

# Canberra Indian Myna Action Group Inc

Patron: Dr Chris Tidemann

## Myna Matters Bulletin # 16



Dear CIMAG Members and Friends

The following provides an update on CIMAG activities.

### **Mynas drop in pecking order: from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>**

The success of CIMAG's trapping program continues to be reflected in monitoring data by the Canberra Ornithologists Group's (COG) Garden Bird Survey. Three years ago, the Garden Bird Survey by COG members indicated that Indian Mynas were the 3<sup>rd</sup> most abundant bird in Canberra. The 2007 GBS Report showed that after CIMAG members started trapping in backyards, mynas had dropped to the 9<sup>th</sup> most abundant bird in Canberra. Well, the good news continues! The 2008 GBS Report has just been released. The sharp drop in myna numbers goes on, with mynas now down to the 12<sup>th</sup> most abundant bird.

What a turn around in such a short time! Well done to all CIMAG trappers. This is an excellent demonstration to other communities and local councils that a program involving many backyard trappers can have a profound impact on a pest species.

### **CRC Myna Display**

The Collaborative Research Centre for Invasive Animals, out at the University Of Canberra, now has a nice new display of mynas — thanks to the donation of trapped mynas by John Corey of Gordon and the organizing effort by Di Holloway from the CRC. A taxidermist from Sydney collected the trapped mynas and has made up a very life-like display. This is part of the CRC's education program on the problems caused by introduced pest animals. The CRC is a great supporter of CIMAG.



Prof Tony Peacock, the CRC's Head and a CIMAG member, each fortnight talks on ABC 666 about feral animals with Alex Sloan. He frequently fields questions from listeners about mynas and is constantly refers to CIMAG. Tony — a polished, entertaining and highly informative speaker —spoke at the Indian Myna Conference at Nowra in May.

### **Roosting Tree Hunt**

The roosting tree hunt that we held out Kaleen / Giralang a while back was a great success — if only we could say the same about the open-air BBQ that was intended to be the reward for the tree-hunters. Some twelve CIMAG members joined Kate Garrock and Chris Tidemann to search Kaleen / Giralang for roosting trees. Kate had identified an area for each couple to search: some went by bike, some walked and some went by vehicle. The intention being to locate the trees where mynas were collecting to roost for the night. 5 roosting trees were found, although they did not have large congregations of mynas. Still, these trees will be watched as locations for roosting-tree trapping in the months ahead. Chris and Kate think that as the weather gets colder, the mynas will form larger roosts — a way to keep warmer, perhaps. These trees are in the suburbs that Kate has selected as the "High Harvest Trapping Suburbs" — myna trapping will be by both CIMAG members trapping in their backyards and Kate and Chris, with help from a couple other CIMAG people (Greg Flowers and Daryl King) will use the roosting tree trap.

# Canberra Indian Myna Action Group Inc

Patron: Dr Chris Tidemann

As I mentioned above, using the public gas-fired barbeques at Palmerville Heritage Park opposite Giralang was not a great success as even after 40 minutes on the barbeque the gourmet sausages were hardly scorched. Luckily for us, one of the roosting tree hunters, Dale Brookes, lived nearby and we were able to finish off the barbeque at her place. Thanks muchly Dale. There would have been some hungry people that night without your help.



Finishing the sausages in Dale's microwave



The roosting tree hunters finally get their reward

## Alexander Maconochie Centre Opens - let the trap building begin!

We are hopeful now that the Alexander Maconochie Centre – the new Canberra Jail – has commenced operations, the inmates will soon be working hard on making traps for CIMAG. It will not come soon enough as we still have 87 people on the trap waiting list. This is despite us having regular working bees to supply traps to would-be trappers. So, if you are waiting patiently for your free trap, please hang on a while longer and we should be able to get one to you.

We have had good discussions with the jail staff about commencing the training program and expect that to start soon.

## NSW Regional Indian Myna Conference

We held the Southern NSW Regional Indian Myna Conference at Nowra on 13<sup>th</sup> May. It was a great success and we are very hopeful that we will now see a major boost in the effort to control mynas by a lot of councils with the help of local communities. Nearly 80 people attended – including some 22 councils – another 5 councils had registered but couldn't make it on the day. As well, 35 community groups were present. The "Shoalhaven Model" was discussed in depth in the afternoon as an approach that holds a lot of promise – it involves the council and communities working together in an integrated way: the council providing initial facilitation and coordination to help establish community groups which then have the responsibility for trapping and trap management. This is of low cost to councils but has high effectiveness by using the time, resources and skills of the community.



Nearly 80 attended conference

A report on the conference has been circulated across the CIMAG email distribution system and will be separately posted on our website. A full report of the conference and the conference papers will be included on the CIMAG website in due course. We propose to develop a handbook on the best practice approach to myna control drawing on the discussions and presentations at the conference.

All in all, a very good day, and one we believe will lead to much more activity in controlling Indian Mynas across New South Wales.

## Keep the bait fresh

Jim Cleaver, a long standing CIMAG member and trapper from Yarralumla, reminds us of the need to keep the trapping bait fresh. Jim reports that he has observed that the dry cat

# Canberra Indian Myna Action Group Inc

Patron: Dr Chris Tidemann

food he uses to entice the mynas to his trap seems to lose its attractiveness after 4 days. After that time, the mynas show no interest in the trap and he rarely catches any.

But it is a different story after he refreshes the food. Whenever he discards the old food and puts new food in, the mynas are around and in the trap. So remember: keep the bait fresh and after it rains, discard the food and start again.

Importantly, please do not use bread, porridge or seed: it will entice native birds.

## Certificate Awarded to a Young Australian Wildlife Protector

Libby Holloway, an eleven year old girl from Palmers Island near Yamba on the NSW north coast, has been awarded a certificate by CIMAG for being an Australian Wildlife Protector, for her efforts in controlling Indian Mynas around her place. Libby mentions that they saw a flock of 50 mynas around their place, but that she and her dad have now trapped 23 of them. Congratulations and well done, Libby.

Unfortunately Libby has had to put her efforts on hold for a little while – as can be understood when seeing the photo of her house in the recent floods.

Still, we know that she will be back to protecting the local native wildlife recede. Let's hope that is soon, for



when the waters Libby's sake.

## Is there a Collective Noun for Indian Mynas?

Justine Ramsay from Lyneham High School has posed a tough question of us: she is doing a project on Indian Mynas and has asked what is the collective noun for a flock of mynas. We know of no such collective noun, so now is the chance to devise one. Justine is putting this task to her class-mates, but we are also putting it to you.

So come up with your best collective noun. There is “a murder of crows”, “a parliament of owls”, but what is it for mynas? I am attracted to a “raucous of mynas” but the field is wide open for some ingenious descriptor.

Send us your suggestions to [president@indianmynaaction.org.au](mailto:president@indianmynaaction.org.au) and we will throw them into the hat with those from Lyneham High School.

## Around the Traps

The movement grows with a number of councils, businesses and community groups considering what might be the best approach in their area. Mosman in Sydney is one such place where the residents lead by Kim Allchin and a couple of far-sighted and aware councilors — Libby Moline and Tom Sherlock — are looking to deal with the problem. CIMAG will help them as much as we can.

Two North Sydney council officers, Gareth Debney and Ramin Khosravi, are interested in setting up a program in their area utilizing the time and skill of the local community. To help them consider how best to proceed, CIMAG participated in a morning workshop with the council officers and a local group in early May.

# Canberra Indian Myna Action Group Inc

**Patron: Dr Chris Tidemann**

Eurobodalla officers are also looking to develop a council – community integrated program in their region — CIMAG will participate in a information-sharing evening in early June.

We wish Mosman, North Sydney and Eurobodalla all the best in these efforts.

At the Nowra Conference, a number of councils and community groups gave presentations or provided one-page information sheets about their activities. They all had an interesting story to tell and lessons for others facing the same circumstances. We will put these up on the website in due course. For those who do not have access to the web, we will look to distribute in hard copy together with this Bulletin.

## **Myna Trapping Numbers**

Graham Gliddon has been hard at work bringing our capture data up to date.

Graham is finding that a lot of people who we have down on the trap database as having traps do not seem to be responding to his request for monthly returns. It might be that they have now passed the trap onto friends or have given up trapping for a while as they have cleaned out the local pests. It is a very time-consuming task for Graham to chase up people.

Moreover, maintaining the database with names of people who no longer intend to trap ever again only clogs up the system. So another plea: if you have passed on your trap and never intend to trap again, can you contact Graham ([g-gliddon@mysoul.com.au](mailto:g-gliddon@mysoul.com.au)) so that he can tidy the list up. But, if you still have your trap and are waiting for the mynas to return before putting it to further use, please respond to Graham's emails and advise him of your situation. We still want your name on the list so you get his monthly requests.

The number of mynas trapped and disposed of as at the end of April 2009 was 23,829.

These are the birds we know have been trapped and disposed of. How many others have gone that way and we have never been told? It may not sound that important. But let me assure you, it is very important for a number of reasons. Firstly it demonstrates the success or otherwise of our strategy which is important to determine so that others can adopt or reject this model based on its performance; secondly, there are still some sceptics out there, so having reliable data is important in influencing them; thirdly, Kate Grarock's PhD research project requires her to know with reasonable certainty the level of trapping in her selected suburbs. The research results would be less useful if the trapping data was badly astray. Governments need good science and good data if they are to come on board. Reliable data on numbers of mynas trapped is a big help in giving our efforts credibility with governments and key stakeholder groups. So, **please**, just send Graham a quick email or phone me on 6231 7461.

## **CIMAG News Distribution System**

To get onto the CIMAG news email distribution system for news and notices from the CIMAG Committee, just send a blank email to [news-subscribe@indianmynaaction.org.au](mailto: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".

From time to time, members request that we take them off the chatline. The easiest thing to do if you no longer want to get chatline emails (this is different from getting the Myna Matters Bulletin and news from the committee) is to send a blank email to [chat-unsubscribe@indianmynaaction.org.au](mailto:chat-unsubscribe@indianmynaaction.org.au) . That will take you off automatically.

Bill Handke  
President  
CIMAG  
29 May 09