

Around the Traps: Summer 2021

Darwin News

A friend in Darwin tells me that mynas have landed there: this is bad news. It is not known whether these are Common (Indian) Mynas like those here or the more aggressive and more damaging Javan Myna or even Jungle Myna. Fingers crossed they can eliminate them promptly – whichever they are.



The Javan Myna – more aggressive and hence more of a danger to wildlife than the Indian Myna of eastern Australia. Note the tuft of feathers above its beak.



The Jungle Myna – very similar looks to the Javan Myna (but note partial black beak)

Bendigo, Vic: Jenni Heinrich of the Landcare Versus Mynas Group (under the umbrella of the Northern Bendigo Landcare) reported back in early 2020 of activity there in getting a program up and running. Jenni, Sally Dearthcott and Jodie Kirkby arranged publicity via a local market, the local news and newspaper, through Landcare's Facebook page and were distributing posters and fliers around town and electronically to their contacts to distribute as they saw fit. A person from council was very much on board: they started with a council grant for the first traps. Things have moved a long way. Jenni now advises that they have distributed around 250 traps which they get from the Sale Gaol. They are aiming to get 600 traps distributed – a number that Ron Fink of the Macedon Indian Myna Action Group considers is necessary to get on top of the myna numbers in Bendigo.

Mackay, Qld

Rex Singline from Mackay reports that there are 3 distinct locations of mynas in the Mackay area with flocks of 50-100 birds. Interestingly the birds have remained outside the urban areas of Mackay during the day - so local public awareness of the birds and the threats they pose is low. But the birds are on the radar of the Mackay Regional Pest Management Group (MRPMG), overseen by Mackay Regional Council, and comprised of representatives of State & Local government agencies, Reef Catchments – the regional NRM group, and Birdlife Australia (Mackay). The birds accompany grazing cattle: just like Cattle Egrets and the backs of cattle provide a smorgasbord of tasty treats, not



to mention the critters unearthed by the actual grazing habits of the stock. The real Cattle Egrets on the other hand have moved into town and accompany the council mowers: more salubrious company.

At one spot, the mynas roost in a line of palm trees at the back of the local pub. They fly in at dusk. Knowledge of them only come to light since the onset of the Coronavirus lockdown. The other 2 flocks fly in at different times of the day to meet up with their cow friends.

Rex says they have tried to trap birds, with and without a judas bird, but without success. Perhaps the tasty morsels disturbed by the grazing cattle are more appealing than the food in the trap. Also Rex thinks that the plentiful numbers and variety of native birds in town might also have managed to hold them off: they have a lot of feisty, medium-size birds – lorikeets, corellas, blue faced honeyeaters, other honeyeaters, magpies, peewees and of course crows.

He thinks that part of their strategy must be to encourage Mackay residents to establish native bird-attracting gardens. The local Council has a program of giving away natives plants in big numbers once or twice a year which is a great initiative.

Myrtleford, Vic

Gayle South and Sally McDonald organized a zoom hook-up mid year with a group of interested locals – during which I gave the standard presentation. There was a good response by the participants to the initiative. Gayle advises that they are still in the community awareness-raising phase, and are to hold their first meeting in Feb – hopefully the trapping will start soon after that as they are seeing more and more of these pests in the area.