

Canberra Indian Myna Action Group Inc

Patron: Dr Chris Tidemann



President's Report 2008-09

It is my pleasure to present the 2008-09 President's Report for the Canberra Indian Myna Action Group Inc (CIMAG).

In short, 2008-09 has been a most successful year for CIMAG. We have made very good progress in the task of tackling Indian Mynas in the Canberra region and further afield.

There have been significant gains across all of our areas of activity.

But first I would like to pay tribute to the guidance and support of our patron, Dr Chris Tidemann, and to the CIMAG Committee for their work in this third year of CIMAG's operation. CIMAG is fortunate to have such prominent local people as Bruce Lindenmayer, Jenny Bounds, Alison Russell-French, Greg Flowers, Peter Franklin, Anne l'ons, Peter Ormay, and Rosemary Blemings on our Committee. We are also very lucky to have members who are happy to contribute lots of their time to this task. In this regard I would like to pay special tribute to Mik Ormay and to Graham Gliddon. Both of these members have contributed many hours to CIMAG's great benefit. Mik's active mind is always on the task of fine tuning the trap building process. Graham, who is now the CIMAG monthly capture collator, has refined and embellished our capture database: this has taken him many hours and his thoroughness and dedication in collating the monthly captures needs to be acknowledged and applauded.

CIMAG operates as a loose association of like-minded members who individually and collectively work to implement the CIMAG Strategy. This Strategy — developed earlier by the Committee to guide and direct our efforts — recognizes that a multi-layered approach will be needed to achieve our common overarching objective. That objective is to reduce the presence of Indian Mynas in our region and thereby reduce the threat they pose to our wildlife and the nuisance to our urban and home environments.

I would like to mention a number of activities and highlights of the past year.

The success of our collective efforts is readily observable by the drastically reduced numbers of mynas that we see around the place. This success was again recorded in the Canberra Ornithologists Group's 2008 Garden Bird Survey Annual Report that was released in March 2009. Last year I reported that Indian Mynas had dropped from the 3rd most abundant bird in Canberra when we started to ninth last year. Well our collective efforts have seen their numbers drop even further. The 2008 GBS Annual Report indicates that Indian Mynas have now dropped down to the 12th most abundant bird in Canberra. This is acknowledged as being due to our trapping efforts. This is a wonderful achievement — and one that all our 610 CIMAG members and 594 trappers can be proud of.

The **public education and awareness raising** activity of CIMAG over the past year has again been intense. Apart from presentations to some 8 community groups in Canberra, and radio and newspaper interviews here, 2008-09 has been a year when we took our message further afield. Regular references to CIMAG activities by Ian Fraser and Prof Tony Peacock on ABC 666 and by Merylyn Condon on her 2CA Gardening Gurus gardening program continue to give the group and its activities a high profile across Canberra.

Our efforts and success were also mentioned in the media in the United Kingdom and elsewhere overseas, and in radio interviews and newspapers in Sydney and Canberra.

Providing support for myna control activities elsewhere has taken up much of the Committee's time over the past year. Our success has been an inspiration to other groups and individuals across NSW and to a lesser extent, Victoria. Through our informative

Canberra Indian Myna Action Group Inc

Patron: Dr Chris Tidemann

website, CIMAG has now become a focal point for people wishing to learn about Indian Myna control: we receive daily emails and phone calls from interstate people and local government officers requesting information about how to reduce the myna problem in their area. The website hits (some 156,427 hits over the year with 13,173 unique visitors) has been a valuable way of spreading our message and the lessons from our experience to a wide audience.

As a consequence of our achievements, we were invited by the Shoalhaven, Wingacarrabee, North Sydney and Eurobodalla councils to give presentations / workshops to groups in their areas. Many other councils and community groups were in contact to learn how to apply our experience to their area. The presentations and support we have provided have resulted in community groups setting up or in the process of being formed across many areas of NSW. Alas, despite much contact from individuals in Victoria, to our knowledge no groups have been formed down there.

Our public awareness raising activities reached their peak with **the Southern NSW Regional Indian Myna Conference** — subtitled “Towards Best Practice Indian Myna Control” — held at Nowra in May 2009. It was a major focus of our attention earlier this year and a huge accomplishment. This was a CIMAG initiative that we organized and funded with monies available from our Envirofund grant from the federal government. Some 22 councils and 35 community groups from across NSW attended, with representatives from the South Australian Government and the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne, and academics from Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne. Some 75 people attended. A short report of the conference is on the website and the detailed proceedings of the conference will be posted there as well, as will a handbook that we are in the process of writing called “Best Practice Indian Myna Control”. The handbook will draw upon the presentations and discussions at the conference.

The **trapping effort** continues across Canberra and district. While not all people who are trapping report their monthly captures to CIMAG—which is most regrettable—nonetheless the capture records show that a minimum of 25,300 mynas have now been removed from the Canberra / Queanbeyan district. The actual number is likely to be some thousands of mynas more. The reported capture rate in 2008-09 dropped off from that of previous years, but still totaled 5,800 mynas and 480 starlings. We know that traps in new areas tend to be very successful, so we need to promptly supply traps to as many new people as possible.

A significant step was taken in this area in June 2009: we trained the staff at the new ACT gaol in trap building and they are now supervising the inmates in trap building. The inmates have been making traps since mid July, and doing an excellent job. We are supplying the materials for the traps from the remaining monies from our ACT Environment Grant. I wish to acknowledge the work of ACT Corrective Services’ management and staff in getting this project up and running, and the supervisors and “Men of Maconochie” for their excellent work.

The **membership** of CIMAG continues to grow strongly. With 610 members and with some 594 members who have been trapping at some stage, CIMAG has become a major community-action group in the ACT.

In conclusion I would like to thank all our members for their continuing efforts. We look forward to your further efforts in tackling this significant pest.

Bill Handke
President
12 August 2009