

Canberra Indian Myna Action Group



Myna Matters Bulletin # 4

Dear CIMAG Members and Friends

There has been further good progress over the past month in our efforts to protect our native wildlife from the impact of Indian Mynas in this region.

Collaborative arrangement with the RSPCA

The big news is that the RSPCA Council has agreed to a collaborative arrangement with CIMAG to tackle the Indian Myna problem. The RSPCA has agreed to euthanize trapped mynas (and starlings) and dispose of the bodies free to CIMAG members. This is great news for trappers who would prefer not to euthanize the trapped birds, and provides CIMAG members with another way to dispose of the carcasses in a hygienically and environmentally sound manner. For practical reasons, the RSPCA Centre at Weston will need to limit the times when it can accept trapped birds or bodies. The RSPCA has agreed to trial this service for the following times:

Monday:	10:00am – 11:00am 4:30pm – 5:30pm
Wednesday:	4:30pm – 5:30pm
Friday:	4:30pm – 5:30pm.

CIMAG members using this service should take the mynas / starlings to the Wildlife Building at the RSPCA Centre in Weston — it is the very first building in the RSPCA complex as you come down Kirkpatrick Street (Building A). The RSPCA has indicated that it should be able to deal with the trapped birds there and then — alternatively members could leave their trap, to be collected later. In an emergency, the RSPCA could accept birds on Saturdays, but as the Centre is not fully staffed up on weekends people should ring first to see whether it would be OK.

If bringing dead mynas and starlings to the Centre for disposal, could you please use an opaque bag or box in view of possible sensitivity of some members of the public to dead birds.

In this collaborative arrangement we have agreed to use every available opportunity to publicise animal welfare issues and to continue to emphasise with CIMAG members the need for our trapping program to accord with sound animal welfare practice and to only target Indian Mynas and Starlings. The RSPCA has sought assurances that our trapping program is designed to reduce the risk of trapping native and other non-target birds and that any such trapped birds are immediately released. As you know this accords with our approach.

Nonetheless, in the light of the RSPCA's comments, we have revised our Protocol on Animal Welfare — a copy is attached. You will note the specific requirement for

CIMAG trappers to avoid using seed or seed-based food in traps so as to avoid possibly luring non-target birds into the trap. We advise trappers to use dry dog / cat biscuits as feed lures: we have now strengthened the Protocol so that this is a requirement for participation in the CIMAG trapping program. As advised before, any non-target bird is to be released immediately — we now know from experience that when the appropriate feeding program is followed native birds rarely get trapped.

CIMAG membership growing strongly — and widely

The membership of CIMAG continues to grow strongly as people in the Canberra and Queanbeyan region hear of our efforts. We now have just under 160 people on our membership / contact list with some 60 members with traps. We have also been fielding interest from people interstate who wish to be involved or to set up similar community-based groups in their areas. Our strategy is to help groups get started elsewhere, so we have been providing information to help them get a group going in their region.

July trapping data

The trapping data for July follows. Numbers of mynas captured in July totalled 814, **bringing our aggregate to 3593**. People are reporting a noticeable drop off in numbers of mynas being observed in areas where trapping has been heavy for some time. In my own area, where before we started trapping I would see between 35-40 mynas on a regular circuit walk, now I only see 4-7 on the same walk. A small number of CIMAG trappers in my area (an enclave of 60 or so houses north of Sulwood Drive in Kambah) have removed over 350 mynas, so no wonder they are getting scarce.

Below is some info on capture data across Canberra suburbs. You can see that we are now getting a broader representation of suburbs in the trapping program: although at this stage it might involve just a single household in a suburb.

Suburb	July Mynas	Aggregate Mynas
Aranda	94	176
Campbell	7	7
Chapman	17	17
Chifley	8	15
Deakin	6	18
Duffy	50	240
Fadden	4	4
Fisher	-	16
Florey	6	6
Flynn	14	14
Garran	46	140
Hall	12	562
Hughes	23	41
Isaacs	8	8
Kambah	267	1978
Lyons	16	16
Lyneham	12	12

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Macarthur	-	8
Narrabundah	6	6
Pearce	67	82
Theodore	36	40
Wanniassa	38	38
Waramanga	37	55
Watson	8	8
Weston	<u>32</u>	<u>88</u>
Total	814	3593

Committee positions now settled

In other news, the Committee has now settled the remaining Committee positions. Alison Russell-French has agreed to be Vice President and I will be the President. As before, Anne I'ons is Treasurer and Kristiane Herrmann is Secretary. Other Committee members include Jenny Bounds, Ian Fraser, Bruce Lindenmayer, Greg Flowers, Peter Franklin, and Peter Ormay.

Future Activities

We will be lodging an application for CIMAG to become an Incorporated Association in the next week. This will open up further opportunities to us: including on the fund-raising front which will be needed to finance our public education program. On the fund-raising side, the Committee wishes to thank members for making donations to the group. These are greatly appreciated.

Trap Building Workshop

Now that the weather is getting warmer and the days longer we will look to hold another trap building workshop. Would those who might be interested in attending get back to me by email to help firm up numbers.

We are working on establishing a website for the Canberra Indian Myna Action Group. I will let you know when it becomes operational.

Our communication program is being further developed. Material has been forwarded to media outlets — hopefully our efforts will get some further media coverage in the near future.

Cheers

Bill Handke
21 August 2006