

Canberra Indian Myna Action Group Inc

Patron: Professor Tony Peacock



Myna Matters Bulletin # 21 (Autumn 2011)

Dear CIMAG Members and Friends

The following provides an update on CIMAG activities:

MynaScan Launched - a great boost for major action on mynas (I just had to say it!)

MynaScan – an interactive web-based mapping and recording site – was launched recently by Peter West of the Invasive Animals' Collaborative Research Centre (CRC) at the Ballarat Myna Workshop that had been organised by Peter Bird of SA Biodiversity Dept.



Peter West and Peter Bird viewing the MynaScan site at the launch

MynaScan will enable each of us to record sightings of mynas in our area – this will be particularly valuable for recording roosting sites, breeding hollows occupied by mynas, the location of flocks of mynas. It is possible to also record observations of damage being done by mynas, such as mynas attacking other birds or animals, evicting native birds from nesting hollows, and their feasting on fruit and grapes. Getting good records of these things are important to build up the knowledge base about mynas.

It is very easy to use the site: to access it just google “MynaScan” or go to www.feralscan.org.au/mynascan/ and follow the instructions. Register first and then start mapping.

MynaScan is great news for all of us who want to take action to control the spread and numbers of this invasive pest bird. It is strongly recommended that everyone who is interested in tackling the problem use this site to map and record their sightings – it will be a wonderful resource.

It will also be invaluable for community groups and local councils as they will be able to set up their own dedicated mapping records within MynaScan, keep track of numbers seen and the success of their control activities etc.

We are very lucky that Peter West from the Invasive Animals CRC has been dedicated to this task. Peter has also developed RabbitScan and FoxScan and is working through the large list of pest species that are plaguing Australia. What a wonderful job he is doing.

Our collective hats off to Peter for developing this brilliant web-based mapping system.

The GBS confirms it again: myna numbers still going down

It is confirmed – myna numbers are still dropping in Canberra. When CIMAG started in early 2006, the Indian Myna was the 3rd most common bird in the Canberra area, according to the Garden Bird Survey filled out each week by members of the Canberra Ornithologists Group (COG). The “A” value for the bird, in statistical speak meaning the measure of abundance, was 4.9587 in the 2005-06 survey period. That means on average there were 5 mynas seen by each surveyor at a time at each site each week throughout the year. That’s a lot of mynas.

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Martin Butterfield's analysis from the GBS survey for 2009/10 confirms that numbers are still decreasing, albeit at a slowed rate. The value of "A" was at 1.7588 for the 2009/10 survey year. What that means is that each surveyor on average saw less than 2 mynas at a time at their survey site per week throughout the year. Great news.

The Ballarat Workshop on Mynas – perhaps the start of something big in Victoria

Peter Bird of the South Australia Biosecurity Dept has been concerned for some time that the westward move by mynas in Victoria will see them over the border into SA at some time in the future. In years past Peter has been at the forefront in, to use his terminology, "wacking" any mynas that have dared to enter the land of the Crows.

Peter and CIMAG have been dismayed that the community-action movement in the ACT and the community-local council action in NSW has not taken hold in Victoria, and that local and State Government agencies have shown little interest in dealing with the huge myna numbers down there. So to help engender some greater awareness and knowledge about the problem and what can be done – as a way to stop the westward myna march – Peter organized a Myna Workshop at Ballarat earlier this month. It was well attended by key Victorian officials and former officials, academics and members of local environmental groups.

The Workshop heard from Peter, Simon Martin from the Vic Dept of Primary Industry and Jane Malcolm from the Animal Welfare Unit of that Dept, myself and Peter West who used the occasion to launch MynaScan to the world. A very useful part of the day was a long discussion about the way forward in Victoria. A plan was mapped out for the future.



Participants at the Ballarat Myna Workshop arranged by Peter Bird

We were delighted that so many Victorian officers attended and were interested in seeing how the myna problem in Victoria could be handled. Hopefully that will see some interest and support for community and local / State government action to control mynas.

Wollongong joins the fight

The Wollongong myna control program is off and running with the launch of the Wollongong City Council-managed program. Paul Formosa of the Wollongong City Council has been

developing up WIMAP (the Wollongong Indian Myna Action Program) for some time and has developed a comprehensive strategy with 5 key components: 1) Community Engagement; 2) Administration; 3) Men's Shed; 4) Monitoring; and 5) Research & Dev. Each of the above strategies has their own specific actions.

Perhaps this approach will set the model for other council-managed programs.

The launch was at the Corrimal Men's Shed – these guys are making traps for people in the area who are participating in the program. And they are very impressive pieces of work – almost "art". Peter

Franklin and I participated in the launch and were very impressed with the way the people and council at Wollongong have approached this task.



Paul Formosa speaking at the launch of the Wollongong Indian Myna Action Program

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Now this is dedication

A while back we received a call from a man in Bendigo who wanted to get his hands on a trap as they were not available in Victoria. So rather than miss out, he and his wife made an overnight trip from Bendigo to Canberra to get hold of one. Now that's a long drive and a level of dedication rarely seen. I haven't heard how the trap is going, but I am confident that with that level of keenness, it will be getting a work out. We have also in the last few months had a man and his wife drive down from Newcastle for a day trip to pick up a trap, and John Bolger drove down from Liverpool. John reported back a few days later with some good capture numbers.

This is something special

Dave Daniel reports that now that mynas have been removed from his area – he lives next door to Peter Green (he of the renowned PeeGee Trap fame) and the two of them have removed over 1,000 mynas – he has a very special resident in his nesting box – a box that previously was occupied by mynas.

If only more of us had an Owlet Nightjar as our backyard resident. Dave says that it happily looks out of the entrance to the nestbox during the day and is not at all disturbed by their comings and goings.

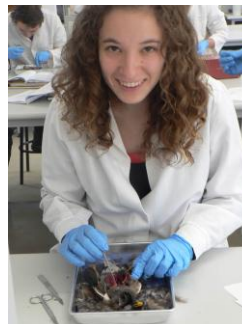
We are hearing more and more reports of native birds back in nesting boxes / tree hollows – the nesting hollows that had previously been taken over by mynas.

Chapman, Campbell, Red Hill, O'Connor, Bonython – you can start trapping again.

As part of Kate Garrock's PhD research project at ANU on the impact of mynas on native wildlife and the effectiveness of our trapping program, we had asked people in the above suburbs to stop trapping over the three years that Kate was collecting data from surveys and the nesting boxes in the reserves adjacent to those five suburbs. Well Kate finished her data collection at the end of March, so anybody with a trap in these suburbs can get back to trapping. We know myna numbers built up heavily in a few of those suburbs during the non-trapping three years, so we are giving a priority in handing out new traps to people in those places.

Specimens for Charles Sturt University

In the past, Greg Flowers of CIMAG has been providing frozen starlings and mynas for teaching at Charles Sturt University. They have excellent specimens for skin preparation for ornithological students, as well as for dissections. Craig Reid from the CSU has asked supply more frozen specimens for this teaching. the attached photo they are put to a useful very help can you please contact Greg on Greg.Flowers@environment.gov.au or on or Craig Reid at CSU on CR Reid@csu.edu.au.



proven to make some of their undergraduate us whether we can As you can see from purpose. If you can

02 6250 9416



Dave Daniel's special backyard guest

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Good News for Northern NSW

Volunteers in the Nambucca, Coffs and Bellingen Shires have received a boost in funding support from the NSW Environmental Trust which has allocated \$100,000 to enable the Indian Myna Control Project to run for another three years. And the good news continues as this will mean that Tien Pham will continue as Project Officer working with volunteers in the three Shires to control mynas. They have had a huge success up there, due much to the dedication and hard work of Tien. This funding will allow them more time to solidly establish a control network within the community.

The network is made up of community volunteers involved in a range of control activities including trapping, trap building, euthanasia support, surveying, education and awareness raising. So far, over 1050 volunteers have participated in the project and almost 2,500 Indian mynas have been trapped since the project commenced in April 2009. That's good, isn't it.

Time for Committee Renewal

It is always good to get new people onto a Committee and particularly turn over Office Bearers to get new ideas and perhaps new vigour. So the call is out to anyone in the Canberra region who wants to put their hand up to come onto the Committee. This is part of a process of succession planning for Office Bearers and particularly the position of President.

Trapping numbers for the last few months

Reasonably good number of mynas have been reported as being trapped over the past few months. Many, of course, are juveniles, which is what we would expect at that time of year. For the Canberra region there were Jan 830; Feb 631; March 502; and April returns to date 475, giving a total of 36,312 mynas known to have been removed since we started.

CIMAG Website and News Distribution System

There is a lot of interesting information about mynas and about who is doing what to control them, on our website. Also it has some good scientific papers, plans for the trap, brochures and leaflets, and back issues of the Bulletin.

You are very welcome to use whatever information on the website that you want.

To get onto the CIMAG email distribution system for this Bulletin, news and notices from the CIMAG Committee, just send a blank email to news-subscribe@indianmynaaction.org.au

If you are interested in having someone from CIMAG talk to your organisation or work group about the threats posed by mynas and what CIMAG and others are doing, just get in touch.

Bill Handke
President
CIMAG
18 May 2011