

Canberra Indian Myna Action Group Inc

Patron: Professor Tony Peacock

Myna Matters Bulletin # 23 (Christmas 2011)

Dear CIMAG Members and Friends

The following provides an update on CIMAG activities:



Merry Christmas to all involved in Indian Myna Control Activities



With the year almost over, the CIMAG Committee extends the very best for the festive season and for 2012 to all involved in Indian Myna control activities across eastern Australia.

2011 Highlights

We can look back on a successful year of community / local government activity to reduce Indian Myna numbers across our region and along the eastern seaboard. Amongst the very big highlights for the year are the start of the Cairns Rotary Indian Myna Eradication Society (CRIMES), the total elimination of mynas from Magnetic Island off the coast from Townsville, more local governments in Sydney becoming involved, and the greater interest in myna control activities

being taken by Victorians. Also MynaScan, under the management of Peter West of the Invasive Animals CRC, is now bedded down and is waiting for your input. For Canberra / Queanbeyan, we are rapidly approaching a recorded capture total of 40,000 mynas.

AGM and Public Info Night Wash-up: a good night had by all!

CIMAG AGM nights are different: that's right, the 60 or so members and friends who joined us for the night of 18th Oct 2011 were treated to a really good night of entertaining and informative talks and discussion. Our Patron, Prof Tony Peacock, spoke "patron-type" things, inspiring us all to continue the effort. Peter West explained MynaScan – the interactive web-based mapping and recording system for mynas. It is so easy to register and record any mynas you see around



The 2011 AGM hears the good news

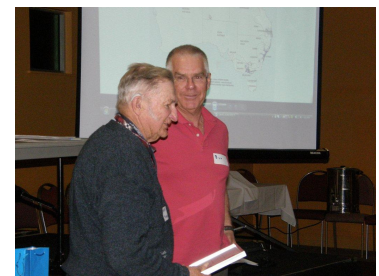
your place – or anywhere else. I almost wish I had a few mynas around home so I could record them on MynaScan! To use the system, just log onto the MynaScan website

(<http://www.feralscan.org.au/mynascan/>) and start recording your observations. In Canberra / Queanbeyan region we are interested in CIMAG members recording roosting sites and breeding sites as well as general myna observations. Kate Garrock mentioned some really interesting aspects of myna behaviour that have come out of her PhD research – she has found that mynas only expand into new

areas very slowly: this gives us some heart that the rate of expansion may not be beyond our rate of control. And Daryl King gave us some of his insights into territorial behaviour of mynas that have arisen from his research out in Belconnen.

The President's Report for 2010-2011 can be read on the CIMAG website (www.indianmynaaction.org.au).

Awards for sterling efforts were presented to highly successful trappers: Michael Downie (165), Robert Harriss (146) and Colin & Kerrie Swan (128). A special award was also given to Ross Tinson.



Ross Tinson receiving an award

Ross has removed over 1187 mynas over the past 5 years and has been a stalwart of the trapping program since it started.

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Oh, and the AGM saw the re-election of the existing Committee with the addition of Ray Barge. We are delighted that Ray has joined the Committee – his insights and big picture strategic thinking will make a good contribution to the work of CIMAG.

Myna numbers still going down, down, down

Martin Butterfield, the collator for the Garden Bird Survey filled out each week by members of the Canberra Ornithologists Group (COG), advises that the preliminary calculations for the 2010-2011 survey period indicate that myna numbers in Canberra district are still on the way down. For the past survey year the “A” value for the bird, in statistical speak meaning the measure of abundance, dropped from 1.7588 in 2009-10 to 1.54. This means that on average, each surveyor recorded a maximum of only 1.54 mynas at any one time in a week for each week throughout the year. Remember, when we started in 2005-06 the surveyors were recording a maximum of 5 mynas at a time for every week of the year. Mynas have again dropped down to the 14th most common bird in the Canberra / Queanbeyan district, after being ranked 13th in the previous year (and 14th in the year before). Good news indeed.

So, well done to all those trappers in the Canberra/ Queanbeyan district as it is your efforts that have given us this great result.

A new CIMAG Project – Nestbox Management in Canberra Reserves

With the end of Kate Grarock’s research on mynas, the CIMAG Committee has decided to undertake a short term research project using the nesting boxes Kate erected in the 15 nature reserves around Canberra. The objective is to see if they are useful as a way of reducing mynas in the nature reserves. We know from Kate’s work that mynas had occupied lots of nestboxes. So, with the aid of CIMAG volunteers and the support of the ACT Dept we propose to keep an eye on the nestboxes, record what is using them, and if mynas have started to breed in the boxes to then do away with them. We will assess how this works over the current breeding season and then determine whether it is worthwhile doing this over the long term as a way to reduce mynas in the reserves. For the moment we have a number of CIMAG members who are checking the nestboxes to see what is using them: some wonderful results and some disturbing news. Bees are active in a lot, mynas in a few (more so in Gunghalin Hill and Red Hill reserves), but rosellas, Sugar Gliders and Owlet Nightjars are also using quite a few.



Kumiko, Mia and Misa Callaway checking the nestboxes on Wanniasa Hills near Fadden

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall

Mirror, mirror on the wall
Inside the trap, but that’s not all
Fresh dog food and water too -
You’ll end up catching quite a few.

A mirror fools a wary one
To come on in and have some fun
“I see my friend is in there now,
Must be safe, I’ll get in somehow”.

A mirror (100 mm x 150 mm / 4” x 6”) inside the feeding chamber in line with one of the tunnels

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is proving an excellent way to lure in the wary mynas. Seeing their reflection, they are fooled into thinking it is safe inside the trap and happily join their “friend”. Marg Peachey reports that after not being able to trap any wary mynas for two years, the mirror did the trick – Marg and Jim immediately caught 17 mynas in a week. Ian Lindenmayer also reports success using the same trick. So if you have wary mynas, a trip to the \$2 shop for a mirror might be a good investment. Just tie the mirror to the inside of the feeding chamber in line with the tunnel.

Your new email address is wanted

If you get an new email address, it would be greatly appreciated if you could advise Marg Peachey and Graham Gliddon of this. Just send an email through to them (margpeachey@gmail.com and g-gliddon@mysoul.com.au).

And now for the bad news

With all the back slapping for a good year passed comes the very sobering news that mynas have reached Mudgee and have been seen north of the Warrumbungles. It is never a good day when we hear of the westward expansion of mynas: John McCrae, the Coordinator for the Mid Western Myna Control Program reports that two free-flying mynas were seen around his “aviary” of decoy mynas in Mudgee recently. John keeps the birds as decoys for use in the trapping activities elsewhere in the mid-west – particularly in Dunedoo where Simon Ferguson uses them to good effort. John was able to trap one of the Mudgee visitors – hopefully the other skedaddled back east.

John also mentioned that on a recent trip north he saw mynas along the roadside just north of the Warrumbungle National Park north of Coonabarabran: now that is a very worrying development. On a more positive note, John reports that 14 mynas were removed east of Burrendong Dam. He thinks that might have been the entire local population.

John suggests that on the fringe of known myna areas it might be good to keep an “aviary” of mynas as a way to attract any that come into the district. That way there would be a better chance of, firstly, seeing them in the area and, secondly, then attracting them to a trap.

Juveniles are out and about

Some juvenile mynas have already been seen out and about with their parents. Juveniles are naïve and can be readily trapped – so long as wary parents are not with them. So time to dust off and hose down the trap, stock it with fresh dry dog food – the small variety – and set it up in a quiet spot in the garden away from cats. January and February are usually high capture months – when we get mostly juveniles, the future breeders. Every one we trap and dispose of is doing our wildlife a world of good and giving our neighbourhood some quiet.

Trapping numbers for the last few months

Graham Gliddon’s records for captures for the past few months are below. Again a plea from Graham that people report in their captures.

	Sept 11	Oct 11	Nov 11	
Mynas	215	276	242	for a total of 5,178 for the year until end Nov 2011.
Starlings	11	29	63	for a total of 1,079 for the year until end Nov 2011.

This brings the reported capture total of Indian Mynas to 39,152 since we started in 2006 to the end of Nov 2011. Hopefully a good trapping month for December and January – with the new juveniles - will see us over the 40,000 number. Of course we know that that is not the absolute

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total captured as many people do not report in their captures and other people have traps that we do not know about.

CIMAG Website Hits a ¼ million Hits

As reported at our AGM, over our past year (2010-2011) the CIMAG website recorded over ¼ million hits (239,390 hits) with some 20,259 unique visitors. 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. So if you want to know what is going on check out www.indianmynaaction.org.au

Get onto the CIMAG email Distribution System and Chatline

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 . To get onto the CIMAG Chatline, send a blank email to chat-subscribe@indianmynaaction.org.au and then start posting messages.

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
21 Dec 2011