



TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS

NEWSLETTER

TO ENCOURAGE THE OBSERVATION AND STUDY OF THE BIRDS OF THE TOOWOOMBA AREA

March 2026

EDITION 522

BIRD OF THE MONTH

Brahminy Kite



Photo by Kathy Bowly

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OUTINGS & EVENTS 2026

The Toowoomba Bird Observers Newsletter is published monthly.

The deadline for the next Newsletter is 25th April 2026

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Management Committee:

Wednesday
8th April

**Cooby Dam
Charles Dove**

Sunday
26th April

**Lockyer Wetlands
Lareina Hagan**

President	Mick Atzeni 0499 395 485
Vice-president	Dan Bishop 0401 235 156
Secretary	Joe Scanlan 0400 709 446
Treasurer	Ann Alcock 0418 159 760
Newsletter Editor	Kathy Bowly
Committee	Jennie and Tony Bond. Lareina Hagan
Records Officer	Pat McConnell 0457 422 082
Facebook Admin	Mick Atzeni, Ann Alcock Dan Bishop
Website	Dan Bishop

PLEASE CONTACT THE LEADER IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND

MID WEEK WALK – April 2026

Cooby Dam

- Date:** Wednesday, 8th April 2026
- Leader:** Charles Dove
- Meet location:** Boat Ramp. Cooby Dam
<https://maps.app.goo.gl/hdvnJQKBR1angKup9>
- Time:** 7.45 am
- Other details:** Level grade. **Closed footwear required.**
BYO morning tea and lunch if you feel
Facilities available.
Please wear a name tag if you have one.
- RSVP** Charles Dove 0417 422 302
5pm Tuesday 7th April 2026 or
email me at powerart@bigpond.net.au



In the event of inclement weather contact the leader.

MONTHLY WALK - April 2026

Lockyer Wetlands

- Date:** Sunday 26th April 2026
- Leader:** Lareina Hagan
- Time:** 7.00 am
- Meet location:** **To be confirmed**
- Required:** Closed shoes, plenty of water, sun protection, binoculars.
- Other details:** BYO Morning tea for after the walk, if you wish.
- RSVP:** Lareina by 25/04 on 0402 554 609 or lareinahagan@gmail.com.



MONTHLY OUTING February 2026

Applegum Walk, Crows Nest

Postponed from February to March 14th

Text by Dan Bishop Photos by Charles Dove

When I woke on the morning of 14th March, I wondered if the windy, grey, drizzly conditions might force us to postpone the Applegum Walk again. I decided to go ahead anyway, and a small group of five keen TBO naturalists gathered at the Bullockys Rest carpark just inside the township of Crows Nest at around 7:30.

The mistletoe was flowering, attracting to the carpark a squabbling, chattering cacophony of lorikeets, Noisy Miners, and Pied Currawongs, belying any expectation that birds might be hunkered down feeling sorry for themselves in the overcast, windy weather. Laughing Kookaburras and Common Bronzewing occupied the lower habitat strata beneath the babbling umbrella of nectar feeders.

As we made our way along the start of the Applegum trail, an Apostlebird family entertained us as they hopped, shuffled, and yapped their way across the path. Reg pointed out an Eastern Water Dragon making its best statue impression as it attempted to warm itself on a soggy log. The recent wet weather had filled Crows Nest Creek, and its soothing gurgling accompanied us as we made our way along the rocky path. There were tranquil pools and rushing rapids along the length of the walk and the vegetation was green and vibrant.



Apostlebirds



Cicadabird

We stopped to admire the rock formations and the creek cascading into the deep waterhole at the Pump Station lookout. Carlie and Reg proved to be keen-eyed observers, with Carlie noticing a sleepy Koala while we searched the trees for birds, and Reg spotting a Lace Monitor hugging a low-lying branch on the other side of the creek soon after. Reg later spotted a second Koala as we sat by one of the rock pools to watch a zippy White-throated Treecreeper and a pair of Cicadabirds skulking in the canopy.

Continuing along the track, we spied Variegated, Superb and Red-backed Fairy-wrens flicking through the heath. But the star of the show made two brief, flashy appearances as we neared the Hartmann Park end of the walk. A quick streak of blue and orange marked the flight of an Azure Kingfisher as it arrowed along the creek line. The group gathered excitedly on the rocky shoreline to get a better look, but the bird proved too fast and elusive.

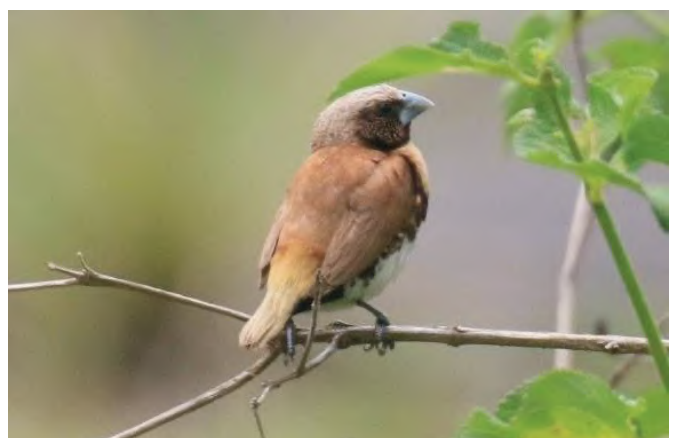




Charles managed another quick look on the return trip while he was photographing busy Blue-banded Bees hovering around flowers, though views were again hampered by creekside vegetation and the speed of the bird. Next time! This is the perfect spot for this species, and repeated visits will surely bring success. As we approached the carpark the sun finally broke out and we were treated to another uncommon sight. Sonya spotted a Square-tailed Kite looming over the canopy, skilfully navigating the windy conditions and deftly turning like a ... well ... a flying kite. We watched the bird for a few moments before returning to Bullockys Rest.

Square-tailed Kite

In total we encountered forty-seven species during what turned out to be a rewarding morning's walk. Worth getting out of bed for after all.



Photographs: Top left to right *Grey Shrike-thrush*; *Blue-banded bee*

Bottom Left to right *Laughing Kookaburra*; *Chestnut-breasted Mannikin*

Applegum Walk, Crows Nest		March 14 th 2026		47 species
Pacific Black Duck	Rainbow Lorikeet	Spotted Pardalote	Grey Butcherbird	
Spotted Dove	White-throated Treecreeper	White-throated Gerygone	Willie Wagtail	
Common Bronzewing	Variegated Fairywren	White-browed Scrubwren	Spangled Drongo	
Masked Lapwing	Superb Fairywren	Brown Thornbill	Leaden Flycatcher	
Square-tailed Kite	Red-backed Fairywren	Australasian Figbird	Magpie Lark	
Rainbow Bee-eater	Blue-faced Honeyeater	Rufous Whistler	Torresian Crow	
Azure Kingfisher	White-throated Honeyeater	Grey Shrike-thrush	Apostlebird	
Laughing Kookaburra	Noisy Friarbird	Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike	Welcome Swallow	
Galah	Scarlet Honeyeater	Cicadabird	Chestnut-breasted Mannikin	
Australian King Parrot	Lewin's Honeyeater	Pied Currawong	Welcome Swallow	
Pale-headed Rosella	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Australian Magpie	Red-browed Finch	
Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	Noisy Miner	Pied Butcherbird		

MONTHLY MIDWEEK OUTING March 2026

West Creek, Toowoomba

by Howard Ward

This month's mid-week outing was a pleasant stroll through West Creek Park, Kearney Springs. This park, approximately two kilometres in length contains a surprising diversity of wildlife due to its mix of habitat and the permanent water that flows from pool to pool along its length. We are indeed fortunate to have such an easily accessible asset in the southern part of Toowoomba.

Seven members, 3 of whom were new faces, assembled near the public BBQ off Lemway Ave. After introductions we moved off in a southerly direction following the path towards Spring St.

The path first passes through a mix of Casuarina (Sheoak) and Bottlebrush. Above this canopy could be heard the calls of lorikeets and flitting silhouettes were briefly seen. Emerging from these trees to the left is a man-made pool fed by a concrete channel and the first of numerous waterfowl were seen.

Australian White Ibis were busy probing the grass edges for worms and grubs while Dusky Moorhen and Purple Swamphen were strutting back and forth with that characteristic upward flick of the tail. Further along the path to the right is the back of the Kingfishers Café. In the grounds of the cafe is another more natural pool and it was pointed out that Buff-banded Rails were observed in the past. Unfortunately not this time.

On either side of the path before reaching Spring Street, there is a stand of very tall Eucalypts and the chatter and whistle of Lorikeets was again noted. On a lower branch to the right a Grey Butcherbird was busy preening himself and the chuckle of a Kookaburra could be heard in the distance.

Crossing Spring St brings you to Murray Clewett Wetlands. The water course changes from a drainage channel to a small lake, a very different habitat. This small wetland lake supports a wide variety of plants, small fish and invertebrates - essential food for the many birds and creatures that can be found here.

As we approached the edge of the water, a group of 5 Pacific Black Duck were almost stepped on. They were just chilling out in the long grass and offered a charming photographic opportunity before slipping into the water. One then gently stretched his wings for another picture. Interactions like this are possible because the waterfowl associate people with food.



Pacific Black Ducks By Howard Ward

Around the lake edge and on the water the group observed: Pacific Black Duck, Grey Teal and a Hardhead. On the opposite bank a Plumed Whistling-Duck sat uncharacteristically on his own beside a Black Duck. Busy among the reeds and Lilly pads were Dusky Moorhen, Purple Swampphen and Eurasian Coot, their loud shrill calls echoing across the water. A splash on the water also drew our attention to a pair of Australasian Grebes, disappearing with a plop and circular ripple on the water only to reappear several metres away.

As we walked around the lake, the calls of a pair of Masked Lapwing were heard; they landed in an open grass area to the West. A sole Little Corella flew overhead followed shortly after by a larger white bird, as it drew closer it was identified as an Egret. Photos later confirmed it as a Great Egret.



Little Corella(l) and Great Egret(r) by Howard Ward

Water Dragons were also seen soaking up the sun. Murray Clewett Wetlands certainly has something for everyone.

Having done the full circuit of the Wetland Lake it was time to explore the remainder of West Creek and the other waterways and habitats. But before leaving, in the grass a splash of yellow and blue revealed a Pale-headed Rosella chewing contentedly on grass seeds.



Pale-headed Rosella by Howard Ward

After negotiating the path under the Flying fox roost and pausing briefly to watch their noisy squabbling, we crossed Spring Street heading north back into West Creek Park.

In the uppermost branches of the tall Eucalypts we saw earlier, the calls of Lorikeets drew our attention again and a tinge of red gave away a Musk Lorikeet feeding on the blossom. Well spotted by Sam one of our new members.

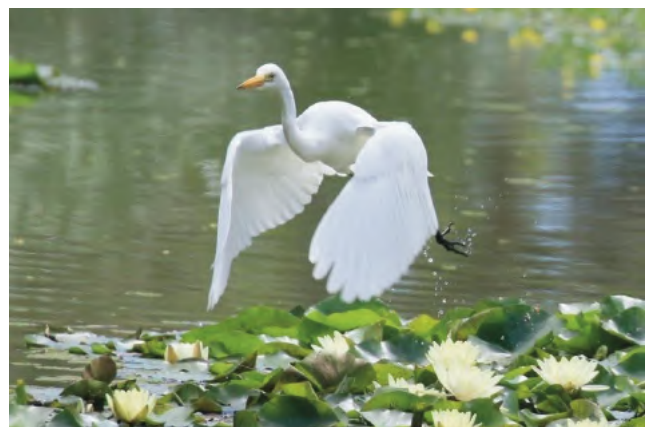


Musk Lorikeet left and Scaly-breasted Lorikeet right. By Charles Dove

Proceeding along the path on the eastern side of the waterways, it was interesting to note how the habitat surrounding the water changes. From concrete-lined channels to tall grasses and reeds, shady dense shrub-lined pools and tall trees, this variation caters for a wide variety of wildlife needs.

We crossed Stenner Street and headed further north. Here water flows from one pool and cascades to another. This drew the group's interest and flying around a lower pool were several species of Dragon fly. Another 100 metres further north a Cormorant flew past above the tree line and later it was confirmed that both the Little Pied Cormorant and Little Black Cormorant had been seen.

The area we were now in had everything, mixtures of dense shady pools, open reeds and lilies. Charles spotted a Plumed Egret stalking the shallows of a pool ahead of us and a Cattle Egret was added to the list.



Plumed Egret. by Charles Dove



Brown Honeyeaters could be heard in the Bottlebrush, later seen in the shrub above our heads. High above, a tiny bird flew into a tall gum tree and was identified by its triple note call as a Striated Pardalote. Several Spotted Doves and Crested Pigeon were added to the list and the ever-busy Willie Wagtail chattered and weaved about ahead of us.

Movement in a low red flowering gum drew my attention and I couldn't resist taking a picture of a Noisy Miner enjoying the delights of the blossom which he had all to himself

Charles was keen to go a little further to see if a Tawny Frogmouth he had seen before was still in the trees ahead. He informed the group that he has seen up to 14 in this park on one walk. Sure enough, the Tawny was still there.

Noisy Miner by Howard Ward

Tawny Frogmouth by Charles Dove

It's time to turn around and head back to the park BBQ and shelter for a drink and snack. The shelter is located next to the water near Stenner St and Lemway Ave and our birding wasn't finished.

On the pool wall before the road culvert under Stenner St, an Australasian Darter was sitting, wings outstretched drying after a morning's fishing. Flying from under the road were numerous Welcome Swallows skimming over the water in front of us. A Fairy Martin briefly joined them then disappeared.



Ed and I, cameras at the ready, fired off dozens of shots in an attempt to get a picture of the Swallows. My excuse for not getting a sharp photo is "Unlike wine that matures with age I'm getting older but not getting better". Ed disappeared and left me to it saying something about "You were 20ft behind that bird". He returned later with something simpler to photograph and add to the list. A Red Wattlebird and Little Friarbird.



Welcome Swallow by Howard Ward

Thanks again to Charles for his knowledge and time. To everyone who attended and the new faces, I hope you enjoyed the outing and will return for more.

Additional pictures from the outing.

Charles Dove

Australian White Ibis

Eastern Water Dragon

Laughing Kookaburra

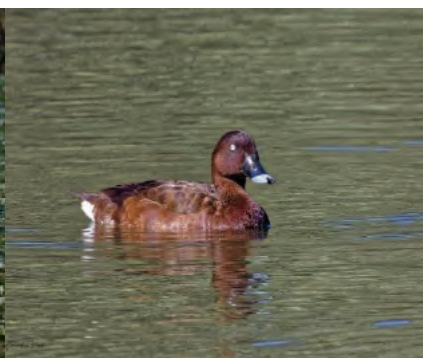


Howard Ward

Dusky Moorhen

Hardhead

Black Flying-fox



Ed Crago

Plumed Whistling-Duck

Brown Honeyeater

Little Friarbird



West Creek, Kearney Springs. Toowoomba		March 11 th 2026		36 Species
Plumed Whistling-Duck	Dusky Moorhen	Pale-headed Rosella	Pied Currawong	
Australian Wood Duck	Australian White Ibis	Musk Lorikeet	Australian Magpie	
Pacific Black Duck	Cattle Egret	Rainbow Lorikeet	Grey Butcherbird	
Grey Teal	Plumed Egret	Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	Willie Wagtail	
Australasian Grebe	Little Pied Cormorant	Brown Honeyeater	Magpie Lark	
Spotted Dove	Little Black Cormorant	Little Friarbird	Fairy Martin	
Crested Pidgeon	Australasian Darter	Red Wattlebird	Welcome Swallow	
Tawny Frogmouth	Masked Lapwing	Striated Pardalote	Hardhead	
Purple Swamphen	Little Corella	Australasian Figbird	Great Egret	

MONTHLY OUTING March 2026

Redwood Park

Text by Dan Bishop
Photos by Charles Dove

Fourteen birders gathered at the small Redwood Park entrance on a perfect, crisp, clear-skied Saturday morning, a welcome relief following a cold and windy previous twenty-four hours. After meeting, greeting and signing in, we headed down to the picnic area under the watchful vanguard of three wary Peaceful Doves.

Plenty to see along this track already. Lewin's (of course!), Yellow-faced and Scarlet Honeyeaters flickered in the tree canopy alongside tiny Mistletoebirds, while Eastern Yellow Robins and White-browed Scrubwrens fussed about at ground level. Both species of Pardalote were calling but remained elusive throughout the walk. A Varied Triller greeted us at the picnic area while White-naped Honeyeaters called from the canopy overhead. We stopped for several minutes, taking in the birdlife around us. We collectively looked at the rear-end of a possible Varied Sittella feeding in a tree fork, but it remained obscured before



Eastern Yellow Robin

flying out of sight, too quick for a positive ID. That's birding for you. A Spectacled Monarch was seen skulking in the sheltered growth next to the picnic tables.



Varied Triller

Over the creek causeway and along the Forest Walk, Rufous and Grey Fantails flipped and waggled their way through their respective habitat niches, Greys up high Rufous down low. A Brown Gerygone chattered down at us from the dry rainforest side of the track, and I was surprised that we missed out on the usual Large-billed Scrubwren contingent commonly seen in this area. After climbing up past the Crow's Ash and heading towards the fire trail, we were fortunate

to see a pair of White-eared Monarchs which I haven't encountered at Redwood for a couple of years. Definitely the highlight of the outing and a lifer for several members.



White-eared Monarch

Backtracking down the hill, we picked our way carefully along the rock-strewn path before stopping for morning tea at the cool, shady picnic area. A pair of Brown Gerygones and a Brown Thornbill kept us occupied while we rested, and White-throated Treecreepers scrambled their way up the trunks of nearby gum trees while members traded birding stories.

Initial activity flurry at the start of the Grass Tree Track section of the walk. White-naped Honeyeaters were everywhere, a pair of Little Lorikeets snuggled atop a



small cup-shaped hollow in one of the gums, Spangled Drongos called (fooling this birder into thinking a Grey Goshawk was nearby!), Scrubwrens and Variegated Fairy-wrens chattered in the undergrowth, and Red-browed Finches peeped across our path. But as we continued into early mid-morning, activity started to quieten down, and we headed back to the car park before making our farewells. Thirty-five species tallied, not bad at all for autumn. Looking forward to seeing everyone at the next outing!

Little Lorikeets

Redwood Park		March 28 th 2026		35 species
Brown Cuckoo-dove	White-naped Honeyeater	White-browed Scrubwren	White-eared Monarch	
Peaceful Dove	Noisy Friarbird	Brown Thornbill	Spectacled Monarch	
Bar-shouldered Dove	Scarlet Honeyeater	Australasian Figbird	Torresian Crow	
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Lewin's Honeyeater	Rufous Whistler	Eastern Yellow Robin	
Pale-headed Rosella	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Grey Shrike-thrush	Silvereye	
Little Lorikeet	Spotted Pardalote	Varied Triller	Mistletoebird	
Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	Striated Pardalote	Rufous Fantail	Red-browed Finch	
White-throated Treecreeper	Brown Gerygone	Grey Fantail	Double-barred Finch	
Variegated Fairywren	Weebill	Spangled Drongo		

Tribute to Peter Everist

Peter joined Toowoomba Bird Observers (TBO) in 2021 and was soon actively promoting the club. He became our Outings Coordinator the same year; took over the Secretary role in 2022, for two years; then continued on as a committee member. Last May, Peter informed he could no longer drive at night so had decided to step down from the committee. A text message offering to pick him up was all it took to change his mind—instantly!

I had the pleasure of travelling with Peter on several outings as he didn't like travelling too far alone due to his health. I always enjoyed his company. I also had the pleasure of meeting Peter's old mate, Andy Anderson, whom he spoke very fondly of. Andy had come along with Peter on our annual Species Census, and the deep friendship he and Peter had was evident in the banter and reminiscing going on in the car.

Peter proved to be one of TBO's keenest advocates in the short time we had him. He also remained a huge fan of the Cairns Birders, and often reminded us how much easier it was being 'unincorporated'. As Secretary, he started sharing the New Frogmouth newsletter with our membership, and we've decided to carry on that tradition in Peter's honour. Peter also became the resident bird expert at Village on the Downs, where he and his wife, Sharon, lived.

Sharon let me know that Peter passed away peacefully on 12th September, in the evening, while listening to Beethoven. He had a catastrophic stroke. Sharon said she was lucky to have him and that they'd had a good life together, and asked that we remember him with love and humour. We do.

Peter didn't want anything remotely like a funeral, so in accordance with his wishes he was cremated privately. Sharon suggested we could pay our respects to Peter every time we see a bird, cloud or storm. That was where his heart was.

Mick Atzeni
TBO President and friend

BIRD OF THE MONTH

Text/photos courtesy of <https://www.birdsinbackyards.net>

Brahminy Kite

Scientific Name: *Haliastur indus*

Atlas Number:

227

What does it look like?

Description:

The Brahminy Kite is one of the medium-sized raptors (birds of prey), with a white head and breast. The rest of its body is a striking chestnut brown. The very tip of its tail is white. The wings are broad, with dark 'fingered' wing tips and the tail is short. The legs are short and not feathered, the eye is dark and the lemon-yellow coloured bill is strongly hooked. It sails on level wings along shorelines and mudflats.

Similar species:

The adult Brahminy Kite is unmistakable, though juveniles may be confused with the Whistling Kite (longer tail and distinctive underwing pattern) or light Little Eagle. First-year juveniles may also be mistaken for Ospreys but are dark underneath rather than white.



Where does it live?

Distribution:

The Brahminy Kite is widespread across northern Australia, mainly along the coastline from Western Australia to northern New South Wales and is more common in the north of its range. It is widespread throughout tropical Asia.

Habitat:

The Brahminy Kite is a bird of the coast, particularly mangrove swamps and estuaries. It is sometimes seen over forests and along rivers.

Seasonal movements:

The Brahminy Kite is mostly resident and possibly locally nomadic.

What does it do?



Feeding:

The Brahminy Kite feeds on carrion (dead animals), insects and fish. It swoops low over water, the ground or treetops and snatches live prey or carrion from the surface. It also steals from fish-hunting birds, snatching prey in flight. It harries or bothers other birds such as gulls, [Whistling Kites](#), Osprey or [Australian White Ibis](#).

Breeding:

The nest of the Brahminy Kite is built in living trees near water, often mangrove trees. The nest is large, made from sticks, seaweed or driftwood and lined with a

variety of materials such as lichens, bones, seaweed and even paper. Both parents incubate the eggs and the young are fed bill to bill with small pieces of food.

Living with us

Brahminy Kites are secure in Australia. Being scavengers, they benefit from waste at tips, on roadsides and in harbours.

Did you know?

Brahminy Kites have weak feet so, although they have long, sharp curved claws, they cannot take large prey. However they are expert at snatching prey in flight.

Calls

Usually silent. Drawn-out descending wail, like a bleating lamb: 'pee-ah-ah-ah'; meowing notes.

Average size:

50cm

Average weight:

530g

Breeding season:

April to October

Clutch Size:

1 to 2 eggs

Incubation:

28 days

Nestling Period:

52 days

LINKS OF INTEREST

A Hunting We Will Go!

<https://birdlife.org.au/news/2026-duck-hunting-season-begins/>

Duck hunting season in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania began 18th March and continues until 8th June, with seven species allowed to be hunted. However, many other bird species are at risk. Despite

campaigning to end duck hunting, the Victorian government has ignored any recommendations from its own Select Committee on Victorian Recreational Native Bird Hunting Recommendations.

Wren in the Coalmine.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2026/apr/01/australia-superb-fairywren-bird-climate-crisis-extinction-risk-within-decades-scientists-warn>

One of Australia's favourite little birds is at high risk of extinction within the next 30-40 years despite currently having a status of least concern. Studies have shown that climate change will have a great impact on our Superb Fairywrens with drier seasons and warmer winter and summer temperatures impacting breeding.

Artificial Hollow as Good as Any

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-03-29/palm-cockatoo-hatching-from-artificial-nest/106498256>

The first Palm Cockatoo chick has hatched from an artificial hollow in Far North Queensland. With these birds numbering less than 2000, researchers have been looking for ways to accommodate these birds with nesting hollows as logging and tree clearing reduce the number of mature trees and consequently the number of tree cavities.

Restriction ruling on rat baits

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-03-11/rat-bait-rodenticides-restricted-under-new-regulation/106437604>

Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides will become a restricted chemical and removed from retail shelves. This chemical has had a devastating impact on wildlife that eats rats and mice that have eaten this bait. This is a big win for wildlife advocacy groups who have been working on this since 2020.

Bird population in free fall in the USA

<https://www.livescience.com/animals/birds/birds-are-declining-faster-and-faster-in-3-us-hotspots-new-study-finds>

With the development of intense agriculture in a number of hotspots in the USA, researchers are finding that bird populations are in rapid decline.

