

Around the Traps

The Shoalhaven City Council, on the initiative of Councillor John Levett, is re-activating the myna control program that was initially commenced in 2008-09 but fell away: we referred to their program - which was an integration of



the council and community effort - as the Shoalhaven Model and promoted it as the approach to be followed by other councils and communities. Ray Barge and I travelled to Nowra a few months ago, at John's request, to present to a public meeting involving the mayor, councillors, and the community. Now with a much more active and dedicated council and senior management, we expect the program to rebuild to a strong engagement of the community working with council. Anna Hernell from the council is back involved and with her experience and guidance and John Levett's

involvement, all will be well in the Shoalhaven soon.

Tenterfield activity - Jane l'Ons reports on the trapping effort up at Tenterfield. She and her husband Martin are running a number of traps in the area and have removed 663 mynas since 2015. Jane reports that a local vineyard was attracting many Indian Mynas during the grape picking season and that starling numbers seem to have grown of late (as mynas and starlings compete for food and tree hollows, perhaps the reduction in mynas is leading to starling numbers increasing). Jane also mentions that Kevin and Laura Noble from Clarence Valley Conservation in Action Group had been up presenting to the Granite Borders Landcare Group in Tenterfield recently. It was very well attended – so hopefully many more people in the area will also start trapping.

Pohnpei in the Federated States of Micronesia – Pohnpei Island, one of the “emeralds of the Pacific” (the largest, highest and most populous island - 34,000 people - in the Federated States of Micronesia, and one of the wettest places on the planet with an average of 7600mm of rain a year) has had an incursion by just a couple mynas. The actual number is still being assessed. Pohnpei has one of the highest concentrations of extant endemic birds of any small island in Oceania, so this is a very worrying development. Luckily the local people have been onto it very quickly and are launching an invasive species emergency and working up an urgent strategy for how to remove the birds. CIMAG and Susana Saavedra provided info on our different trapping techniques and trap designs. The Pohnpei team will commence removal actions very soon once they determine the best strategy / trap / technique for their island.

Neil Fowlis of Johannesburg reports that myna populations in **South Africa** have exploded and are out of control. They have now reached the Kalahari. They have been officially declared alien invasive species and enjoy no protection, but as far as he knows there is still no private or government working group in place to combat the problem, although efforts are being made to stop them establishing in Kruger National Park.

Arne Witt of the Kenyan Centre for Agriculture and BioSciences International on the other hand advises that mynas have not reached **East Africa**. Arne contacted CIMAG to ask about the best person that could run a myna control training course for people in **Saudi Arabia** – where mynas have been a problem for some time. We recommended Susana Saavedra - who we all know as “The Scourge of Mynas and Bulbuls” for her wonderful work in removing (even to the point of total extinction) mynas and bulbuls from a number of islands in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. I understand that Susana is still awaiting news from the Saudis if she has the contract to run training programs on practical activities to reduce mynas in the Kingdom. Hopefully so, and that her training will start an active campaign to reduce mynas across the whole of the Middle East.