

Around the Traps – March 2011

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.



Participants at the Ballarat Myna Workshop arranged by Peter Bird

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.

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.



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

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.

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.