

Canberra Indian Myna Action Group



Myna Matters Bulletin #3 — an Update on CIMAG Activities

Dear Canberra Indian Myna Action Group members

The following is an update of the activities of the Group.

The membership of the Group continues to grow strongly. We now have just under 100 members. Thank you to all those who have been spreading the word and putting items in various newsletters about the Group and its objectives. This is raising a lot of interest.

You will recall from the CIMAG Strategy that an important element of our proposed activity is public education and the circulation of information on how the general public can help to minimize the spread of mynas. To this end, the Committee has been developing material for circulation to the media and public information sheets. We hope that these will be finalized at our next Committee meeting at the end of the month and then available for distribution.

We have also continued to hold meetings with some key people. The RSPCA Council is still considering a proposal that we have put to it about some collaborative activity. The RSPCA is also considering our Protocol on Animal Welfare — we sought their views on it. We have held a meeting with Dr Chris Tidemann, the eminent ANU researcher on Indian Mynas. Dr Tidemann is supportive and encouraging and has helped us with our thinking in a number of areas. He considers that backyard trapping can have a positive impact at the local level but believes that we need to be realistic in our expectations as to the likely broader landscape scale impact of our endeavours. We have also had a very useful meeting with Murray Evans of Environment ACT. Murray is very interested in what we are doing and is most encouraging. He indicated that our trapping success exceeded his expectations. He also encouraged us to set up a good monitoring program using the Garden Bird Survey (being run by the Canberra Ornithologist Group) and our monthly capture monitoring spreadsheet to help assess the overall impact of the trapping program on mynas in suburbs and across Canberra. The Committee will develop that concept further, but our initial reaction is that this would give us a very good tool to assess the overall strategy and the trapping aspect in particular. It would give Environment ACT an excellent basis for subsequently considering parallel activity down the track.

We have also been in touch with other interstate communities and commercial operators who are involved or interested in tackling the Indian Myna problem in their areas. We look to learn from the experience of others, and from the good research work done by Dr Tidemann and others at the ANU over the past decade.

The trapping program continues to show excellent results. As of end June, some 2779 mynas have been removed from the environment by CIMAG members — some 927 in June alone — and people are reporting positive impacts where mynas numbers have been reduced. The reduction is quite discernible — even my postie reported that he is seeing only a few mynas in my local area after 3 CIMAG trappers took out over 250. Other members are reporting that they are seeing more small birds in their gardens.

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Below is some info on capture data across Canberra suburbs. It is still early days and most of the 45 CIMAG trappers are only just getting their traps operational.

Kambah	1711 mynas / 175 starlings	(this is by 16 trappers)
Hall group	550 mynas	
Weston	56 mynas	
Garran	94 mynas	
Fisher	16 mynas	
Waramanga	18 mynas	
Hughes	18 mynas	
Aranda	82 mynas	(all by one person)
Deakin	12 mynas	
Duffy	190 mynas	(by a single trapper)
Theodore	4 mynas	
Pearce	15 mynas	
Macarthur	8 mynas	
Chifley	<u>5 mynas</u>	
	2779 mynas	

There are also CIMAG trappers in Campbell, Chapman, Curtin, Fadden, Lyons, Lyneham, Monash, Narrabunda, Spence, Wanniasa, Watson, Weetangera who are just getting operational.

I am enclosing the Constitution of the Canberra Indian Myna Action Group that has been agreed by the Committee. It follows the model constitution for incorporated bodies as put out by the ACT government, with a few changes relating to the process for applying for membership to make joining CIMAG easier than the more cumbersome approach outlined in the model.

The trap building workshop that was held a few weeks back was a great success, with 17 people turning up. A dozen new traps were made by members. We will look to hold a few more of these workshops in the future, but until the weather starts to warm up we might restrict numbers to 5 so that we can fit into a garage or carport if the weather is bad. A photo of the happy group is enclosed.

The current priorities of the Committee are to:

- develop the public education / information packages
- get coverage and a profile of our activities in like-minded environmental groups and the local media (initially the Chronicles and then the Times)
- develop a robust monitoring program
- complete the incorporation process
- further develop alliances with key stakeholders
- consider the options for an integrated euthanising and disposal process.

Cheers

Bill Handke
Interim President
12 July 2006