

Around the Traps – July 2014

Victoria – State on the Move: there seems to be a lot now happening in Victoria on myna control – or at least many councils and communities have been in touch with CIMAG to discuss ways of getting things moving in their area. Hopefully we will be able to report in the next Bulletin that the **Bayside, Port Philip, Stonnington, Macedon Ranges, and Venus Bay** councils are working with local communities to get myna control programs under way.

In **Gippsland, Harry Hof** reports their myna control program is still going strong and they now have retail outlets for traps from Bairnsdale to Warrigal: the Fulham Prison is making the traps as well as some Men's Sheds and a local school. Harry reports that the reduction in myna numbers has been quite noticeable, with feedback from trappers that thousands have been trapped.

Julia Gibson from the **Yarra Indian Myna Action Group** in Victoria, reports some huge captures by some of their trappers. The reports are coming in to her from the YIMAG trappers of the return of native birds into their gardens. Now that is a story that all of us up here know well: when mynas are gone, the native birds are back. It has been a busy time for the Group. They have been running information sessions all over the place. So far they've trapped a total of 7,729 birds.

Ron Fink and Kate Daniel from **Macedon Indian Myna Action Group** report on the busy first 12 months of their program: and there are some really good stories to tell. Council has offered to design and run a backyard bird survey to gauge the abundance of mynas and native birds across the shire – this will hopefully involve landcare and other sustainability group members. Some 150 traps are now out in the community: collection from the Fulham Prison using a trailer was a long and apparently hair-raising trip. The standout trapping towns are Woodend – 612 mynas removed over the 12 months with now 54 traps in the area; Gisborne - 182 mynas removed in the first 6 months; and Newham – 50 mynas removed in April. Another 75 traps have been ordered from Fulham Prison, but luckily for Ron and Kate they now have alternative delivery arrangements. Ron has been talking to the local vigneron – mynas love grapes – about starting trapping. The Macedon Ranges Sustainability Festival held earlier in the year was a great opportunity for awareness raising for the Group: Kate says that there was non-stop interest in the program and the trap that was on display - they went home hoarse but happy.

Melanie Addinsall of the Gecko CLan (Landcare) the **Benalla Indian Myna Action Group** is very active, week to build traps which are sold via local agriculture. The group has been in operation for around one year sold hundreds of traps which have been distributed in. The group raises awareness about the threat of Indian information sessions and publicity in local newspapers and radio. The group has set up its own page on MynaScan, to assist with the collection of trapping data.



Group tells us that meeting each supplies stores. and has built and the Benalla area. Mynas through

At **Venus Bay** on the south east coast of Victoria, **Mae Adams** of Venus Bay Eco Retreat – set within the idyllic conservation zoned Coastal Banksia Woodlands - reports that Indian Mynas are becoming more prevalent in the bushland, and are often seen in large numbers in nearby residential and farming areas. They have started occupying nesting boxes for wildlife. Landowners are being encouraged to trap to protect native bird nesting and feeding sites.



Ron Smith of Ulitarian Society in Coffs Harbour tells us that myna numbers are still low and under control in the area. There is a large network of trappers throughout the district who still pick up a few mynas which is keeping the numbers down. Coffs Harbour City Council remains very supportive.

Lots of things are happening in **Wollongong**. Being selected as a finalist in the NSW KAB Sustainable Cities Awards reflects the innovative approach that is being taken down there to myna control and community engagement. **Narelle Zahra and Paul Formosa** of the **Wollongong City Council** tell us that they have conducted 64 workshops with a total of 848 participants, and have purchased 614 traps as part of the **Wollongong Indian Myna Action Program**. 3,940 mynas have been removed (that they know of) since March 2011. The research partnership with the University of Western Sydney's Invasive Species Unit has been extended for a further 12 months. The research maps the distribution and abundance of mynas and native birds, investigates the home range of mynas, as well as compares myna morphology in the Wollongong area. Myna home range research was performed on two trapped birds. These birds were fitted with a glue-on VHF transmitters then radio tracked for three weeks using triangulation. The home ranges for both birds were similar, with both birds generally residing within the area where they were trapped. These birds' home range occupied an area of 10ha and 14ha. This is all valuable research work, and the information on home ranges will be of interest to groups in similar habitats and with similar myna population densities.

Barbara Jones from the **Far South Coast Myna Action Group** mentions that their prize 'removalist', John Jessop, at Coolagolite in the north of the shire has now stopped counting at just over 500 mynas and new intruders are slowing down. John has a dairy and is near a power easement, so they were seemingly using that as their laneway from the north. John's great effort means that mynas are being intercepted before getting further into the Bega Valley. About 700 mynas have been removed from the Bega Valley. The other good news is that **Andrew Morrison**, Environmental Assets Officer with the Bega Valley Shire Council is active in promoting the program and in getting the message on myna control out to the community. This will be a great help. Andrew Morrison opened the connection with **Eurobodalla Shire Council's Courtney Fink** who arranged purchase of 10 small traps made by the Batemans Bay Men's Shed, supplied courtesy of Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority. Bega Valley Shire Council is now listed along with FSCB as the email contact for sightings.

Tracey Poulter from the **Camden Council Indian Myna Program** reports enquiries regarding Indian Mynas are now coming from the majority of suburbs and across the rural areas across the Camden local government area, and not just the more urbanised areas. The Camden Council has ten traps which are being circulated through the community. The Council will be launching its new website in late July 2014, and residents will have the opportunity to find out about Camden Council's Indian Myna Program online. Since April 2013, 461 Indian Mynas have been removed and a dozen starlings. One of the local Men's Sheds is considering making the traps, which would greatly assist.

The **North Sydney City Council**, through **Ramin Khosravi, Gareth Debney and Andrew Scott**, is continuing to promote myna control amongst its ratepayers, including by running their PeeGee trap building workshops at Hutley Hall in North Sydney. These workshops provide local people with advice on myna control - and the bonus is they take home a working trap.



Happy North Sydney ratepayer making a trap

Pam Gray of Tweed Shire Council advises that the council program is still being implemented. Some 96 PeeGee traps are out in the community and an estimated 12,000 mynas have now been caught over the six years of the program. Despite the effort, numbers are still generally high and spreading – it is noted that nearby dairies and the local racecourse are sources of re-infestation. An encouraging - and uplifting – aspect is that there is now consistent control in some valleys. In particular, Limpinwood Valley is “clean” and 3 women – a sheep farmer, a cattle farmer and a tree farmer

– are cleaning the valley of mynas each time there is a re-infestation. Pam also reports good trapping activities in Murwillumbah. Tweed Shire Council now has a permanent Pest Management Officer - so mynas are receiving due attention as part of their pest control program.

Daintree Gerrand advises that traps are still being loaned out by the Hastings Landcare Inc in the **Port Macquarie-Hastings area**. Daintree reports that where people have been successfully trapping in both urban and rural areas, there has been a discernible drop in myna numbers.

Kevin & Laura Noble report that the **Clarence Valley Conservation in Action** group based around **Grafton** has now passed 6,000 captures. Kevin and Laura continue to spread the word at community market days etc. They have a trailer decked out as a Mobile Myna Education Centre. During May they drove to Bathurst with a trailer load of 31 traps and conducted a successful workshop for the Bathurst Regional Council. Twenty five people attended from local areas including Orange and Lithgow Councils. Hopefully the presentation and the traps will get a program running across the area. With a slight modification to size, Kevin has now found a good way to transport the PeeGee trap: the feeding chamber fits inside the containment chamber for travelling, thereby reducing the cost of sending the trap by courier or post. It just needs a tweak at the end to reseal the containment chamber, and bingo – there is the trap. A baseline survey is about to get underway by local ecologist, Dr Greg Clancy, to find the Indian Myna “hotspots” in the Clarence Valley.

Nambucca / Bellingen / Coffs Harbour: the Mid North Coast Indian Myna Group have finished their 5 year grant and are transitioning into a voluntary group, dependent on good coordinators and trappers supported by councils and Landcare. It will be quite a change from having a salaried project officer but based on the group up that way, I'm sure they will make a go of it.

While in Brisbane for the Australian Vertebrate Pest Conference I caught up with **Wayne Cameron** of the **Bulimba Creek Catchment Coordinating Committee**. B4Cs covers a big part of Brisbane. It is undertaking a pilot project on community trapping under the auspices of the Brisbane City Council. Its early days yet, so they are feeling their way. I gave a talk to the group - which included people from surrounding areas - on the Canberra experience, so hopefully that was useful to them.

Things are continuing to move ahead up in Cairns: **Peter Goulding** of the **Cairns Rotary Remove Indian Myna Program** advises there has been a re-organisation of the group which now includes broader representation on the Committee, including from the Cairns Regional Council and the Men's Shed. This will greatly assist the administrative aspects of the group. The Men's Sheds are very active in trap building: there are now 1450 traps out across the Cairns area, and the capture numbers – believed to be somewhere between 20,000 – 30,000 are showing. Peter says that consistent and strong anecdotal evidence tells them that native bird numbers are growing, particularly in inner suburbs where many mynas have been culled. This is great news: just one more reason to go up to Cairns to escape the southern winters.