

# Canberra Indian Myna Action Group Inc

Patron: Professor Tony Peacock

*National 2013 “Keep Australia Beautiful” Award Winner  
for  
Environmental Innovation & Protection*



**Myna Matters Bulletin # 28**

**(Christmas 2013)**

Dear CIMAG Members and Friends

The following provides an update on CIMAG activities:

## **Merry Festive Season 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 2014 to all involved in Indian Myna control activities across eastern Australia.

### **2013 – What a Year it's Been!!**

We can look back on 2013 with some satisfaction that the community-based myna control movement across eastern Australia continues to grow, with recognition and support of key institutions, governments and community organizations.

Here are a few highlights for the past year that are worth mentioning.

### **1. CIMAG wins the National 2013 Award for Environmental Innovation and Protection**

On 18 Nov 2013, Keep Australia Beautiful presented the Canberra Indian Myna Action Group Inc with the National 2013 Sustainable Cities Award for Environmental Innovation and Protection. The Award was granted in recognition of the profound change that the community myna control program has had in the Canberra district. From being the 3<sup>rd</sup> most common bird in Canberra in 2005-2006 when we started, CIMAG's community effort had reduced mynas to the 20<sup>th</sup> most common by June 2012.

All the other contenders for the Environmental Innovation and Protection Award were local councils from each State, so to win the award in that company was a real “feather in the cap”.

The presentations by the local councils on what they have been doing as “sustainable cities” was very inspiring – they have been doing some remarkable things in waste management, energy efficiency, recycling etc.

Nonetheless, I took the opportunity during my presentation at the Awards in Perth, to put it to those local councils present that they can not be regarded as “sustainable cities” unless they also focus on protecting our local wildlife and restoring the balance by removing mynas.

Let's see if that message struck home !!



**Josh Byrne from Gardening Australia presents the Award to myself (centre) and Vice President Bruce Lindenmayer**

# Canberra Indian Myna Action Group Inc

**Patron: Professor Tony Peacock**

## **2. CIMAG holds highly successful National Indian Myna Conference, June 2013**

It was gratifying to see just on 100 people attend the Indian Myna Conference that we held at the CSIRO Discovery Centre in Canberra in June. People came from as far away as Far North Queensland, Adelaide, and New Zealand, while a keynote speaker was Susana Saavedra from the Canary Islands. The Conference was opened by the Minister for the Environment, Shane Rattenbury, after having been first introduced by our patron, Prof Tony Peacock.

We were honoured to have some remarkable people as speakers. Apart from hearing of the successful approach adopted by Susana – and some lessons from her experience – Dr Andrea Griffin of Newcastle University spoke of her research on myna intelligence, adaptability, problem-solving skills and how they alert other mynas to danger. Her talk and that of PhD candidate Marie Diquelou had lots of important messages for us.

The sobering part of the program was hearing the research findings of Kate Grarock (the ANU PhD candidate that many CIMAG and Canberra Ornithologists Group members helped with field surveys). Kate's research findings documented a clear connection between the rise of mynas in Canberra and the decline in the numbers of some hollow-nesting birds – eg Crimson Rosellas, Kookaburras – and the small birds we love to see in our gardens – Willie Wagtails, Silvereyes, Superb Fairy-Wrens, Pardalotes, Grey Fantails, etc. This is the first time that there has been scientific evidence of what all of us felt from our lived experience: mynas are a threat to native birds. It was good to have this scientifically documented as it provides an opportunity to present more solid arguments for mynas being listed as a “threatening process”.

A report on the conference was included in the Special Edition Myna Matters Bulletin (#27) – it is on the CIMAG website in the Myna Matters Bulletin section. This included the excellent summation of the presentations by Ian Fraser, our very own eminent naturalist.

The presentations were video-ed and we have had that turned into a DVD – copies have been forwarded to most councils along the eastern seaboard from Far North Queensland to western Victoria. We have additional copies available for those that could not attend but want to hear the informative and interesting talks.

So, if you want to hear all about the latest research findings, new control approaches, the dangers that mynas pose to our wildlife, how MynaScan works, what other communities and councils are doing, get in touch for a DVD. We propose to put the presentations on YouTube – once we work out how to do that!



Susana speaking at the conference



## **3. CIMAG in ABC TV series – “William’s Big Twitch”**

Earlier in the year, CIMAG was asked to participate in filming for a new ABC TV series on birds in Australia. One of the parts in the series is about pest birds – what better place to come to than Canberra to hear about how a pro-active community can deal with such a problem.

We had a good day, with filming at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (the gaol where the inmates make the traps for us), at Jennifer Cleary and Ted Fleming’s places in Deakin (they have excellent stories to tell about the problems posed by mynas and the benefits of trapping), with Kumiko Callaway and her children checking the nest boxes in reserves.

We had understood the series was to be shown during November this year – but that has come and gone – so we expect it to be shown some time in 2014.

# Canberra Indian Myna Action Group Inc

**Patron: Professor Tony Peacock**

## **4. Some Good Numbers During the Year**

- a. Men of Maconochie produce their 700<sup>th</sup> Trap
- b. CIMAG membership passes 1500
- c. 1400 traps out to good homes since we started
- d. Over ¼ million hits on CIMAG website in 2012-13
- e. 46,000 known removals since we started (more if everybody reported in!)

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

CIMAG AGM in November kept up its form as the place to be. This year, the 48 members and friends who gathered for the night heard about the efforts of the year, of Kate's research results, of how to use MynaScan to record sightings of birds – and this came with a plea to people to use this very valuable tool – and from Daryl King about his latest research findings. Daryl's surveys indicated that if you see a pair of mynas, they are likely to have a nesting hollow within 250 metres; that they will protect their nesting area throughout the year; and that successful nesting sites are very valuable and will be used over and over again. The "take-home" messages were these: take note of where mynas are and record that on MynaScan as that will help us target the areas; remove the successful nesting sites as that will limit the capacity and interest of mynas in breeding in that place.

Presentations were made to Jennifer Cleary and Ted Fleming for their support and assistance over many years. These two are our "media talent" - with their great stories to tell, and their ease in telling them, they are a real hit with the media. I'm sure it was Jennifer's stories that helped us cinch the Keep Australia Beautiful Award, and not just that she was chatting up the judge from Sydney.



Jennifer and Ted being presented with certificates of appreciation

An Award was also to be presented to the Men of Maconochie for producing their 700<sup>th</sup> trap: but not surprisingly, none of them could get out for the night to receive it. It has been since been delivered to the gaol.

And as usual, Graham Gliddon filled us in on our capture records for 2012-13. Graham does a wonderful job collating monthly captures and the database that he has compiled is huge and very valuable: to us and to researchers.

The AGM was also the time when there was some turnover in Committee membership: after being a mainstay on the Committee since CIMAG's inception in 2006, Anne l'ons has left the Committee. Megan van der Velde has also had leave for pressure of work and family. We thank them for their support. Thea Reiman comes onto the Committee, joining Bruce Lindenmayer (Vice President), Marg Peachey, Rosemary Blemings, Ray Barge, Greg Flowers, Andy Fuller, Peter Oram, Ross Dalton (Secretary) – and myself. Welcome Thea.

The President's Report for 2012-13 can we read on the CIMAG website ([www.indianmynaaction.org.au](http://www.indianmynaaction.org.au)).

## **Your new email address is wanted**

If you get a new email address, it would be greatly appreciated if you could advise us of this. Just send an email through to [president@indianmynaaction.org.au](mailto:president@indianmynaaction.org.au). For those that need to report monthly captures, use the following email address for Graham: [ggliddon@tpg.com.au](mailto:ggliddon@tpg.com.au)

## **Keep the tunnel prongs straight**

After reports that mynas were not going into traps, we found that some people had bent the prongs on the inside end of the tunnels that lead into the feeding chamber inwards - to stop mynas from getting out of the feeding chamber. But this also stops them from going in – as they tend not to push their way through a narrow gap to get to the food. So please keep the prongs pointing straight forward. We have the Tiny Tim Drop Door Trap for mynas that work out that the entrance is the exit.

# Canberra Indian Myna Action Group Inc

**Patron: Professor Tony Peacock**

## 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. 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 your neighbourhood some quiet.

## Mynas hit Cootamundra

Jenny Cash of Cootamundra reports sightings of mynas in Cootamundra. The westward march continues and we need vigilant and active people on the Western Front. Jenny was able to trap one of the two that were frequenting her place. Hopefully she can arouse interest by others in the district to follow her lead and remove them before they build up.

## Trapping numbers for the last few months

Graham Gliddon's records for captures for the past few months are below. Again a plea from us for people to report their captures. Captures have dropped off remarkably over the years: and the lower trend continues: hopefully indicating that there are many fewer around to be caught !

	aug	sept	oct
Mynas	139	121	150
Starlings	2	1	44

for a total of 2721 for 2013 up until end Oct.

for a total of 226 for 2013 up until end Oct.

The reported capture total of mynas is 46,731 since we started in 2006 to the end of Oct 2013.

## Around the Traps

**Tracey Poulter** from the **Camden Indian Myna Action Program** reports that the Camden community has been getting very enthusiastic about the Indian Myna Program. Enquiries regarding Indian Mynas are now coming from the majority of suburbs including the rural areas across the Camden LGA, as opposed to only the more urbanised areas. An article that appeared on Indian Mynas in October 2013 in Camden Council's local community newsletter generated a lot of new enquiries, with the waiting list for Council traps growing considerably. One of the local Men's Sheds is considering making the traps for members of the local community to purchase, which would greatly assist the effort.

**Barbara Jones** from the **Far South Coast Myna Action Group** mentions that they are tackling birds in the Wandella area while other patches are being targeted successfully. Their prize 'removalist' is at Coolagolite and has now captured over 420 mynas - no one knows where they keep coming from. He has a dairy and is near a power easement, so perhaps they are using that as a possible laneway from the north. About 60 mynas have been removed from the Candelo area and a similar number from Bemboka.

**Harry Hof reports** that the myna control program across **Gippsland** is progressing well: the Fulham Correctional Facility is making the traps as well as some Mens Sheds and a local school. There are some commercial outlets for the trap, which helps to reduce the administrative burden on the group. Harry reports that the reduction in myna numbers in their area has been quite noticeable.

**Kevin & Laura Noble** report that the **Clarence Valley** group has now passed 5,000 captures.

## 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](mailto:news-subscribe@indianmynaaction.org.au) . To get onto the CIMAG Chatline, send a blank email to [chat-subscribe@indianmynaaction.org.au](mailto:chat-subscribe@indianmynaaction.org.au) and then start posting messages.

If you are interested in having someone from CIMAG talk to your organization or work group about the threats posed by mynas and what CIMAG and others are doing, just get in touch.

Bill Handke  
President  
CIMAG  
16 Dec 2013