

Indian Myna



Some Myna History

The Indian Myna (also known as the Common Myna) is native to Asia and India.

The Indian Myna was first introduced into Australia (Melbourne) in 1862 in an attempt to control pests in market gardens. Further releases occurred in Queensland in 1883 (Herberton, Johnstone River and Townsville) in an attempt to control insect pests in cane fields.

Indian Mynas have now spread from these starting points to colonise a large portion of coastal and inland south-eastern Australia through to north-east Queensland. This range is continuously expanding northwards and westwards. Colonies of the bird establish in urban centers where there is plenty of food, and from there they radiate out to surrounding rural areas.

Follow this link to see the current recorded range of the Indian Myna in Australia.
<http://sres.anu.edu.au/associated/myna/spreading.html>



The Indian Myna

Photo: Richard Major/Australian Museum

A Global and Local Threat

Globally, Indian Mynas are a widely recognised as a serious threat to biodiversity. In 2000, the species was listed among 100 of the Worlds Most Alien Invasive Species by the World Conservation Union, alongside species such as the Fox, the Cane Toad and the Feral Pig.

The awareness of the Australian community is also rising about the impacts that the Indian Myna is having on our native fauna. During 2004, the Indian Myna was voted the Pest of Australia in the ABC WildWatch Australia survey. Follow this link to see the survey results. <http://www.abc.net.au/wildwatch/results/award.htm>

The Problem with Mynas.....

Impacts on Biodiversity

The Indian Myna is a highly intelligent and aggressive bird that successfully competes with our native species for food and nesting sites. As Indian Mynas nest in hollows, the negative impacts from this species are particularly high on hollow-dependant mammals and birds.

Mammals

Indian Mynas evict small mammals, such as Sugar Gliders, from their hollows. As 42% of Australian mammals utilise tree hollows, the dominance of Indian Mynas in the use of tree hollows as a breeding site poses a serious threat to the future of a large percentage of our native mammal species. Once abandoned by Indian Mynas, hollows are avoided by native species for a number of years.

Birds

Many Australian bird species are dependant on hollows for nest sites. This includes birds such as Rosellas, Lorikeets and Parrots, and many species listed as Threatened such as the Glossy Black Cockatoo and the Brown Treecreeper.



Crimson Rosella

Photo: Lindy Quin, Tilba Tilba (02) 4473 7211



Eastern Rosella

Photo: Lindy Quin, Tilba Tilba (02) 4473 7211

Tree hollows are now the most threatened of the many different nest types utilised by birds in Australia (Birds Australia 2002) due to activities such as harvesting for fire wood, land-clearing for urban and agricultural development and 'limb lopping' of mature hollow-bearing, trees in established urban areas.

When Indian Mynas colonise an area they dramatically increase the threat to hollow-dependant birds. They dominate any remaining hollows that are suitable as nest sites. They are even known to move into hollows occupied by other bird species and destroy their eggs and chicks. The Indian Myna is even capable of evicting large, more aggressive, birds such as Kookaburras and Dollar Birds from their nests.

Other negative impacts of Indian Mynas include:

- Nesting in roofs. In addition to the mess made by this activity, Indian Mynas carry bird mites which have the potential to transfer to the human inhabitants of the house. Bird mites bite, and they can cause asthma and hay fever if inhaled.
- Accumulated droppings, particularly under communal roost sites. These droppings are problematic for a number of reasons, not least because they pose a threat to human health and they are a source of nutrient enrichment to waterways.
- Noise at night from communal roosts near residential areas.
- Damage to fruit crops.
- The potential to spread weed species. As Indian Mynas consume the fruits of exotic plant species (O'Keefe and Walton 2001), they can assist in the spread of weed species.

What is being done to control Indian Mynas?

Indian Mynas are intelligent birds with highly developed systems of communication. As a result of these two factors, Indian Mynas are very hard to trap. Dr Chris Tideman of the Australian National University has developed a purpose built trap, and a system for trapping Indian Mynas at feeding areas. Dr Tideman is currently developing another trap that will allow trapping to occur at roosting sites. Should this roost trap prove successful, it will greatly increase the effectiveness and efficiency of trapping efforts.

It is widely recognised that trapping efforts alone are not enough to successfully control Indian Mynas. Trapping needs to be a part of an integrated strategy that involves the whole community and includes actions such as habitat restoration to favour native bird species rather than disturbance species (such as Indian Mynas) and controlling food sources.

Some programs to control Indian Mynas include:

- the Regional Indian Myna control program in the Tweed and Byron Local Government Areas;
- the "Minimising the Myna" project in Canberra and Cairns – Coordinated through the Australian National University;
- Coffs Harbour/Bellingen Indian Myna Action Group in collaboration with the Ulitarra Society;
- Central Coast Indian Myna Action Group (NSW);
- Monitoring and trials coordinated by Hastings LandCare;
- Control works coordinated by Port Stephens Council; and
- Monitoring and trials at Caloundra.

How do I Identify an Indian Myna?

The Indian Myna is a very distinctive bird. You can recognise it as it:

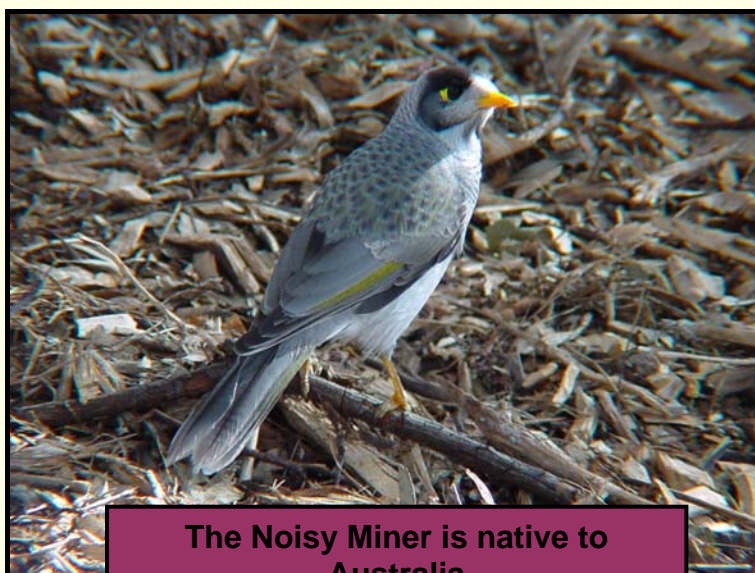
- is a medium sized chocolate-brown bird with a black head and neck;
- is about 25 cm tall;
- has a black head and neck;
- has a yellow beak, eye patch, feet and legs;
- has white wing patches are obvious when the birds are flying;
- walks (some say strut) rather than hops.

Listen to the Indian Myna call [here](#) in MP3 format (298 KB). Copyright © Fred Van Gessel



The Indian Myna has a black head with a yellow beak and eye patch

Photo: Richard Major/Australian Museum



The Noisy Miner is native to Australia

Photo: Richard Major/Australian Museum

The native Noisy Miner (*Manorina melanocephala*) is sometimes confused with the Indian Myna.

Although the Noisy Miner and the Indian Myna both have yellow skin behind the eye and a yellow beak and legs, you can distinguish the native Noisy Miner by its **predominantly grey body**.

How Can You Help?

- Contact your local Council to gain details on local groups that are involved in Indian Myna eradication programs;
- If there is no local program **START ONE!** Recent surveys indicated that most of the people surveyed preferred native species to invasive species and that they would participate in a reduction program if it was available. Your local Council is potentially one of your greatest allies so make sure that you provide them with the opportunity to be involved;
- Limiting access to food. Make sure that Indian Mynas do not have access to feed intended for your domestic pets or livestock;
- Limit access to roosting sites by removing exotic plant species known to harbour colonies and re-establishing native vegetation; and
- Restore degraded sites with **native plant species** that are **local to your area**. As Indian Mynas thrive in a disturbed landscape, new subdivisions provide a prime opportunity for them to extend their range. Restoring degraded sites with native vegetation that is local to your area will assist in providing habitat more suited to native species than Indian Mynas.

Other Useful Websites

There are many websites with useful information on Indian Mynas and the control methods that are currently being trialled. Here are a few sites to get you started.

- The Common Indian Myna website
- <http://sres.anu.edu.au/associated/myna/index.html>
- The Global Invasive Species Database
<http://www.issg.org/database/species/ecology.asp?si=108&fr=1&sts=sss>
- Birds in Backyards
<http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/finder/display.cfm?id=36>
- Information on trap for use at feeding areas.
http://www.mynamagnet.com/default_files/Page445.htm
- Information on nestbox protection
http://users.bigpond.net.au/ozbox/myna_control.htm

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