

Canberra Indian Myna Action Group Inc

Patron: Professor Tony Peacock



Myna Matters Bulletin # 19

Dear CIMAG Members and Friends

The following provides an update on CIMAG activities:

“A good year just passed and a full year ahead”

That is a short summary of President's Report at the 2010 AGM, which was held on 21st September. The AGM / Public Information Night was well attended with around 50 members and interested people from the public there to hear excellent presentations by our new Patron, the “Feral Professor” Tony Peacock; Sharon Woods and Peter Sanderson - RSPCA animal welfare inspectors; and from David Drynan of the Bird and Bat Banding Scheme. More of that later on.

Tony Peacock our A New Patron

Professor Tony Peacock, the “Feral Professor” (only partly so-named as he was until very recently the CEO of the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre), has graciously accepted our invitation to be CIMAG's Patron. Most people know that Tony is a brilliant communicator on science – in fact Tony won the 2010 Eureka Science Award for this very thing – and so it is when Tony talks about the problems of invasive pests, like Indian Mynas. We are indeed most fortunate and grateful to have someone of Tony's standing and knowledge as our patron. Tony has now taken on the role of CEO of the Association of all the Co-operative Research Centres: some 45 or so of them, but he will continue to do his fortnightly radio slot (on Wednesday mornings) with Alex Sloan on ABC 666. Listen when you can: you will learn lots.



A New Face on the Committee and One Leaves Us

Following the AGM elections for the new CIMAG Committee, we now have a new Committee member, Megan van der Velde. Megan has a background in animal welfare. It is wonderful to have her join the Committee. At the same time we are sorry to see one of our stalwarts, Jenny Bounds, leave the Committee. Everybody knows of Jenny's tireless work for conservation and birding in the region, and CIMAG is most grateful that Jenny was able to devote time on the Committee during its formative years. But we know where she lives, and we will no doubt be able to get her thoughts and insights when we need them. The rest of the Committee remains unchanged: President: Bill Handke; Vice President: Bruce Lindenmayer; Treasurer: Anne I'ons; Secretary: Peter Franklin; Committee members, Alison Russell-French, Rosemary Blemings, Margaret Peachey, Greg Flowers, Peter Ormay.

Snippets of 2009-10

The President's Report for 2009-10 is on our website (www.indianmynaaction.org.au) and gives a summary of the successful year just past. Some of the highlights are worth mentioning here though:

- CIMAG continues to grow as a group with over 1000 members
- our website had 215,480 hits last year
- we presented at or ran trap-building workshops at Lane Cove, Hawkesbury and Hornsby and gave a number of presentations to Canberra groups / schools
- members reported 32,047 mynas have been removed in aggregate as at the end of

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- June 2010 - and we know there have been many more that were never reported
- Mynas are now down to 14th most common bird in Canberra (results of Garden Bird Survey for 2008-09 that was announced in Nov 2009) – down from 12th the year before (and 3rd when we started in 2006)
- inmates from the Alexander Maconochie Centre have now made 400 traps for CIMAG.

CIMAG tops 1000

Andrew Sutton became CIMAG's 1000th member in June 2010. Welcome on board Andrew. We hope that your involvement in CIMAG helps rid your area of mynas – as it has for many others. Andrew has since been joined by a further 49 new members.

A Night of Awards



Julia Foley receiving awards to staff and inmates of the Alexander Maconochie Centre (Canberra's gaol)

The AGM is always an opportunity to recognize effort and achievement, and to thank the many people that help us. This year CIMAG presented awards to our new Patron; to Andrew Sutton, the 1000th member; to the staff and the inmates of the Alexander Maconochie Centre (Canberra's gaol) – Julia Foley accepted the award on behalf of the inmates as they had trouble getting a leave pass; and to four trappers in recognition of their outstanding efforts – three each removed over 100 mynas from their backyards while Stan Price trapped 539 starlings last year. The three outstanding myna trappers for 2010 were Daniel Macdonald, Mary Murphy and Kevin Hardy.

Our thanks also goes to Graham Gliddon for the great job of collating reports on captures for the data-base, and to David Cook for his work on the CIMAG website (there is always new stuff being loaded onto that so check it out regularly).

A Bird Chart for your Fridge

Seeing native birds in the backyard is one of the delights of living in the Canberra-Queanbeyan district. There are just so many of them – when there are no mynas. To assist you to identify them we have developed a 2-sided glossy on Canberra's Native Backyard Birds. It is suitable for putting up on your fridge as a ready reference for when you see a bird that you might not be familiar with. The photos are from the COG Photo Galley: our acknowledgement to the photographers. We have the chart on our website as well (look under Facts Sheet and Info), but if you want a printed copy – it really looks good – ring me (6231 7461) or email me (president@indianmynaaction.org.au).



Nesting Boxes

You will recall that last year we wanted to provide members with nesting boxes for rosellas to breed in. This was part of mynas took over the around and remove them. boxes, so if you are people in Red Hill, O'Connor (the five non-PhD research project), Kate's project is finished build your own, the plans



our myna control program: if nesting box then we would come We will shortly have a supply of the interested just let us know. But for Campbell, Chapman, Bonython and trapping suburbs of Kate Grarock's boxes will only be provided once in March next year. If you want to are on the website.

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“Being Kind to our Wildlife, not Cruel to Mynas”

Sharon Woods and Peter Sanderson, the two RSPCA animal welfare inspectors who spoke at our AGM, reinforced the need to keep animal welfare issues at the front of our mind when we are trapping. In CIMAG we have a saying that we are trapping to be “Kind to our Wildlife, not to be cruel to Indian Mynas”. This means that our trappers ensure that they follow the CIMAG Protocol on Animal Welfare and thus trapped mynas have food, water, cover and shade, and that are disposed of humanely. Remember that the engine of your petrol vehicle must be stone cold – the car hasn’t been driven – when you euthanase with carbon monoxide as this ensures a very quick, painless and stress-free departure for the birds.

How Has your Suburb Gone?

Do you want to know how many people in your suburb have traps and the total number of mynas removed in your area so far? If so, you can get that information from the data that Graham Gliddon has collated. Just go to the website and scroll down the left hand menu.

Bird Banding Explained

At the AGM, David Drynan of the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme spoke about the information that can be provided by putting bands on birds, releasing them and subsequently getting reports back on them from observers. Bird banding has been a significant part of animal research for many decades. As the bands have different colours and combinations of colours, it is possible for observers to report back on banded birds while they are still free-flying, as well as when a carcass is found. Information that is useful is such things as: how long the birds live, how far they travel to feed, how far young disperse from their nest.

The AGM heard a range of views as to whether this approach was worthwhile for Indian Mynas. There was some discussion as to whether this might result in mynas becoming trap shy if the birds being banded were trapped birds: these concerns would be allayed if the birds being banded were nestlings from nesting boxes. A key point made by a member who has had considerable experience as a bander and CSIRO researcher was whether the information desired could be gleaned by other means. It was a very useful discussion. The more we can learn about myna behaviour the better we can tackle them.



David Drynan explaining the bird banding scheme

Public Consciousness Awakes: Mynas in Top Five

Results from a recent national Community Awareness Survey indicate that public awareness of the problems caused by mynas is rising. In the latest survey Indian Mynas have supplanted both wild pigs and foxes and are currently regarded as being in the ‘top five’ feral pests for the first time since the survey began. This is up from 8th position in the previous quarter. Importantly, this is the first time a ‘city pest’ (as opposed to an agricultural or environmental pest) has occupied such a position of prominence in the public mind, and points to the possibility of a shift in national pest control priorities as Australia continues to urbanise.

No doubt the activities that CIMAG and the other community-council myna control groups undertake to raise consciousness about the threats and problems caused by mynas are having a role in raising broader public awareness of pest animals and their impacts.

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Around the Traps (more details on the website under “Happenings Elsewhere”)

Lots of happenings around the traps elsewhere.

In Victoria, Julia Gibson and Fiona Mundy report that the **Yarra Indian Myna Action Group** is being formed.

The myna control program at the wonderful **Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne** in Victoria is having good success after some initial problems with bandicoots thinking the free food in the MynaMagnet Trap was for them: they report that since they built 3 PeeGees traps, relocated their effort and stopped free feeding they have removed 133 in quick time. Ollie Sherlock also reports that things slowed down dramatically in winter with weeks without a capture, but that whenever there is a clear sunny day they catch birds. This can only enhance the experience for the many visitors to the Gardens.

Kirraly Moran, who initiated the myna control program at the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne, is moving onto the **Nillumbik Shire** in Melbourne where they are running a control program. We will hear more of their activities down the track.

David Nicholls of the **Chisholm Institute** in Victoria had two programs running as study projects involving the students, but had mixed success. They are reviewing the project approach as it was very labour intensive for little return. Their main success was where they located the trap in a chook yard where mynas were used to feeding - the result was 30 of the 40 mynas there were caught in three days of trapping.

The reports from Tien Pham, Project Officer for the **Coffs, Bellingen & Nambucca Indian Myna Program** indicate that the program there is going very well, with many innovative approaches. The Trapping Statistics report indicates a useful bit of information for trapping programs: trappers across the three local government areas who used decoy mynas had a 87% success rate while those without decoy mynas only had a 40% success rate. The Coffs Harbour “Drop and Swap Station” – where trappers can drop off their trap full with mynas and get a replacement trap (hopefully empty) – was set up in May.

The Wingecarribee Shire Indian Myna control program under Tracey Poulter’s guidance is going very well: 1593 Indian Mynas and 107 Starlings have been removed, 86 traps have been built within the community and 60 traps have been built by the Bowral Men's Shed. In addition the Council has 9 traps that are continually in use by the community.

The Tweed / Byron Indian Myna Control Project has been a great success. The Environmental Trust Project through which the Indian Myna Control Project Officer for Tweed and Byron has been employed for the last two years wrapped up in early August 2010. Pam Gray reports that the success of the project exceeded expectations, with an extensive community trapping effort resulting in over 2500 Indian Mynas trapped over 23 months. In response to the community’s clear desire to continue Indian Myna control in the two Shires, the current control project will be integrated into the Invasive Species Control component of the Bush Futures project and run until March 2012. This is good news.

The **Hawkesbury Indian Myna program** is going from strength to strength, with around 500 volunteers trapping in their city area and 10 area co-ordinators who help to train the volunteers and make traps. It is a very enthusiastic and successful group with great support by Hawkesbury Shire officers, Gary Baldry and Martin Gauci. They have been knocking the myna numbers down in a big way: just for the five months from Nov 09 – March 10 their captures were 1570. Mind you, there were a lot of mynas up there.

Myna control activities around **Orange** have reduced further the low numbers of mynas around the district. Cilla Kinross advises that the few recalcitrants remain, well, recalcitrant.

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They are looking at different strategies to deal with these.

Roger Earle of the **Stuarts Point Indian Myna Eradication Program** advises that they are starting a trapping program to remove the 140 mynas that are in the village with traps made by the local Men's Shed. Again we wish Roger and the team up there all the best.

Sharon Lehman reports that the **Clarence Valley Conservation in Action Landcare** group (the CIA) is slowly starting to take over the distribution and management of myna traps and data from the Clarence Valley Council. Martyn Swain of CVC has done a great job to get traps built and the program up and running but is very happy to have the offer of assistance from the CIA. The website <http://cvcia.org.au> will provide updates as this program develops.

Sutherland Shire Council (SSC) has just finished a "Community Coastcare Grant" in which 328 traps were produced in 13 community workshops. SSC also completed trapping at 7 sites with the large Myna Magnet traps. In both programs 4318 Indian Myna's were caught and destroyed by council Pest Species officers in the 18 month period. SSC currently has 850 residents participating in their Indian Myna control program. Four Community Trap Building Workshops are planned for next year and council loans 30 traps to residents.

North Sydney's trapping program will kick off at the end of Oct as the Council's Bushland Project Officer, Ramin Khosravi, has arranged for CIMAG to run a trap-building workshop for a group of keen North Sydney volunteers. At the end of the workshop we will have a number of fired-up and equipped trappers to tackle mynas in North Sydney.

Since CIMAG's presentation to around 100 people organised by the Hornsby Council's Bushland Management coordinators, a follow-up meeting as held to engage the community in Indian Myna control on their properties. This resulted in a group of people and a volunteer Coordinator establishing the **Hornsby Indian Myna Bird Action Group**. Council continues occasional contact with the volunteer coordinator and assists in small ways with meetings and monitoring. The group held a trap making workshop in May and are continuing to make traps for others who join the group. Indian myna trapping began in autumn with very good results. Some members caught over 20 birds within just a number of weeks.

Eurobodalla Indian Myna Control Program

The Eurobodalla Indian Myna Control Program had its 1 year milestone celebrations last week. What a busy year it has been with the community, including coordinators and trappers spending over 3,700 hours implementing the program with over 80 traps made by the Batemans Bay Men's Shed and distributed by Council's Environment Team. Over 300 Indian Mynas have been humanely euthanased, which is estimated to be about 20% of the entire Eurobodalla population.

Courtney Fink-Downes of the Eurobodalla Shire Council says that the community has really embraced the program: hundreds of people have been actively involved, either through raising the communities' awareness of the issues associated with Indian Mynas, working with local schools, holding community information meetings and workshops and working with local businesses to promote the program.

CIMAG News Distribution System

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Bill Handke
President
CIMAG
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