

## **Council and the community working together ensures a successful start to the Eurobodalla Indian Myna Control Program**

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Indian Mynas were first sighted in the Eurobodalla Shire (located on the coast four hours drive south of Sydney) in the mid-90s. The Indian Myna populations were concentrated in the seaside 'villages' and on farmlands to the west of the shire. Eurobodalla Shire Council initiated the Eurobodalla Indian Myna Control Program in August 2009. Due to national parks to the north and west and ocean to the east, it was an achievable goal to significantly reduce Indian Myna populations in some areas and completely remove them in others. Some four years later, that is exactly what has happened.

Prior to the start of the Shire-wide program, Council began a 12 month trial program in one of the villages. The results of this trial proved the success of using the PeeGee trap and lessons were learnt along the way of how to deliver a program across the entire Shire. Also during this period, as the Council's Natural Resource Supervisor, I researched other Indian Myna control programs that were being implemented elsewhere. Those models were adapted to best suit the Eurobodalla region. As a result, Council is the 'nucleus' of the program and works very closely with the Eurobodalla community. This is how it has worked:

- Council provides materials for a local Men's Shed to make the PeeGee traps. Over 130 have been made so far
- These traps are lent out to the community for use
- Volunteer Coordinators are identified in each of the 'villages'
- All public Indian Myna queries go to me at Council, and I then pass trapper details to the Indian Myna Volunteer Coordinators
- The coordinator has traps at their premises and they meet directly with the potential trapper in their village
- They show the person how to set up the trap and what is involved. The coordinator is the local contact for support and answering queries
- Each Volunteer Coordinator undertakes the humane euthanising of Indian Mynas.



In the situations where there is no Indian Myna Volunteer Coordinator, I deal directly with each trapper, going to their property and showing them how to set up the trap. They contact me for euthanasing.

### **Lessons learnt**

Council has a very detailed database which logs the location of all Indian Myna traps. This gives a very clear 'pattern' of the location of birds and the history of successful removal.

It is critical to have a passionate central coordinator and Council can play a pivotal role in this. Councils have the media contacts, the ability to administer grant funds, and the minimal seed funding required to initiate these programs.

Facilitating bi-annual 'informal' meetings is an invaluable way of encouraging community participation, supporting the Volunteer Coordinators and trappers, and ensuring the momentum of the program doesn't wane.

Regular media opportunities are a fantastic means of increasing community awareness and community participation. This has included the newspaper, community or school newsletters, letterbox drops, posters in 'shop fronts' and on community noticeboards. It also provides confidence to people already involved in the program that Council is and will continue to support the program.

In the future Council will continue to be the 'nucleus' of the program. The success of the program is reliant on Council's ongoing support and the ongoing enthusiasm, persistence and participation of the community.