, often taking on multiple support roles. Since 1998, he has held several key positions within the Budgerigar Council of South Australia (BCSA), including two stints as Treasurer totalling about two decades and about two decades as a bird carer at the Nationals. His leadership extends to national representation, having served as a South Australian Delegate at the ANBC on nine occasions prior to 2016.

Beyond administrative duties, John has played a crucial role in shaping the BCSA's auction events since 2003, either as the primary organiser or co-organiser. His ability to coordinate and manage these events has ensured their ongoing success, further benefiting breeders across the state.

John's expertise extends beyond the show bench, with his in-depth knowledge of genetics being highly sought after by the ANBC for input into reviews of the Australian Standard. His insights have contributed to shaping the breeding and exhibition standards for future generations of fanciers.

With such an impressive track record, *Chatter Magazine* thought it was only fitting to uncover where it all began for John, and to learn the secrets behind his patient, methodical approach to exhibition budgerigars.

John's journey into budgerigars is deeply rooted in family tradition. His father and grandfather had



John Mulley

budgerigars in the 1950s, and as a youngster, John found himself responsible for looking after his father's birds while also making nest boxes for his grandfather. However, it wasn't until the late 1980s that he began breeding in earnest—and it all started by chance. A stray grey budgerigar landed at his back door, and after finding it a mate, John set up a colony and began breeding.

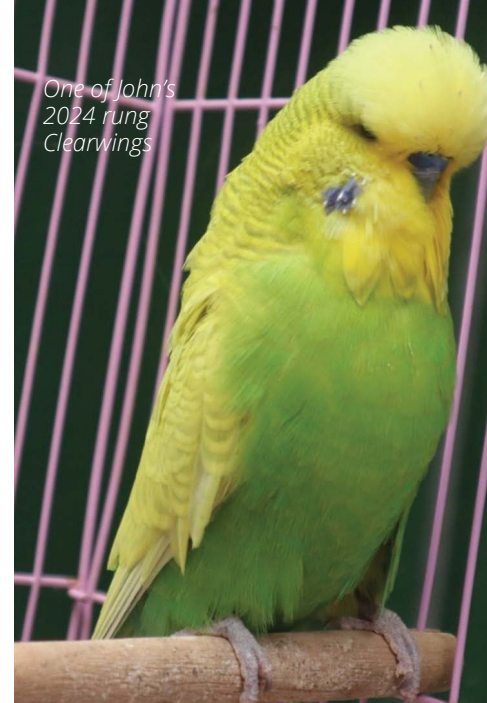
It was only by accident that he discovered exhibition budgerigars. One Saturday, while casually browsing the Advertiser's bird section for the first time, he noticed an advertisement from someone selling exhibition budgies. Something about it piqued his interest, and he decided to go and have a look. That moment changed everything. By October 1992, John had joined the North East Budgerigar Society after seeing another advert, this time for their next club meeting.

His involvement in the fancy quickly deepened, and he became a founding member of the Budgerigar Breeders Club (BBC), an organisation dedicated to making exhibition budgerigars accessible to beginners at reasonable prices. In 2006, he was awarded Life Membership from the North East Budgerigar Society in recognition of his contributions to club and state activities, an honour he holds in high regard alongside his military and professional accolades.

As an exhibitor, John has performed consistently well on the national stage with birds selected in the South Australian team each year except for 2022 when



John Mulley
2025



One of John's
2024 rung
Clearwings

presiding as a judge at the Covid restricted nationals. He secured a first place in the Opaline AOSV class at the 2000 Adelaide Nationals, followed by another national title in the Black Eyed Self class in Cairns in 2003. He competes across multiple classes with seconds in Clearwing (3), Black Eyed Self, and Yellow Faced Blue, and thirds in Dominant Pied, Hen, Black Eyed Self (3), Dark Eyed Clear, Golden Faced Blue, Yellow Faced Blue and Crested. For John, any bird from anyone with a bird in the South Australian team that places in the top half of the field is a worthwhile contribution to the performance of South Australia at the nationals.

John's passion extends beyond breeding and exhibiting—he is also a respected judge. He became a judge in 1998, advanced to Senior Judge by 2002, and was elevated to Major Award Judge in 2006, stepping up to national accreditation in 2018. With a family history steeped in judging—his grandfather was a bantam judge, his mother a floral art judge, and his father the National Chairman of rose judges—John was well-prepared for the thick skin needed for the role. His favourite time of year is May, beginning with club-level shows and culminating in the Nationals, an event he considers the ultimate assessment of a breeding season's success.

His breeding program is centred around the usual Normals, Dominant Pieds, Opalines and Cinnamonwings, but with emphasis on Clearwings

and Black Eyed Selves. When it comes to pairing birds, he takes a careful approach, balancing genetic compatibility with visual appeal. He often pairs cousins, uncles to nieces, and other moderately related birds, believing that slow inbreeding helps refine exhibition qualities while maintaining vigour. He avoids very close pairings, unless by accident.

Preparing birds for the show bench is an important part of John's routine. He believes that handling chicks in the nest helps tame the birds, and he locates nursery cages in the bird room close to human traffic for the chicks to become comfortable in the presence of humans. Show cages containing treats are placed in the nursery cages to help birds get used to the confines of a show cage. The chicks are moved out to the main aviary at about 10 weeks post hatching as they begin to break their caps.

In the weeks leading up to shows he fine-tunes his birds' condition with a diet boost that includes sprouted seed, fresh vegetables, and light water sprays to improve feather appearance. While he used to invest more time in show training, he now relies more on producing naturally steady birds.

John's approach to feeding in the aviary is simple but effective. His base seed mix consists of 50% canary seed, 25% Jap millet, and 25% white millet. He provides sunflower seeds separately in the aviary prior to breeding and branches of salt bush, apple,



corn on the cob, silverbeet, and chickweed. Sprouted seed with the same ingredients as used for breeding pairs is given occasionally throughout the year.

Breeding pairs receive sprouted seed every second day, and silver beet every other day. Sprouted seed comprises equal parts of triticale, feed oats and large parrot mix, with some mung bean. Preparation is timed to feed about the same time of day optimally with sprouts about 1-2 mm long as best as can be judged depending upon outside temperature. A couple of hours before feeding the sprouting mix he adds a pinch of iodised table salt, Liquid Gold, The Good Oil, Soluvite D and Probiotic. That is preferable to adding anything to their drinking water with wastage and risk of toxic degradation. Finally, a generous amount of Budgie Starter is mixed in just prior to feeding. All of that, plus not stressing the birds by over breeding, not breeding through excessive summer heat and not breeding while birds are under physiological stress during their regular April moult seems to be enough to avoid French moult.

Disease prevention is another key part of his management. He values natural hardiness in his stock, ensuring that his birds have access to plenty of flight space, clean flights, natural sunlight, and exposure to rain in the external wire extensions to the flights to maintain their good health.



John's birdroom is designed for efficiency. He prefers wire cages over wooden ones for better airflow and has painted the walls of the bird room a light green. There is a night light and through the day natural light comes in through some clear roof panels. Natural light is supplemented by lights on a timer extending lighting either side of sunrise and sunset to trick them into thinking winter and summer is coming a little bit earlier than it really is. At the end of the breeding season he watches the weather and when it rains the wire cages are spread out on the back lawn and after a soaking are finished off with a strong hosing down. If it doesn't rain, then the sprinklers automatically come on for 20 minutes every Wednesday morning during summer, so that substitutes for rain.

Record-keeping is another aspect of John's meticulous approach. He uses breeding cards, not on the nest boxes, documenting date of set up, parent ring numbers, variety and colour, approximate dates the eggs are laid, approximate expected hatch dates, ring numbers as applied to that nest, and chick movements between nests. He transfers that to a neater page for each nest and after culling uses "The Budgerigar Program" to record birds that he retains. That allows him to print pedigrees to assist with pairing, even though this extremely useful program is no longer supported by its creator. He separately lists all his birds in a WORD file with birds in logical groups (like a page for Clearwing cocks, a page for Clearwing hens, etc) with the text for each entry coloured to match the ring colour for their year of hatching, as an aid to seeing immediately the age structure of the flock.

Despite his success, John remains humble about his achievements. He emphasises that even the best-laid breeding plans can sometimes go awry. For

example, the Clearwing and Black Eyed Self families were nearly lost due to fertility issues so they are currently being rescued with the aim of getting back to required numbers. He values the friendships and shared knowledge within the fancy just as much as the results. Like his previous interests in cricket and fishing, he saw budgerigar breeding as an enjoyable outlet from the pressures of work. The only difference, he jokes, is that this hobby keeps him in his own backyard—most of the time! Since retirement his ongoing involvement provides necessary ongoing social interaction and helps keep his brain active.

John's depth of knowledge and willingness to share insights make him an invaluable member of the South Australian budgerigar community. Whether as a breeder, exhibitor, or judge, his contributions continue to shape the fancy, and his dedication serves as an inspiration to both new and experienced fanciers alike.

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Breeding and Exhibiting Rainbows

By John Mulley, February 2025

Rainbows are among the most visually striking budgerigar varieties, blending the Clearwing and Opaline mutations with one of the yellow-faced blue series. Their vibrant body colours range across sky blue, violet sky blue, cobalt, violet, and mauve, while their yellow pigmentation is determined by the specific yellow-faced mutation involved.

Understanding the Yellow-Faced Blue Series

The Yellow-Faced Blue forms include Yellow-Faced Blue, Golden-Faced Blue (Single Factor), and Golden-Faced Blue (Double Factor). Although Whitecap Blue Single Factor is part of the Green-Golden Faced Blue-Yellow Faced Blue-Whitecap-Blue colour series, it is not recognised as a Rainbow combination under the Australian National Budgerigar Council (ANBC) exhibition standard. However, some Rainbow breeders may adopt a more flexible interpretation.

Getting Started with Rainbow Breeding

There are two main ways to start breeding Rainbows:

- 1. Purchase or Trade:** Buying established Rainbows or trading with an existing breeder is the quickest route to acquiring stock.
- 2. Breeding from Scratch:** This method requires assembling the necessary genetic components over multiple generations. While more time-consuming, it offers great satisfaction to breeders who enjoy working towards a goal.

Improving and Maintaining Rainbows

If you acquire Rainbows through purchase or trade, maintaining and refining the strain requires selective outcrossing. The best approach is to pair them with clear-headed Opaline Blues or, ideally, Opaline Golden-Faced Blues. Avoid flecked Opalines, as breeding from these birds encourages flecking, which can compromise the variety's purity.

The Challenge of Breeding Rainbows from Scratch

Breeding Rainbows from the ground up involves incorporating Clearwing, Opaline, and Yellow-Faced Blue genetics onto a single bird. This requires careful selection of:

- **Clearwing Blues:** Exhibition Clearwing breeders typically avoid Opaline and Blue, focusing instead on Green Clearwings, which perform better in competitions. Opaline Clearwings are not intentionally bred for the show bench but may have merit in Rainbow breeding.
- **Golden-Faced/Yellow-Faced Blues:** Breeders of exhibition-quality yellow faces often exclude Opaline and Cinnamonwing by outcrossing to Normal Blue hens. This ensures strong representation in the Normal Blue classes of the ANBC Matrix.

Maintaining varietal characteristics while achieving exhibition quality is a challenge, as is the case with other recessive varieties such as Clearwing, Black-Eyed Self, and Recessive Pied. A minimum of five pairs is necessary to avoid inbreeding depression, but ideally, 10 pairs (including outcrosses) are needed to sustain the line and produce show-quality Rainbows.

Step-by-Step Breeding Process

The breeding sequence outlined in Genetics for Budgerigar Breeders by Taylor and Warner provides a clear roadmap:

1. **Blue Opaline cock × Blue Clearwing hen**
2. **Blue Clearwing cock × Blue Opaline hen**
3. **Normal/Opaline/Clearwing cock (from #2) × Opaline/Clearwing hen (from #1)**
4. **Yellow-Faced cock × Blue Clearwing hen**
5. **Repeat pairing as in #4**
6. **Yellow-Faced Clearwing cock (from #4) × Blue Normal/Clearwing hen (from #5)**

7. **Opaline Clearwing cock (from #3) × Yellow-Faced Clearwing hen (from #6)**
→ 25% Rainbow hens
8. **Yellow-Faced Clearwing/Opaline cock (from #7) × Opaline Clearwing hen (from #3)** →
12.5% Rainbow cocks and 12.5% Rainbow hens

These birds will be single-factor Yellow-Faced Rainbows. To produce Double-Factor Golden-Faced Rainbows, pair:

- **Rainbow Single-Factor Golden-Faced × Rainbow Single-Factor Golden-Faced**
→ 25% Rainbow Double-Factor Golden-Faced Blues.

Adding dark factor and violet factor expands the visual spectrum of the strain.

Sustaining and Refining Rainbow Lines

Once you have established Rainbows, continuous refinement requires outcrossing to clear-headed Blue Opalines. Like any variety, breeding should aim to maintain body strength, vitality, and feather quality while avoiding faults such as head flecking, heavy secondary flights, and excessively long flights. The ultimate goal is perfection.

The Role of Rainbows in Exhibitions

The recent inclusion of Rainbows in the ANBC exhibition standard has drawn increased attention to the variety. Moving forward, Rainbows will compete in an Any Other Standard Variety (AOSV) class at national shows alongside Saddlebacks and Darkwings. The timeline for integration into the national show structure is as follows:

- **2025-2026:** Promotional class
- **2027-2029:** Demonstration class
- **2030 onwards:** Official class eligible for points, provided the variety has gained sufficient recognition and distribution.

It is anticipated that Darkwings on a Dilute background may dominate in this category.



Club Show Considerations

While the ANBC has clarified the place of Rainbows in national and state selection shows, club Show Managers must determine how to incorporate them into local show schedules. Traditionally, AOSV/NSV classes have been used to accommodate Saddlebacks and Darkwings. Given that Rainbows are a combination of Opaline and Clearwing, both of which already have established show classes, their traditional placement has been in the Opaline AOSV category. However, to promote the variety, club shows may need to introduce a dedicated Rainbow class.



The Ongoing Discussion: What Defines a Rainbow?

A key question remains: should Opaline Clearwing Whitecaps be considered Rainbows? While Double-Factor Golden-Faced Blue Rainbows fit neatly into the definition, Single-Factor Golden-Faced Blue Rainbows, Yellow-Faced Blue Rainbows, and Whitecap Single-Factors exist within a spectrum of possibilities. Some breeders argue that Golden-Faced Blue-Whitecap Blue and Yellow-Faced Blue-Whitecap Blue combinations may appear too green to be considered true Rainbows.

Another point of discussion is the inclusion of Rainbow Greys in international Rainbow Standards. Their place within the Rainbow spectrum remains a topic of debate, as does whether mauve belongs in the Rainbow category.

Final Thoughts

Rainbows are a captivating and rewarding variety for budgerigar enthusiasts, offering both breeding challenges and exhibition opportunities. With increasing recognition through ANBC standards and show classifications, now is an exciting time to explore the world of Rainbow breeding. Whether through acquiring established birds or building the variety from scratch, breeders have the opportunity to contribute to the future of this stunning variety within the exhibition community.

Robert Marshall: A Budgerigar Breeder of Distinction in Louisville, Kentucky

Troy Holmes

I had the pleasure of visiting Robert Marshall in Louisville, Kentucky in December of 2024, and experiencing first-hand the dedication and craftsmanship that have made him one of the most successful budgerigar breeders in the United States. Robert's achievements on the show bench are nothing short of remarkable, with numerous wins across the Midwest. In one show, he swept the entire Top 10, while in another, he claimed nine of the Top 10 places—an extraordinary feat in competitive budgerigar exhibitions.

Robert's journey into budgerigar breeding is an intriguing one, sparked almost by chance. Initially visiting a breeder of other birds, he was instantly captivated by budgies and never looked back. Since then, he has built a thriving aviary and a reputation as both a leading breeder and a respected judge within the Budgerigar Association of America (BAA) and the World Budgerigar Organisation (WBO).

A Passion for Birds and a Self-Made Aviary

From a young age, Robert had a deep fascination with birds, an interest that evolved into a lifelong passion for aviculture. While working in the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning industry, he developed his breeding setup with the support of his family. What makes his aviary particularly impressive is that he has personally designed and built every

component—from welding his own wire fronts to constructing custom cabinets and nest boxes. A true craftsman, Robert embodies the spirit of a hands-on breeder, ensuring every detail of his birdroom meets his exacting standards.

His aviary is designed with careful attention to airflow, spacious flight cages, and strategic layouts that maximize the birds' health and comfort. His commitment to these details ensures that his budgerigars not only thrive but also achieve the highest levels of quality expected in top-tier breeding programs.

A Leading Breeder with an Eye for Excellence

Robert's dedication to breeding high-quality budgerigars has established him as a leading figure in the U.S. budgerigar community. His birds are celebrated for their exceptional head feather, size, cleanliness, and modern show look. Through meticulous selection and breeding strategies, he has elevated the standard of budgerigar breeding, consistently producing birds that are both visually stunning and genetically strong.

His success on the show bench is a testament to his skill. Not only does he compete at the highest levels, but his birds have set benchmarks for quality in the Midwest and beyond. Robert's commitment to excellence has not only earned him personal accolades but has also contributed to improving the overall standard of budgerigars in the U.S. Robert's birds have a strong background from Maarten Heylen in Belgium, as well as other prominent breeders in Europe and the UK. Robert hasn't



*Chatter Editor
Troy Holmes
with Robert
Marshall*



*Cinnamonwing
Grey Green*



*Normal Dark
Green*

had a big budget to purchase birds, so he has had to be patient, and strategic in his approach.

Mentorship and Community Leadership

Beyond his breeding accomplishments, Robert is widely respected for his willingness to share his knowledge and mentor fellow breeders. He is always open to guiding newcomers, offering practical advice on breeding, husbandry, and exhibition techniques.

Although breeders in the United States are often separated by long distances, Robert has built strong bonds within the budgerigar community. Whether through direct mentorship, discussions at shows, or participation in online forums, he fosters an inclusive and supportive environment for both experienced fanciers and those just starting in the hobby. His approachable nature and genuine enthusiasm make him a valued leader in the aviculture world.

Respected Judge and Advocate for the Hobby

Robert's expertise extends beyond breeding and exhibition—he is also a highly respected judge. As



*Yellowfaced
Grey*

an accredited panel judge for both the Budgerigar Association of America (BAA) and the World Budgerigar Organisation (WBO), his keen eye for detail and fair assessments are well-regarded in competitive circles. His judging responsibilities involve not only evaluating birds but also upholding and refining the breed standards that ensure quality and consistency within the show community.

His role as a judge further solidifies his influence in the hobby, as he helps shape the future of



Breeding Cabinet Setup, designed and constructed by Robert Marshall.



Normal Grey Cock



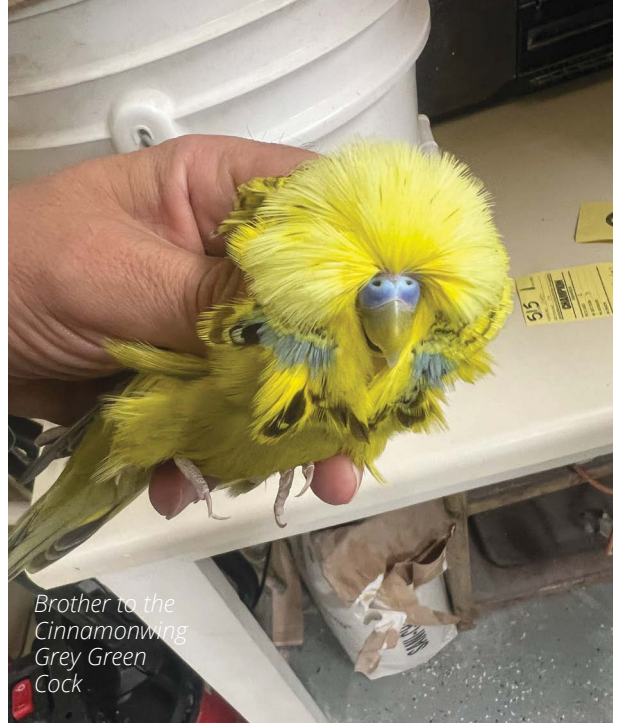
Nest Box, showing a smart feature to help hens get in and out

competitive budgerigar breeding by setting high standards for the birds that take the top prizes. When asked about issues in the fancy, and what we can do to improve them, Robert acknowledges that he can't speak on the hobby as a whole, he can only speak on the hobby in the USA, where they have two competing societies/bodies for budgie breeders and shows. With both, societies memberships are not what they used to be, yet you have members in each that refuse to help or support the other my simply showing their birds at the other ones shows. Robert feels that this is to the detriment of both competing groups, and the hobby as a whole, so he goes out of his way to show birds at both – *“that's the least you can do to make sure that the hobby survives and flourish in this country”*.

When considering advice to those new to the hobby, Robert recommends the following: *“To the beginner, I find today most want to compete for Best In Show right away. Spend a lot for birds starting out, have success right away at first then don't, give up and quit. I say don't be in a hurry. Learn how to take care of the birds first, find a mentor, could be a novice who's been showing for a few years. Learn what a good stock bird that can help you looks like. Start there, and don't put so much pressure on yourself to have to win right away and enjoy learning and growing to get better with the birds.”*



*Another Super
Cinnamonwing
Grey Green
Cock*



*Brother to the
Cinnamonwing
Grey Green
Cock*



*One of the
Aviary Setups*



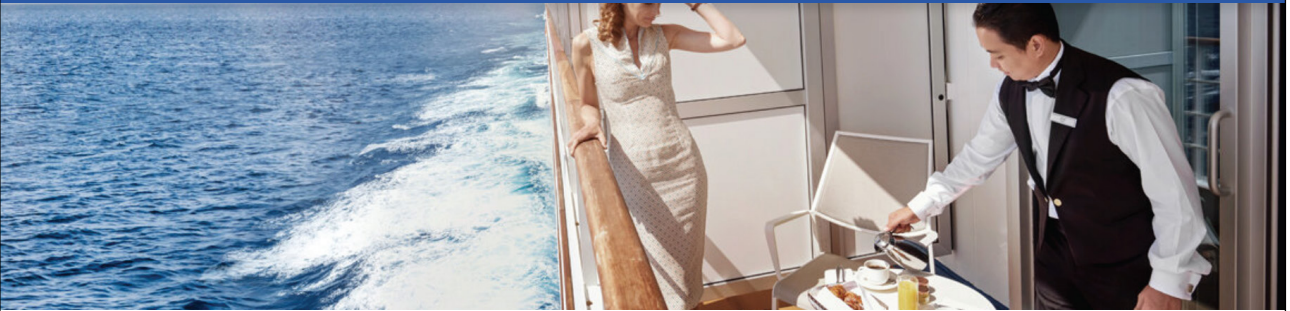
*Typical
Breeding
Cage Setup*

A Lasting Impact on the Budgerigar Community

Robert Marshall's journey as a budgerigar breeder exemplifies dedication, craftsmanship, and a generous spirit. His contributions have significantly shaped the Midwest's budgerigar breeding scene, raising the bar for quality while fostering a strong sense of camaraderie among breeders.

His story—from an unexpected introduction to budgies to becoming a dominant force in the exhibition world—serves as an inspiration to seasoned breeders and newcomers alike. Through his hard work, skill, and willingness to support others, Robert has cemented his legacy as one of the top budgerigar breeders in the United States.

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Scaly Face Mite

Scaly Face, also known as Scaly Leg, is a common condition in budgerigars caused by the *Knemidokoptes pilae* mite. These microscopic parasites burrow into the skin, causing crusty, scaly lesions primarily around the cere (the fleshy area above the beak), beak, eyelids, and legs. While the condition can be distressing for both the bird and the owner, early detection and treatment can effectively resolve the issue and prevent long-term damage.

What Causes Scaly Face in Budgerigars?

The scaly face condition is caused by *Knemidokoptes pilae*, a microscopic mite that lives under the skin of the affected bird. Unlike some external parasites that move around the feathers, these mites burrow into the skin tissue, creating thick, crusty growths.

How Do Budgerigars Get Scaly Face?

- 1. Direct Contact with an Infected Bird** – The most common way for budgerigars to get mites is through contact with another infected bird, particularly in aviaries, pet shops, or during breeding.
- 2. Contaminated Nesting Material** – If a hen or cock is infected, the mites can transfer to the chicks in the nest, leading to early-stage infestations.
- 3. Weakened Immune System** – While mites can be present in many birds without causing noticeable symptoms, those with weakened immune systems (due to stress, poor diet, or other illnesses) are more susceptible to an outbreak.



Photos courtesy of Dr Hamish Baron

Recognising the Symptoms of Scaly Face

Early detection is crucial in preventing severe cases of scaly face mite infestation. The first signs are often subtle, so regular observation of your budgie's beak and face is essential.

COMMON SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:

- **Crusty, scaly deposits on the cere** (often white or grey in color)
- **Beak deformities or overgrowth** due to mite activity
- **Lesions around the eyes, beak, and corners of the mouth**
- **Scaly growths on the legs and feet** (in advanced cases)
- **Itchiness or excessive rubbing of the face on perches**

As the infestation worsens, the beak may become misshapen or overgrown, making it difficult for the bird to eat properly. In extreme cases, untreated scaly face can cause permanent deformities and discomfort for the bird.

Treatment: How to Get Rid of Scaly Face Mites

Scaly face can be treated with many commercially available products from your local pet store, or vet. These include the likes of Ivermectin, Avimec, and other pyrethrin based products.

1. CLEANING AND DISINFECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

Since mites can spread through cages, perches, and nesting materials, it's essential to:

- **Deep clean the cage** – Remove all bedding, perches, and accessories and disinfect thoroughly.
- **Replace wooden perches** – As mites can hide in porous wood, consider switching to plastic or treated wood perches.
- **Treat all birds in the aviary** – Even if only one budgie shows symptoms, others may be carrying mites without visible signs.

2. SUPPORTING RECOVERY THROUGH NUTRITION

A healthy immune system helps birds recover faster and reduces the risk of reinfestation. Ensure your budgie has:

- A **balanced diet** with fresh vegetables, quality seed mix, and cuttlebone for beak health.
- **Vitamin A-rich foods** (carrots, sweet potato, dark leafy greens) to support skin healing.
- **Regular exposure to natural sunlight** or full-spectrum lighting for overall health.



Prevention: Keeping Scaly Face Mites Away

Once your budgie has recovered, taking preventative measures can help stop the mites from returning.

- **Quarantine New Birds** – Keep any new budgies isolated for at least 30 days before introducing them to an aviary.
- **Routine Check-Ups** – Regularly inspect your birds' beaks, legs, and cere for early signs of mite infestation.
- **Clean and Disinfect** – Maintain a hygienic cage environment, washing perches and accessories frequently.
- **Minimize Stress** – Provide proper nutrition, a stable environment, and avoid overcrowding to keep the immune system strong.

Final Thoughts

Scaly Face Mite is a treatable condition that should not be ignored. Early intervention and proper care can ensure your budgerigar makes a full recovery without long-term damage. By keeping a watchful eye on your birds, maintaining good hygiene, and following best breeding practices, you can help prevent scaly face mites from becoming a problem in your flock.

Remember: A healthy, well-cared-for budgie is a happy budgie!





Colony Breeding Setup.
Photo Courtesy of Paul Soul

Starting Out with Budgerigars – A Guide for New Breeders

Patience is Key

As an eager new breeder, it's natural to be excited about getting your budgerigars to breed. However, it's important to remember that success in breeding comes with knowledge, experience, and, most importantly, patience. Before pairing birds, a breeder should take time to understand their general behaviour, care requirements, and natural breeding patterns.

Like all livestock, budgerigars will breed in their own time when they are physically ready, regardless of how much we may want them to hurry up! Rushing the process can lead to stress, poor breeding results, and even harm to the birds. Instead, a patient and observant approach will allow you to enjoy your birds to the fullest while setting them up for success in the breeding season.

Avoid the Common Mistake of Overcrowding

One of the most common mistakes new breeders make is accumulating more birds than they can realistically manage. Budgerigars are undeniably captivating, with their vibrant colours and lively personalities, making it tempting to add more birds to the aviary than the available space allows.

Many beginners start with colony breeding, which involves housing multiple pairs together in a



Another Colony Breeding Setup, courtesy of John Mulley



Courtesy of Paul Soul

communal aviary. While this setup can work well under the right conditions, overcrowding can lead to aggressive territorial disputes, particularly once breeding begins. A once peaceful group can quickly descend into chaos, with birds fighting over nesting spots, leading to broken eggs, injured birds, and disrupted breeding attempts.

For reference, an aviary with a sleeping area measuring 5ft x 4ft x 6ft high, with an attached flight, can comfortably house five or six breeding pairs or around 30 non-breeding birds. If you are breeding in a colony setup, hanging two nest boxes per pair helps reduce squabbling, as birds have more options when choosing a nest. We also recommend placing the nest boxes around the middle height of the aviary, so that there are many

perches at a higher level (birds have a hierarchy too!) Once all pairs have settled and selected a nesting site, the extra boxes can be removed and kept as spares.

Another crucial point to remember is that odd birds should never be left in a breeding colony. A lone cock or hen can interfere with established pairs, causing stress and sometimes leading to lost eggs, harmed chicks, or even injuries to adults. If a breeding bird becomes sick or dies, its partner should be removed from the aviary as well to prevent disturbances among the other pairs. If the pair had eggs or chicks, these can be fostered to other breeding pairs with eggs or chicks of a similar age.

Understanding the Incubation Process

The incubation period and hatching process are fascinating aspects of budgerigar breeding that every novice should understand. A healthy hen typically lays between four and seven eggs, with five being the average clutch size. These eggs are laid on alternate days, meaning a full clutch may take up to two weeks to complete.

Incubation begins at different times depending on the hen. Some start sitting from the first egg, while others may wait a few days before settling down.



A healthy flock of colony breeding budgerigars, courtesy of Paul Soul

The incubation period for each egg is 17-18 days, meaning that a clutch of five eggs, if incubated from the first egg, may take 27-28 days before all have hatched.

This staggered hatching process is a natural adaptation that ensures the youngest chicks receive the nutrient-rich crop milk they need, while the older chicks gradually transition to a diet of partly digested seed. This system helps balance the hen's workload, as the cock bird will take over much of the feeding of the older chicks as they grow.

Not all eggs will necessarily hatch, and there may be gaps in the hatching process. It is important not to discard unhatched eggs too soon, as some may simply take longer to develop. Wait until the full incubation period has passed before assuming an egg is infertile.

Understanding Infertile or Unhatched Eggs

When eggs fail to hatch, it can be disappointing, but it's a natural part of breeding. Eggs can be clear (infertile), addled (undeveloped), or dead in shell (died while pipping out of the egg) for various reasons. Some eggs may not be fertilised, while others may fail to develop due to temperature fluctuations, genetic issues, or improper incubation.

Rather than becoming discouraged, new breeders should take this as a learning opportunity. If you experience a high number of infertile or unhatched eggs, seek advice from an experienced breeder. Most budgerigar enthusiasts are more than happy to offer guidance, and if you're unsure where to turn, Chatter Magazine and various budgerigar publications and Clubs can provide support.

Choosing Healthy Stock for Breeding

The foundation of successful breeding starts with selecting fit, healthy, and well-bred birds. Beginners should avoid purchasing old, overweight, or weak birds, even if they are offered at a reduced price. Instead, it is worth investing in young, closed-ringed birds with clear eyes, strong flight, and active behaviour.

Whenever possible, obtain pedigree information on the birds you purchase. This will help you track their genetic background, particularly if you plan to breed specific colours or varieties.

New stock should always be acquired well in advance of the breeding season to allow birds time to settle in and adjust to their new environment. Hens, in particular, may take longer to acclimate, and if they are introduced too close to the breeding



Some of the stunning colours that are possible.
Photo courtesy of Sam Gilbert

season, they may fail to breed altogether. Cocks tend to be more adaptable, and younger birds generally settle in more quickly than older ones. Old wise heads have often been heard saying you can buy your cocks, but breed your hens.

Controlled Breeding vs. Colony Breeding

Many beginners start with colony breeding, where multiple pairs are housed together in a shared

aviary. While this approach allows for natural social interaction and is visually appealing, it offers little control over breeding outcomes, particularly when it comes to colour genetics. Since it is difficult to track exact parentage in a colony setup, breeders who wish to work with specific colour mutations may eventually need to transition to controlled pair breeding in individual breeding cages.

That said, colony breeding can still yield a variety of beautiful colours and patterns, especially if you carefully select the original birds to ensure desirable traits.

Final Thoughts for New Breeders

Starting out in budgerigar breeding is an exciting and rewarding experience. By taking the time to understand the natural breeding process, avoiding common pitfalls like overcrowding, and selecting healthy stock, new breeders can set themselves up for success.

Remember, breeding budgerigars is a learning journey, and even experienced breeders face occasional setbacks. The key is to observe, be patient, and continuously learn from both your birds and fellow breeders. By doing so, you'll not only improve your breeding results but also develop a deeper appreciation for these wonderful birds.

Happy breeding!

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The Art of Stewarding in Budgerigar Shows

One of the most rewarding aspects of joining a budgerigar club is the opportunity to actively participate in club activities. Among these, stewarding is one of the most essential and fulfilling roles. It provides members with hands-on experience in managing the birds during shows, ensures smooth judging processes, and serves as a stepping stone towards becoming a judge. Stewards play a crucial role in the show system, working closely with both the Judge and the Show Manager to ensure the event runs efficiently and fairly.

Understanding the Role of a Steward

A Steward is responsible for assisting the Judge and Show Manager in various ways throughout a budgerigar show. Their duties involve handling cages, ensuring birds are presented correctly, and facilitating the judging process. Below are some of the key responsibilities of a Steward:

ASSISTING THE JUDGE

- 1. Handling Birds with Care** – The Steward must carefully move cages to the Judge's eye level on tiered staging, ensuring the birds remain calm and undisturbed.
- 2. Ensuring All Entries Are Presented** – Every bird entered in a specific class must be placed before the Judge, so none are accidentally overlooked.

- 3. Liaising with the Show Manager** – If there are any discrepancies, clarifications, or the need for de-benching (removing birds from competition), the Steward must fetch the Show Manager.
- 4. Delivering Results** – Once a class has been judged, the Steward takes the results to the Show Secretary.
- 5. Managing Major Award Staging** – If the event includes Major Awards, the Steward is responsible for moving winning cages to and from the designated staging area.
- 6. Following the Show Schedule** – The Steward must ensure that all awards are judged as per the official Show Schedule.

SUPPORTING THE SHOW MANAGER

- 1. Returning Cages** – After judging is complete, the Steward must return cages to their original positions.
- 2. Applying Place Cards** – At the end of the judging process, the Steward affixes place cards to indicate the rankings.



Steward Tom Sismey ably supporting Judge Malcolm Loveridge

What a Steward Should NOT Do

While the Steward has numerous responsibilities, there are also clear boundaries they must adhere to. Here are some crucial things a Steward should avoid:

- 1. Placing Cages on the Floor** – Birds should always remain on tiered staging to prevent stress and injury.
- 2. Blocking Cages Yet to Be Judged** – The Judge must have a clear view of all entries.
- 3. Handling Cages Roughly** – Birds should be treated gently to ensure their well-being.
- 4. Revealing Ownership of Entries** – The Steward should never indicate who owns which bird.
- 5. Influencing Judging Decisions** – A Steward must not push their own birds forward or attempt to sway the Judge's opinion.
- 6. Obstructing the Judge** – Moving in front of the Judge during judging is strictly prohibited.
- 7. Reviewing Entry Forms During Judging** – Entry forms should only be referenced when necessary and outside of active judging time.
- 8. Checking Placings of Personal Birds** – The Steward must remain impartial and not wander off to see how their own birds have been ranked.

Guidelines for Exhibitors Who Are NOT Stewarding

For those exhibiting but not stewarding, it is important to respect the judging process and avoid interfering. The following guidelines should be observed:

- 1. Stay Away from the Staging Area** – From the moment cages are checked in until judging is complete, exhibitors should keep their distance.
- 2. Do Not Interfere with Cages** – Only the Show Manager and designated Stewards should handle cages during the competition.

- 3. Wait for Clearance Before Removing Cages** – Exhibitors must not remove their birds from the venue until the Show Manager gives permission.

Determining Major Awards: The Steward's Role

Budgerigar shows vary in their award structures, but the goal remains the same: to identify the best birds within each status (Novice, Intermediate, Open) and ultimately determine the best bird in the show. The Major Award Steward plays a pivotal role in this process.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS FOR DETERMINING MAJOR AWARDS

- 1. Moving Class Winners to Major Award Staging** – Winners from the Novice, Intermediate, and Open sections are transferred to the Major Award staging area. Any changes to floor placings can only occur if a disqualification was overlooked.
- 2. Reducing Congestion by Assessing Novice Birds First** – To streamline the process, Novice birds are typically judged first.
- 3. Arranging Novice Birds** – The best Novice cocks are placed to the left in descending order, and the best hens to the right.
- 4. Calling Up Second-Place Birds** – The runner-up from the class of the winning bird is assessed to determine if it deserves a place among the winners (and beyond if the second placed bird is retained).
- 5. Separating Winners and Returning the Rest** – The birds selected for awards remain in the staging area, while the unsuccessful ones return to the main floor.



Steward Danny Brill supporting Judge Shiralee Reardon



*Judges Confer,
while Steward
Graham
McCallum
patiently waits*

- 6. Repeating the Process for Intermediate Birds** – The ranking method used for Novice birds is applied to the Intermediate category.
- 7. Assessing Open Birds** – Open birds generally dominate the final lineup. Cocks are ranked to the left and hens to the right, similar to the Novice and Intermediate stages.
- 8. Calling Up Second-Place Open Birds** – The second-place bird from each winning class is evaluated to determine if it can replace a bird in the top lineup.
- 9. Comparing Across Statuses** – The top Novice and Intermediate birds are assessed against Open birds to see if they merit a place in the final top 10.
- 10. Determining Grand Champion** – The best cock and best hen are compared to determine the Grand Champion and Champion Opposite Sex.

Key Considerations for Stewarding Major Awards

- 1. Ensuring Second and Third-Place Birds Are Assessed** – The Major Award Judge and Steward must ensure thorough evaluations.
- 2. Validating the Grand Champion** – The Grand Champion must not have been beaten

by another bird in the show. This is confirmed with a “Best of Colour/Variety” sticker.

- 3. Checking Lower-Ranked Birds** – Any bird in the top 10 without a Best of Colour/Variety sticker must be verified to ensure another bird of the same variety hasn’t outperformed it.
- 4. Maintaining a Positive Tone at Presentations** – The emphasis should be on the strong points of the winning birds rather than the faults of those ranked lower.
- 5. Respecting the Judge’s Decision** – The Judge’s ruling is final, and arguments are not entertained.

Conclusion

Stewarding is an integral part of budgerigar shows, offering valuable experience and contributing to the smooth running of competitions. A good Steward not only assists the Judge and Show Manager but also upholds the integrity of the event by following proper procedures and maintaining fairness. For those passionate about the exhibition side of budgerigar keeping, stewarding is an excellent way to gain insight into judging and refine their understanding of show standards. Whether you aspire to become a judge or simply want to support your club, stewarding is a rewarding and essential role within the budgerigar community.



North East Budgerigar Society

North East Budgerigar Society (NEBS)

The North East Budgerigar Society has had a busy few months, with leadership changes, special recognitions, and an eventful start to the year. Beau Schutz was elected as a delegate to Council, while Con Orfanos stepped into the role of President. At the Christmas party in December, Ian Marshall was honoured with Life Membership in recognition of his dedication and contributions over the years. Additionally, John Mulley was announced as the Clock turned to 2025 as one of the four judges selected to adjudicate at the 2025 National Titles in Cairns, a prestigious appointment that highlights his expertise in judging.

NEBS also saw some changes within the Council, with both Nigel Tonkin and Ian Wise stepping down from their roles. In addition to these milestones, the North East Budgerigar Society hosted its highly anticipated Once in a Blue Moon event. Unfortunately, true to its name, rare and challenging weather conditions impacted the show component of the event. Despite this setback, the society remains enthusiastic about the year ahead and looks forward to more opportunities to bring members together.







Port Pirie Budgerigar Society (PPBS)

The Port Pirie Budgerigar Society has had an eventful start to the year, with several key changes and well-deserved recognitions. At the January Annual General Meeting, a new committee was elected, with Doug Lange stepping into the role of President. His leadership will guide the club as it continues to grow and support its members in their passion for breeding and exhibiting budgerigars.



The club also acknowledged the contributions of several long-standing members. Peter Glassenbury retired as an ANBC judge after years of dedicated service to the budgerigar community. In recognition of their outstanding commitment and efforts, Malcolm Loveridge, Bob Simpson, and Peter Glassenbury were awarded Life Memberships of the Port Pirie Club. Their dedication has played a significant role in shaping the society, and their ongoing involvement remains invaluable.



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Around the clubs



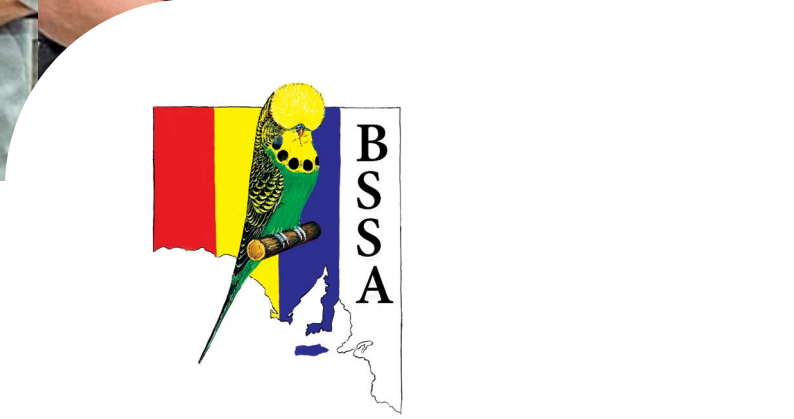
GREENSTAR
MODULAR



Marie Murphy, receiving the award for Open Exhibitor of the Year



Jane Kelb, Intermediate Exhibitor of the Year



Budgerigar Society of South Australia (BSSA)

Over the past few months, the Budgerigar Society of South Australia (BSSA) has seen several significant developments. We were pleased to put forward Paul Wilton as part of the Bird Carer team for Cairns 2025, where he will no doubt glean a lot from working with some of the best carers in the country, preparing birds for the pinnacle event on the Australian budgerigar calendar. A major highlight for the Summer was the recognition of Sue Adams, who was awarded life membership in appreciation of her outstanding service and contributions to the society over the years. Sue has been the Club secretary for the longest time, and now steps into the role of Publicity Officer.

In terms of delegate changes, Danny Brill stepped down from his role on the Council, and we welcomed George England as a BSSA delegate to the BCSA. The BSSA also held its Annual General Meeting, which brought some changes to the committee, with several new members joining and others stepping away.

The “BSSA Exhibitor of the Year” awards were also presented, celebrating the achievements of our members. Congratulations to Kerry & Marie Murphy on winning the Open category, Jane Kelb for taking out Intermediate, and Paul Wilton for his success in the Novice section. These awards highlight the dedication and hard work of our exhibitors, and we look forward to another strong year ahead for BSSA.

Sue receiving her life membership



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Roy Deslandes (Deceased)
George Duffield (Deceased)
John Fisher (Deceased)
Gordon Lowe (Deceased)
Stan Watson (Deceased)
Trevor Weckert
Bruce Stafford
Glenn Stearnes
John Rice
Peter Glassenbury
Larry Jeffries

JUDGES REPRESENTATIVE & SECRETARY



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ANY CORRESPONDENCE FOR JUDGES & STANDARDS CAN BE DIRECTED TO:

Judges Representative & Secretary - John Mulley 0488 224 446 jmulley@bigpond.net.au

BCSA Hall of Fame - ANBC Class Winners

Since the inception of the BCSA in 1996, the following BCSA members have won classes at the ANBC National Titles

Kakoschke & Rice - 12 Wins
Normal Green - 2005
Clearwing - 2005, 2010, 2015, 2016
Opaline - 2011, 2019
Opaline AOSV - 2010, 2015
Crested - 2003, 2005
Grey Green - 2016
J & W Weidenhofer - 5 Wins
Clearbody - 2015, 2018
Dilute - 2022, 2023
Greywing - 2024
Holmes Family - 4 Wins
Grey Green - 2018
Normal Blue - 2022
White Cap - 2023
Crested - 2024
John Mulley - 2 Wins
Opaline AOSV - 2000
Blackeyed Self - 2003
Marshall Family - 2 Wins
Albino - 2007
Recessive Pied - 2014
Doug & Ruth Lange - 2 Wins
Normal Green - 2009
Crested - 2014
Ray Slade - 2 Wins
Blackeyed Self - 2016, 2017

Dennis Lomman - 2 Wins
Violet - 2014
Normal Green, 2024
Helen Brooks - 1 Win
Fallow - 1996
Ron Norman - 1 Win
Hens Class - 1996
Rob McKie - 1 Win
Opaline - 1997
M & R Rafferty - 1 Win
Opaline AOSV - 2001
Michael Crossley - 1 Win
Yellowfaced Blue - 2002
Sue & Colin Norris - 1 Win
Dominant Pied - 2002
Peter Glassenbury - 1 Win
Blackeyed Self - 2009
Peter Simic - 1 Win
Recessive Pied - 2010
Ken & Janet Harris - 1 Win
Dominant Pied - 2023
Kelwyn Kakoschke - 1 Win
Clearwing - 2023

OBJECTS & PURPOSE

The specific aims and objectives of the BCSA are:

- To promote, encourage and stimulate the breeding and exhibiting of budgerigars, including the improvement of existing varieties, and the development of new.
- To serve as the State Council for Budgerigars in South Australia (including Broken Hill).
- To cooperate with other governing bodies interested in budgerigars, here in Australia, and abroad.
- To affiliate with and act as the South Australian member body of the Australian National Budgerigar Council (ANBC).
- To invite and encourage membership of Affiliate and Associate Organisations interested in the breeding and exhibiting of budgerigars.
- To use the Standard of Perfection for the exhibition budgerigar as set by the ANBC.
- To establish, maintain and recommend uniform rules for all shows and exhibitions held by the Council and its Affiliate and Associate Organisations.
- To establish a panel of judges who are able to judge these shows.
- To accept a code of ethics for judges.
- To ratify recommendations received from the panel of judges.
- To recommend and / or co-ordinate on any matter deemed to be of common interest to Affiliate and Associate Organisations.
- To obtain direction and/or instruction from Affiliate and Associate Organisations on ANBC matters through their BCSA delegates.
- To hold an annual pre-selection show to select a team to represent South Australia at the ANBC Championship Show.
- To host the ANBC Championship Show when required.
- To compile annually a register of show and meeting dates of all participating Affiliate and Associate Organisations.
- To establish and maintain an exhibitor status register for all financial individual members or partnerships.
- To do all such other things as may be incidental to the attainment of such objects.

LIFE MEMBERS

- 2016 – Mr Graham Bell
- 2016 – Mrs Doreece Brunton
- 2016 – Mr Peter Glassenbury
- 2016 – Mr John Mulley
- 2016 – Mr Nigel Tonkin
- 2023 – Mr Kelwyn Kakoschke
- 2023 – Mr Dennis Lomman
- 2024 – Mr Doug Lange
- 2024 – Mrs Ruth Lange



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The Budgerigar Council of South Australia (BCSA) is committed to fostering a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all members and visitors to budgerigar shows and events. Specific forms of misconduct to our Policies, including victimisation, gossiping, discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment are strictly prohibited and may result in expulsion from the BCSA. All members are required to treat other with dignity, courtesy and respect. The BCSA is commitment to equality, ensuring all fanciers enjoy a supportive and welcoming environment.

**For further information
regarding the Council,
Affiliated Societies,
membership or events
please contact**

**BCSA President, Troy Holmes
on president@bcsa.com.au**



www.bcsa.com.au