

Despite slow winter trapping, our yearly tally is now 1086

SPRING TIME

This is the time when the mynas are spreading out again looking for tree hollows or man made cavities to start breeding. Many trappers had a winter reprieve with no mynas in their area. In the meantime, trapping hot spots for the mynas during the last 3 months were Coutts Crossing, Carrs Creek, CVC's Grafton Treatment Works, Copmanhurst and Lawrence.

MILESTONE TRAPPERS



Peter from Copmanhurst – is one of the original trappers starting with Council before CVCIA's involvement. His total from February 2011 to September 2013 is 148 and total since starting in 2008 is over 400. When the IMs started to arrive several years ago he spotted an article in a magazine referring to council support for IM trapping and got involved. Peter built a couple of traps for himself and still enjoys trapping and shooting these pests. He has found the best time for trapping is October to March when the younger birds are not as trap savvy. His wife Glenda and daughter Bec were involved with some of the early photography of the IM's and Bec is involved with the Armidale IM program start-up.

We met Bec at a Myna Workshop we ran for Armidale Landcare in June on our way back from the IM Canberra Conference.

VALE MICK (POP) AUSTIN

Sadly, Mick, a CVCIA Indian Myna team member from the beginning, has recently passed away. It was sudden but peaceful. Many new trappers went to Mick's place in Dobie St Grafton to drop off or pick up a trap and be instructed on its use and some residents between Grafton and Yamba were lucky enough to have Mick deliver a trap to them. He was a beautiful bloke and will be missed.

CANBERRA CONFERENCE (Part 1)

CVCIA (represented by Kevin and Laura) were invited to speak on "What Works and the Difficulties" together with 2 Council groups (Wollongong and Hawkesbury) and another voluntary group (Yarra in Vic.). As most issues were mentioned by these three speakers, Kevin changed his talk and did a good job ad-libbing. We then formed part of a discussion panel. However I was disappointed that we (really me) were not able to speak and give our view on a couple of issues, but overall it was a very interesting conference. (A tip for those travelling south in winter – check that the motel has electric blankets, as these are good when the room heating system is dodgy.)

Highlighted points are below together with a brief summary of presentations for those interested. Remember:

- Avoid going near the trap when free mynas are around, unless you have to: eg letting out any natives. Be careful not to alert any free IMs with distress calls that may come from trapped IMs as they will quickly associate the trap and you with danger.
- A happy Myna will make happy calls. So keep traps supplied with fresh food and water, and it's also important to have a clean floor. The trap only has to be moved enough to provide a clean bit of turf under it on a regular basis.
- Trapping helps maintain the balance to give our natives a chance.
- Euthanasing must be quick and humane and is best done when no free IMs are around.
- The quicker a trapping program can be implemented once mynas move in the better the chance to eradicate or contain.
- Trapping needs to be combined with humans limiting the mynas' food sources.

Bill Handke (CIMAG), Peter Bird (Biosecurity SA) & Peter West (Invasive Animals CRC)

Since 2006 the Canberra trapping program has been successful in reducing the estimated 93,000 mynas by more than 45,000 in the 7 years and now the myna has been reduced from the 3rd most abundant bird to the 20th. The experience in Canberra demonstrates that myna numbers can be drastically reduced by a concerted, co-ordinated and sustained trapping program.

Mynas are slow to disperse into new areas. This means it is possible to concentrate control efforts in an area which will significantly reduce their numbers and further reduce the population pressure that forces dispersal to new areas. "Prevention" is a better strategy than "Asset based protection". [The 2 phases in the middle are "Eradication" followed by "Containment".]

Peter Bird reported that South Australia had two mynas, probably hitchhikers on a truck or train. The sighting was not ignored; the birds were trapped so "Eradication" was achieved. Peter advised that for SA's "Prevention" regime, SA is assisting areas on the Victorian side of the border such as the Riverina to help in encouraging and maintaining a myna trapping program.



Kate Grarock from Australian National University (ANU). Her Canberra research indicated a long-term negative impact of mynas on hollow-dependent native species and on other small natives. Also studies so far showed that trapping mynas had a positive impact on breeding opportunities for some native birds. Research also shows that "an increase in myna numbers results in a decrease in small native birds such as Rosellas, Willie Wagtails, Fantails, etc" and they are also a pest in orchards and vineyards causing significant economic cost.

Dr Andrea Griffin and colleague, Marie are both from the University of Newcastle. Their studies confirmed that the mynas are flexible, adaptable and intelligent, learning from other mynas. Mynas have a large brain!, and an important trial confirmed that mynas instantly turn their attention to any distress call heard from another myna. So if the mynas hear a distress call and then see a human around that distress call, the birds will avoid that area. They also said there are 2 types of mynas – the explorers and the innovators. They are concerned that the majority of mynas caught are explorers while the innovators or problem solvers will breed and become strong in trap evasion. So we will need to be adaptable in our trapping methods.

In the next newsletter - Part 2

- Greg Flowers on euthanasing
- Susana Saavedra Cruz a Spanish specialist in invasive species management
- Daryl H King (CIMAG) – importance of managing refugial Indian Myna nests.

MYNAS TRAPPED
2011 = 1593 2012 = 2010
2013 = 1086

OUR TOP 10 TRAPPING AREAS (Jan 2013 to Aug 2013)

1. South Grafton	183
2. Coutts Crossing	150
3. Copmanhurst	98
4. Glenreagh	72
5. Grafton	64
6. Palmers Island	63
7. Lilydale	59
8. Lawrence	54
9. Palmers Channel	43
10. Eatonsville	35

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