

Canberra Indian Myna Action Group Inc.

Patron: Dr Chris Tidemann



Myna Matters Bulletin # 11

Dear CIMAG Members and Friends

The following provides an update on CIMAG activities.

AGM Outcomes

The AGM on 22 August was a great night. We had informative and entertaining presentations by Dr Chris Tidemann and Ian Fraser and a lively discussion amongst the 90 members present of their myna experiences / stories. We are greatly honoured that Dr Tidemann has agreed to be the CIMAG Patron, and Ian Fraser was announced as the CIMAG Roaming Ambassador. A new Committee was elected, with Bill Handke continuing as President, Bruce Lindenmayer is the new Vice President, Anne l'Ons continues as Treasurer, Peter Franklin is the new Secretary, and Jenny Bounds, Alison Russell-French, Greg Flowers, Peter Ormay and Rosemary Blemings are Committee Members. Peter Green continues as our Trapping Advisor. Peter was given a certificate of award in recognition of his work in developing the PeeGee trap.

The President's Report for 2006-07 is on our website: www.indianmynaaction.org.au. The Treasurer, Anne l'Ons presented the financial report for the group, indicating a small level of funds in our kitty. As you know, we do not charge a membership fee, as we do not want that to be an impediment to the community joining the group and participating in our collective actions. However, to enable the organization to meet its operating costs, we rely on donations from our members. A few more would be nice!

CIMAG gets government grants — and recognition

CIMAG has been successful in its applications to the ACT and federal governments for financial assistance to help in our task to reduce mynas. This is great news and will give our efforts at public education and trap building a real boost: we can not use these funds for our administrative expenses though. Up to now our public awareness program has concentrated on public presentations and various media — radio and press — items. But now we can move full steam ahead in developing brochures and pamphlets to circulate around to the public, business, schools etc. A sub-committee has been formed to write these documents. We are also interested in identifying individuals / groups that might be able to participate in trap building as a way of reducing our backlog. Government grant funding for this will allow us to pay a stipend for trap construction by skilled people / groups. If you know of any such skilled people / groups who might be interested in this work, please let us know.

Getting these grants also means that we have received recognition from both the ACT and federal governments that our objective and our efforts are worthwhile: this gives CIMAG and our activities further public credibility.

We are not alone

An exciting development over the past year has been the number of groups and communities that have started to tackle the problem of Indian Mynas. A Workshop up at Coffs Harbour last week was dedicated solely to the issue of Indian Mynas — and it was simply inspiring. To hear of the activities of groups and local governments up along the coast from Sydney northwards was most heartening. Around 60 people attended, with a lot of them from local governments from Sydney through to the Gold Coast — **so we are not alone**. The groundswell to do something is growing, but it is very early days for many areas. Our CIMAG experience was the subject of much discussion: in particular our community-action approach of large-scale trapping was well received and may be a model that many others will adopt.

Myna Awareness Spreads — to schools, birdo and community service groups

Since the last Myna Matters Bulletin, we have had the pleasure of speaking to a number of groups and organizations in Canberra, Sydney and more recently up at Coffs Harbour and Tamworth.

A great delight was an invitation to talk to Class 3/2 W of Lyneham Primary School. This group of young environmental warriors have been counting Indian Myna numbers around their school and have come up with some startling and worrying numbers: around 50 mynas within 15 minutes of counting (although teacher Wendy Hammond did mention that there could have been a bit of double-counting involved!!). The class gave us a lovely drawing of an Indian Myna and we presented the class with a certificate award for their support in the myna battle.



Answering the tough questions from Class 3/2 W



With Class 3/2 W Lyneham Primary School

We have also had the opportunity to give presentations to the Canberra Rotary Club, the BIGNet Meeting in Sydney (a group of representatives from birding groups across NSW and the ACT), to the North Coast Indian Myna Workshop at Coffs Harbour and to the Tamworth Bird Watchers Group. Those groups generally showed a lot of interest and enthusiasm to get on board with this struggle.

Trapping Protocol

The trapping protocol has been refined following discussions with the Animal Welfare Officer of RSPCA - ACT. As we are approaching the hotter weather, trappers are asked to ensure that the traps are located in areas that provide shade and shelter and that the trap has shade-cloth or some such cover on the top (extending down the sides a little) that gives the mynas some protection from the sun and attack from cats and from other birds. There have been some reports of native birds deciding that it is “pay-back” time on trapped mynas. While a wholly understandable position from the viewpoint of magpies etc, we don't want trapped mynas to suffer while in the trap. Besides, a stressed or injured trapped myna is not likely to entice others to join it.

There are quite a few CIMAG members that are after a trap. We are finding that people trapping in new areas are getting lots of mynas, while many seasoned trappers have given trapping away for the moment as they have cleaned out most in their area. If you are in the latter category, could you give some thought to lending your trap on to another member for a while. It will help us out enormously — we are so far behind in filling our trap order list that we run the real risk of people wanting to trap losing interest. Contact me (ph 02 6231 7461 or by email handke@grapevine.net.au) or Peter Ormay on 6251 2428 if you are able to help out.

Reminder: our trapping is to be on private land

Just a reminder to members that our trapping activities are to be kept to private land. Please avoid trapping on public land, such as reserves or where the general public can access. While there might be plenty of mynas in the nature reserves and other public spaces, there are some good reasons to keep your traps on private property where the public can not readily get to them. There are public liability and public sensitivity issues and possible (likely) vandalism of the traps. We have an agreement with the ACT Dept that we would not venture into public spaces with our traps because of these concerns. However, as part of the PhD research project that we expect will commence next year, trial trapping in public areas such as reserves will be undertaken.

Trapping data

Our trapping numbers have now reached 12, 417 as at end Sept. But we also know that we are not getting all trapping information. So **please** send a quick note back to Peter Green when he emails you each month (or phone me on 6231 7461 if you don't have email) advising of your situation: even nil returns and also whether you had your trap out at all is valuable information.

The monthly totals since the last Myna Matters Bulletin are: June **560**; July **475**; August **387**; Sept **316**, giving a total to end Sept of 12,417. I will arrange for the suburb breakdown to be put on the website.

CIMAG News Distribution System and Chatline

To get onto the CIMAG news email distribution system for news and notices from the CIMAG Committee (this is different to the CIMAG Chatline), just send a blank email to news-subscribe@indianmynaaction.org.au and you will be automatically included on the distribution list. This will be the main way that the Committee will circulate information and notices to CIMAG members and "friends".

You can also include yourself on the CIMAG Chatline by sending a blank email to chat-subscribe@indianmynaaction.org.au — if you want off, just send a blank email to chat-unsubscribe@indianmynaaction.org.au .

RSPCA Hours for Disposing of Trapped Mynas

If you don't want to euthanase trapped mynas at home (using carbon monoxide from car exhaust as per our protocol) and would prefer to have them disposed of at the RSPCA, the times to take them to the RSPCA Centre are:

Monday: 10:00am – 11:00am and 4:30pm – 5:30pm
Wednesday: 4:30pm – 5:30pm
Friday: 4:30pm – 5:30pm.

Please take the trapped mynas / starlings to Building A, the Wildlife Building at the RSPCA Centre — it is the very first building in the RSPCA complex as you come down Kirkpatrick St in Weston. If bringing mynas and starlings to the Centre for disposal, could you please use an opaque bag or box in view of possible sensitivity of some people to trapped birds.

Bill Handke
President
CIMAG
30 Oct 2007