

Around the Traps – Nov 2016

The myna control effort around Australia and overseas continues with a flourish.

The **City of Bayside in Victoria** has provided a further grant of \$11,000 to keep the community trapping program going down there. The community program is having great success and this will enable it to have an even bigger impact. The focus in this year with the council money is to expand the community education program with brochures and posters at shopping centres and schools as well as getting the total traps up to around 350 from the current 250. Traps are lent out to people – so far around 1000 people have been involved. Their success has meant that local communities and councils elsewhere in Melbourne have been in touch – so success hopefully will breed more of it.

Barbara Jones of the Far South Coast Bird Watchers Group reports that here has been a surge of activity for the **Bega Valley** Task Force. They have always had low myna numbers, thanks to an early proactive trapping program by a profoundly astute group of birdwatchers /conservationists/ environmentalists. At Candelo 12 birds have been eliminated and 6 caught at McLeod's Hill north of Bega, waiting to be used as Judas birds for another trap east of the Bega township. The small group working on this project will have eyes and ears alert, and are ready to act. This just shows that if a community is activated early before myna numbers balloon, they can keep the birds in check before they become a real problem.

Mynas have arrived in **Araluen**, the delightful spot not too far from Braidwood in southern NSW. Tash Murphy reported seeing a flock of 50-70 mynas in the area. After obtaining a trap, Tash, who lives on a property on the edge of the township, promptly caught 27 mynas in the first week. Tash reports that since then she has not seen any others in the area. Hopefully they got the message that Araluen is simply great without them.

Bundaberg Regional Council is again showing the way with innovative approaches. You will recall that the Bundaberg Regional Council was the first to pay a bounty for each myna caught. Now they have developed an Aviary Trap (1.5m x 1.5m x 2m high). According to Spencer Katt from the Council, the Aviary Trap is proving a great success. Two of the traps have been placed in **Childers** and seven around **Bundaberg**, with sufficient food and water for a few days or a week. Spencer says that myna numbers have dropped substantially in Childers. Two neighbours between them have caught 200 mynas.

The **Campbelltown City Council** program goes from strength to strength. 25 workshops have been held with 506 participants since the program started in 2014. The local Men's Sheds have sold 235 traps. One trapper has caught 144 mynas since March this year. The program now has an engaged and enthusiastic group of local trappers who are making inroads into the myna population in the area.

Up **Clarence Valley** way, Laura and Kevin Noble are still hard at it, together with their band of trappers across the region. Apart from their trapping program – which has now totaled almost 9000 mynas - the Clarence Valley Conservation in Action Group (CVCA) is trialing other control techniques, including mist netting, shooting, an aviary trap *a la* Bundaberg, and nest removal with a tree climber *a la* us. Kevin and Laura have also been giving presentations across northern NSW and southern Qld.

Ron Fink reported mid-year that their program in the **Macedon Ranges** had 250 trappers stretched across 9 towns. So the program has built up very quickly – no doubt those stats are even more impressive now.

John McCrea reports that he hasn't seen any mynas around the **Mudgee / Gulgong** area since he caught a group of 17 earlier this year, but unfortunately there are still a number of them around **Dunedoo and Coolah**. There numbers have been kept in check by the Green Army group trapping in the Dunedoo area. **Dubbo** is reported by Tim Hosking of the Dubbo Field Naturalist and Conservation Society Inc to still be "myna-free".

Bulimba Creek Catchment Coordinating Committee (B4) in **Brisbane** is still very dedicated to the fight against mynas. Stefan Hattingh has been presenting workshops (to fully booked venues) throughout the year. This has branched out to other City Councils, with two more councils now involved with the myna trapping program. B4C's trapping numbers have been good and Stefan reports that other groups have also done a good job. Stefan has met with Prof Daryl Jones from Griffith University to work up a project on how mynas behave in sub-tropical south-east Qld. They are gathering info on that. At present the Qlders extrapolate from what has been done in Canberra. But there may well be different behaviours between the two populations which might mean the need for different techniques in trapping from us.

Now North Island in the Seychelles is the focus

In previous Bulletins we reported on the great success in ridding mynas on Denis Island in the Seychelles. Now the focus is on North Island, one of the 115 islands in the Seychelles archipelago. Only a small island of

500 acres, it had an estimated population of 1000 mynas – some 200 were trapped by University of Reading students and the Green Island Foundation volunteers (with assistance from a University of Seychelles student) in the first 2 months of an eradication program so there is a lot of hope that this time – unlike two previous attempts in 2005 and 2012 - eradication will be achieved. Let us hope so.

- as well as Ein Gedi National Park in Israel



Shahar Mizrahi, a biology and environmental science student at Hebrew University of Jerusalem, has been in touch to find ways to eradicate the few mynas which have settled in the Ein Gedi National Park. Ein Gedi National Park is an oasis on the edge of the Dead Sea in Israel. Shahar says that mynas have quickly built up in numbers in Israel since some escaped from a cage in Tel Aviv in 1997. As a part of a Conservation Ecology course at the University, the students are trying to find a way to tackle the problem, with the intent of passing it on to the Israel Nature and Parks Authority for implementation.

Cyclone Winston to the Rescue

In the last Bulletin I mentioned that Sophie Clay of Treasure Island Resort in Fiji was proposing to start a myna eradication program – but before they could get it underway, Cyclone Winston did the job for them. Mynas have not been sighted since – but the local birds were not affected. Now is the time to visit!