

# **Tackling Indian Mynas**

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Canberra Indian Myna Action Group Inc

# Indian (Common) Myna

*Acridotheres tristis*

- Native to Indian sub-continent
  - Iran to Sri Lanka
  - member of Starling family
  - 12 cm tall
  - distinctive chocolate and black: yellow face skin, beak and legs: white wing patch
  - aggressive / territorial
    - but roost communally
  - opportunistic feeder
    - meat, food scraps, pet food, seed, berries, chicks, insects
  - long lived: 12 years or more
  - breeds Oct – March

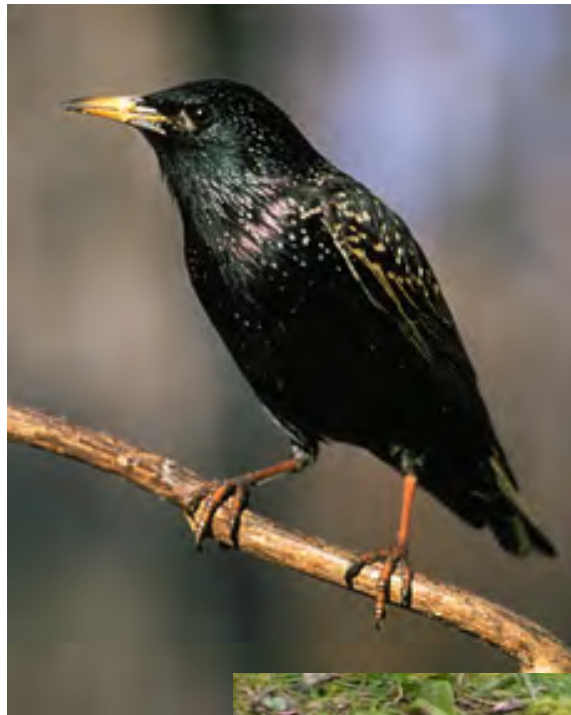


- **Not to be confused with the Noisy Miner**

- native
- nectar feeder
- also highly aggressive and protective of food source
- becoming more common and established in Canberra urban fringe
- can cause some environmental problems (just like the Bell Miner)



**nor Starlings**



**or Blackbird**



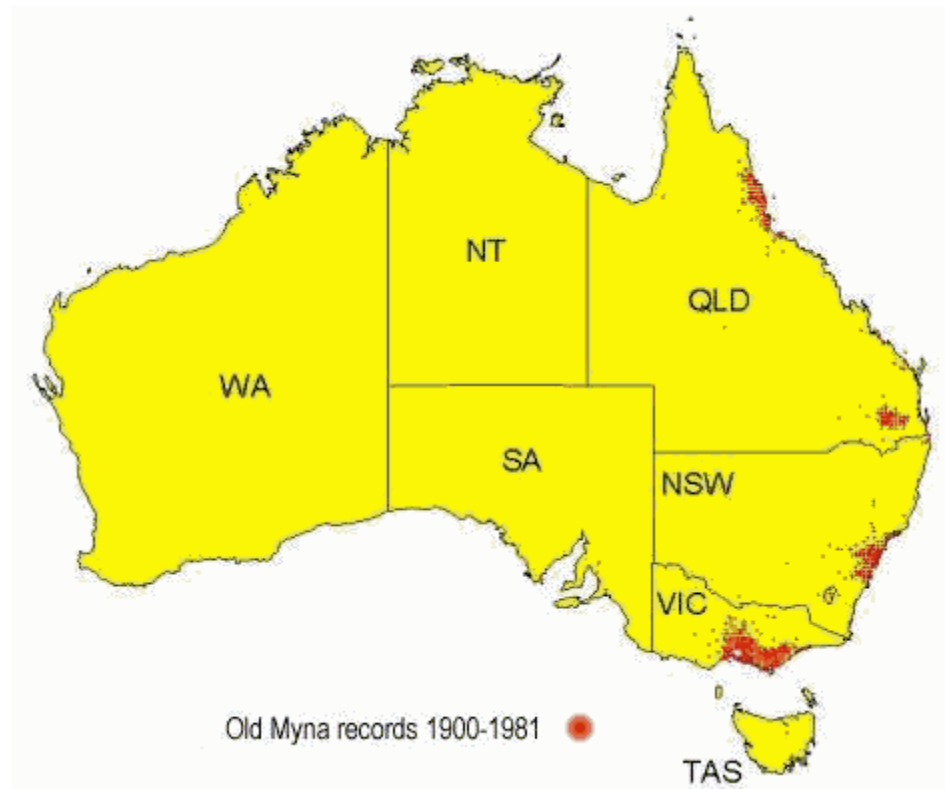


# The Myna Invasion

- Introduced Melbourne **1862**
  - to control locusts in market gardens
- Taken north to Qld canefields (1883)
  - to control cane beetle
    - same as for cane toad
- Brought to Canberra in **1968**
- Now across eastern seaboard

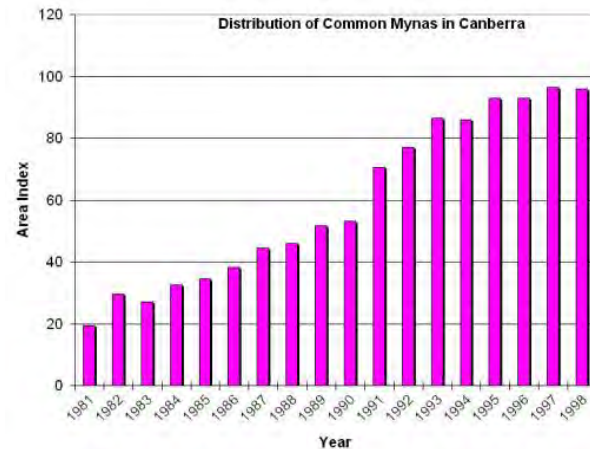
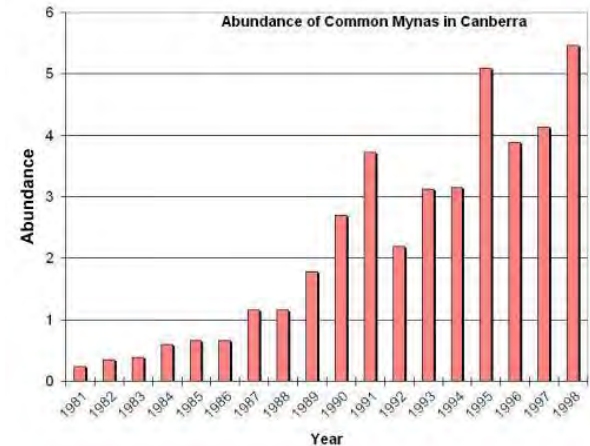


# Myna invasion #2

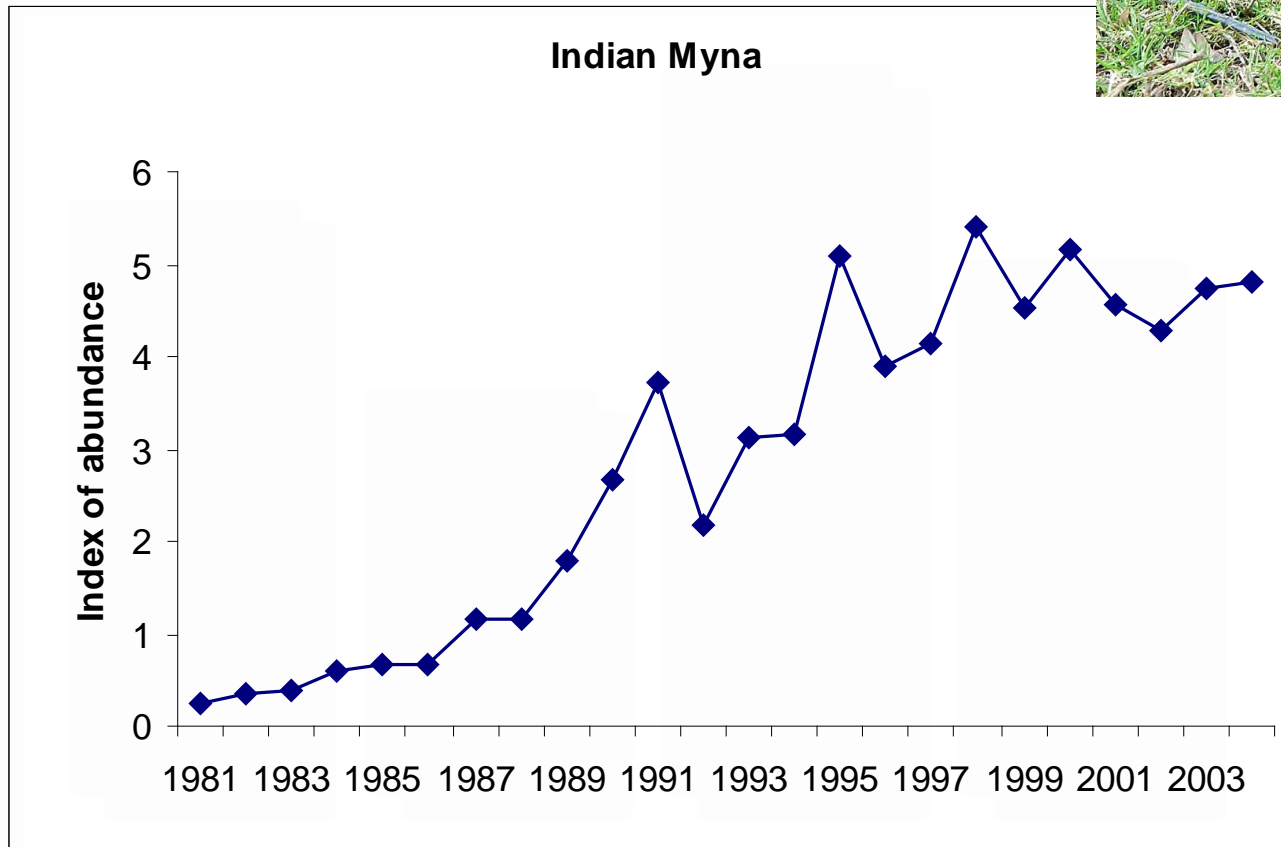


# Indian Mynas in Canberra

- Introduced in 1968
- Est. at 250 per km<sup>2</sup>
- Across all suburbs and urban nature reserves

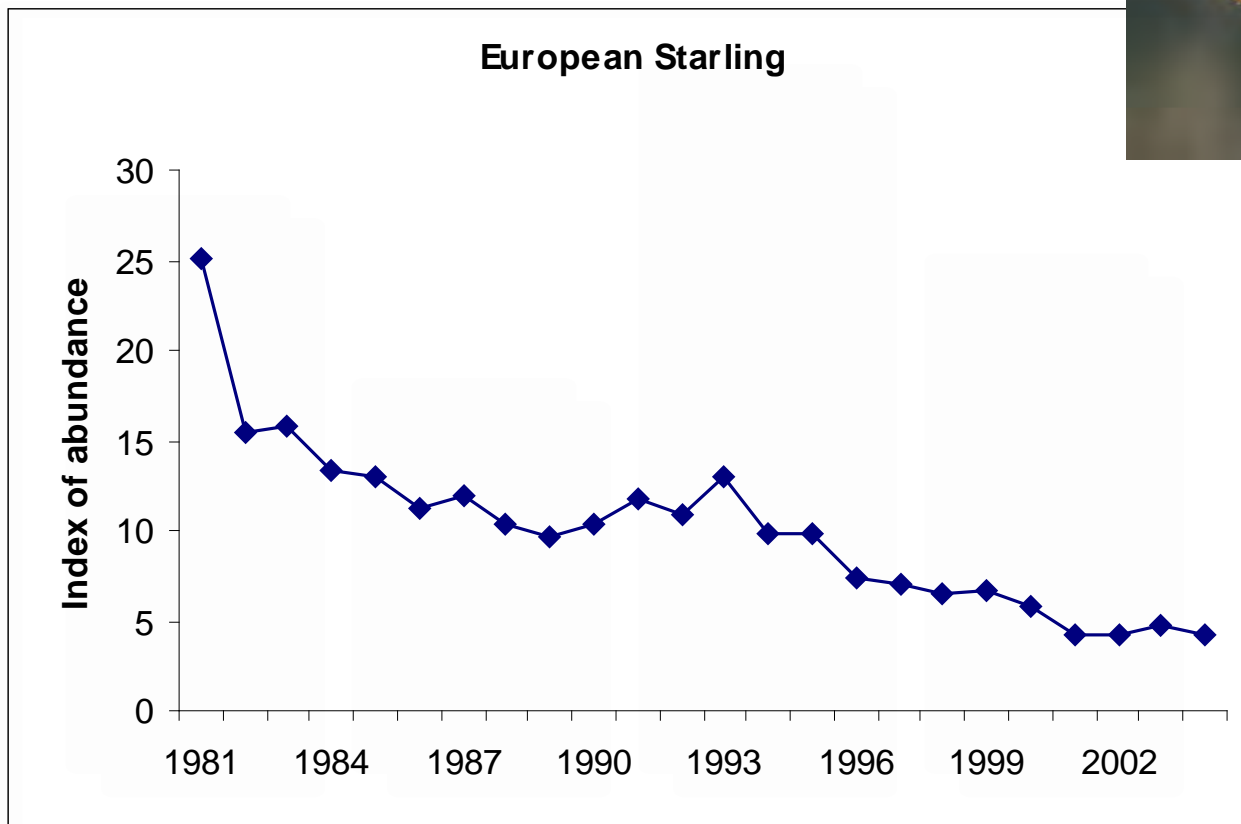
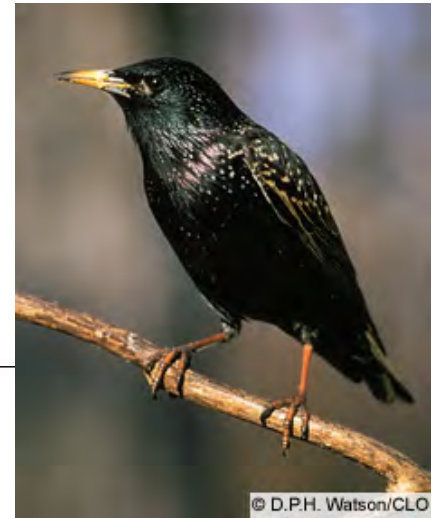


# Myna Abundance in Canberra





## Starling abundance – in decline



# Testimonials

- Among 100 most invasive species worldwide
  - (IUCN 2000)
- Voted most hated pest in Aust
  - ABC Wild Watch Quest for Pests 2005
    - beat cane toad, feral cat and fox
- Most Extreme Threat Category
  - BRS / DEH
- “You can have native birds or Indian Mynas — but not both”
  - Ian Fraser, local naturalist & 2006 Winner Aust Natural History Medallion



# The Case Against #1

- Major threat to native wildlife
  - take over nesting hollows of native birds and arboreal mammals
  - feed on:
    - eggs, chicks & insects
  - drive small birds out of gardens
  - a particular threat to:
    - parrots — esp. **endangered** Superb Parrot
    - endangered insects — eg **endangered** Golden Sun Moth and endemic **vulnerable** flightless grasshopper
- Degrade woodland ecosystems
  - by reducing ecosystem services by other birds



# Under threat





# At Serious Risk



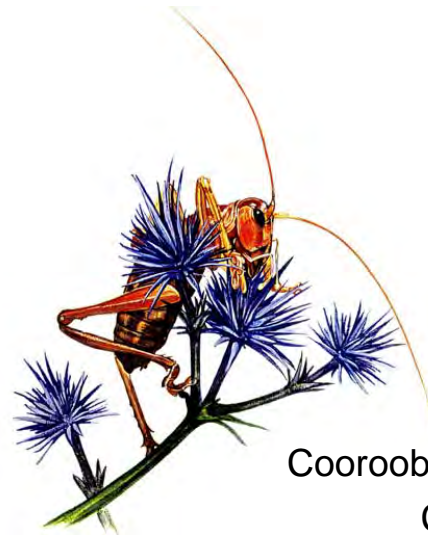
Golden Sun Moth  
*Synemon plana*



Grassland Earless Dragon



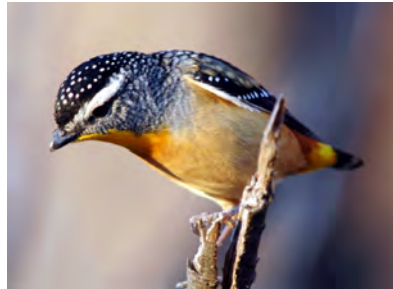
Perunga Flightless Grasshopper  
*Perunga ochracea*



Coorooboorama Raspy  
Cricket



# Could also be affected



# Nesting targets





# A strange place for a nest



# Why we are concerned # 2

- Human health risk
  - bird mites: *Ornithonyssus bursa* & *Dermanyssus gallinae*
    - cause dermatitis, asthma, severe irritation and rashes
      - problem from nests in roofs
  - droppings: Psittacosis & Ornithosis, Salmonellosis, Arboviruses
    - cause pneumonia, gastro
      - concern at outdoor cafes, factories, food warehouses
  - potential vector for “bird flu”
- Fire risk
  - scrappy nests in roof cavities



# Contents of myna nest







# “We can make a difference”

The CIMAG Mantra

- Needs a concerted, concentrated, co-ordinated & sustained effort
  - doing nothing = decline in native wildlife
- Effort at household, commercial and govt level
  - backyard trapping has positive local impact
  - but needs additional effort to have landscape impact
    - reduce feeding opportunities
    - reduce nesting and roosting sites
    - trap at roosting sites and in public spaces
      - esp. nature reserves

# CIMAG

(Canberra Indian Myna Action Group Inc.)

Patron: Dr Chris Tidemann

- Objective:
  - protect native wildlife from the threat posed by Indian Mynas
    - & reduce their nuisance in urban areas
- Strategy:
  - 3 core elements
    - Raise public awareness
    - Distribute public info — on how to reduce feeding, roosting & breeding opportunities
    - Humane trapping program
- Community-action approach
  - a successful model
  - supporting robust scientific research



# Tackling the problem — Actions #1

- Reduce feeding opportunities
  - keep pet food inside
  - better waste control at schools, restaurants and shopping centres
  - stop direct feeding
    - eg at Aged Persons Hostels
- Reduce nesting opportunities
  - block up cavities in roofs
  - maintain vigilance on nesting boxes
- Reduce roosting sites
  - remove unsuitable shrubs / trees
    - eg. dense exotic pencil pines, palm trees
- Plant suitable gardens
  - reduce open space (lawns) and plant native shrubs



# Tackling the problem — Actions #2

- **Backyard trapping**
  - positive local impact
    - return of native birds
  - 12,400 mynas removed by CIMAG trappers at end Sept 07
  - Protocol on Animal Welfare: RSPCA agreed
  - Collaborative arrangement with RSPCA on disposal
- **Trapping in public spaces and at roosting sites**
  - Dr Tidemann / ANU research on roosting trap
- **Supporting research**
  - future PhD project
  - euthanasing research
  - monitoring



# CIMAG Community-action # 1

## Approach based on public participation:

- building networks with impt organisations
  - RSPCA, ANU, COG, ACT Govt, local councils, Landcare / Catchment Management groups, gardening groups
- an aware and concerned public
  - program of public awareness raising
    - media, high profile “champions”, public presentations, website, bulletins
  - tapping into public loathing of mynas
- sense of worth in activities / contribution
  - public believe actions will make a difference
  - need to see results





# CIMAG Community-action # 2

Large-scale participation needs:

- easy, practical and low-cost activities
  - complicated and costly obligations a turn-off
- simple, effective, easy-to-operate traps
  - members own and manage own trap
  - disposal method needs to be simple, but quick, painless & stress-free
- regular feedback to members
- continuous recruitment
  - recognise many members will “drop off”
- low administration load on organisation



# Traps



**PeeGees**  
(MiniMyna)



**MynaMagnet**

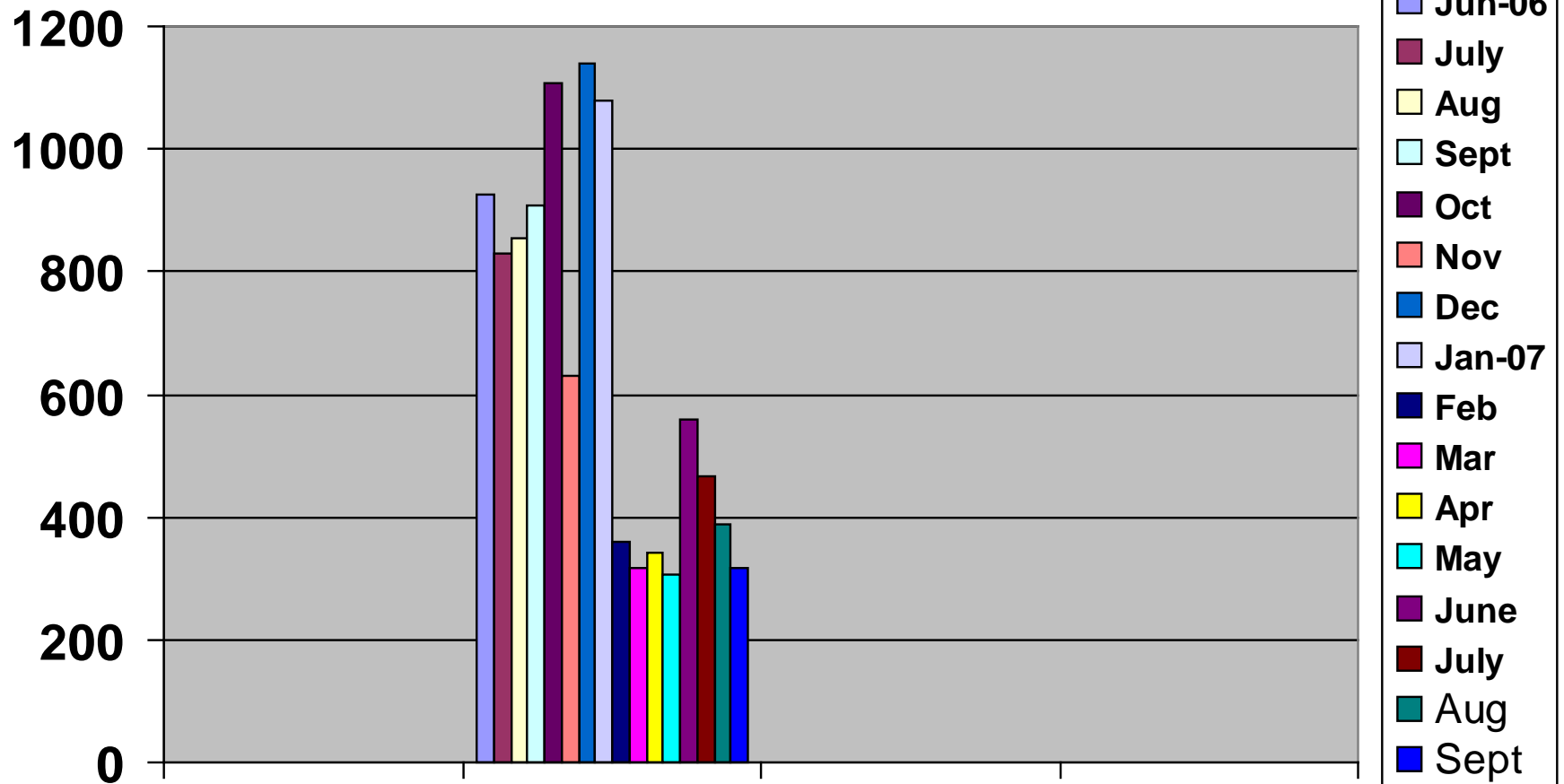


**Myna-magic**



# CIMAG Trapping

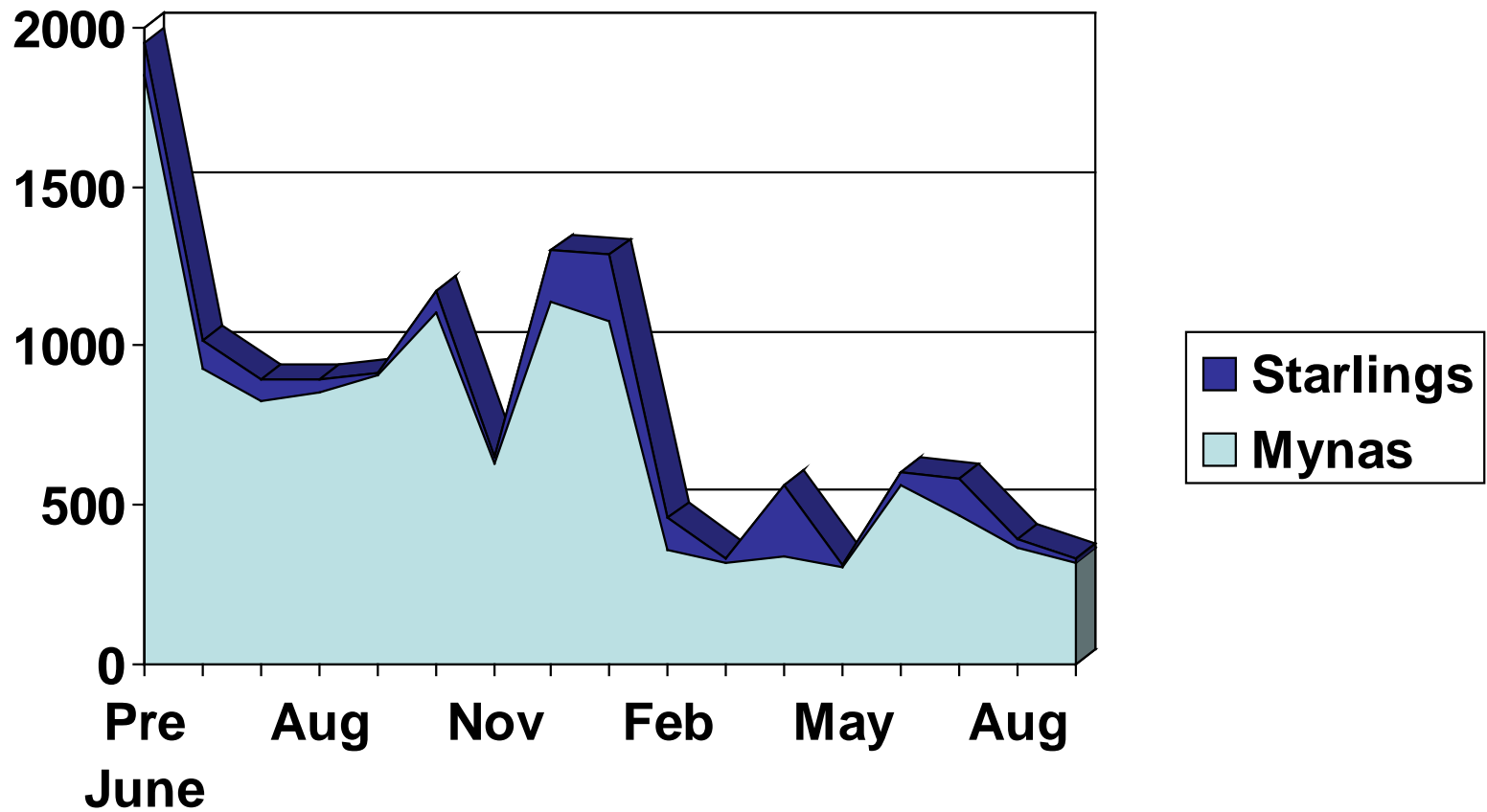
## Monthly Captures



Total captured to end Sept 2007 = 12,400

Additional mynas trapped by other Canberrans

# Myna / Starling ratio









# The Story Elsewhere

- **Commercial operations:** Mynamagnet, Aust Pest Bird Management Co,  
Indian Myna Reduction Program
- **Cairns Myna Eradication Project**
  - Dr Tidemann project
- **Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG)**  
IUCN/SSC, The University of Auckland
  - commencing projects on Pacific Islands
- **Shires & Councils on north NSW / Qld coast**
  - Tweed, Byron, Coffs, Bellingen, Gosford, Pt Stephens, Caloundra etc
- **Landcare & environmental groups**
  - Hastings , Taree, Newcastle, etc
- **Some Sydney Councils**

# CJ Dennis

## The Singing Garden — the Indian Myna

Gimme the town an' its clamour an' clutter;  
I ain't very fond of the bush;  
For my coppers are coves of the gardens and gutter —  
A tough metropolitan push.  
I ain't never too keen on the countryfied life;  
It's the hustle an' bustle for me an' me wife.

So I swagger an' strut an' I cuss an' I swagger;  
I'm wise to the city's hard way.  
A bit of a bloke an' a bit of a bragger;  
I've always got plenty to say.  
Learned thro' knockin' about since my people came out  
From the land at the back of Bombay.

When out in the bush I am never a ranger;  
There never ain't nothin' to see.  
Besides, them bush birds got no time for a stranger;  
So town an' the traffic for me.  
I sleep in the gardens an' loaf in the street,  
An' sling off all day at the fellers I meet.

An' I swagger an' scold an' strut an' I swagger,  
An' pick up me fun where I can,  
Or tell off me wife, who's a bit of a nagger,  
Or scrap with the sparrers for scran.  
A bonzer at bluffin', I give you my word,  
For, between you an' me, I'm a pretty tough bird.

**"Den"**

*Herald*, 7 January 1933, Number 25 in the Bush Birds series.

# CIMAG Contact Details

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Central Coast Indian Myna Action Group Inc

MynaMagnet



# Our Choice

This



or

this

