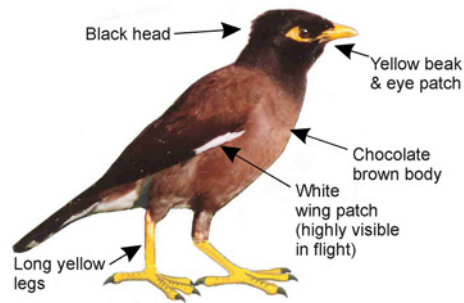


Correct identification

The introduced Indian Myna is sometimes confused with the Australian native Noisy Miner.

Introduced invader: Indian Myna ✗

Indian Mynas are most often seen strutting around the ground looking for food, generally in places where humans gather and eat. School grounds, shopping centres, fast food outlets and outdoor eating areas are some of their favourite haunts. They are opportunistic scavengers and will eat almost anything that is easy to get at. This is why they are sometimes referred to as “rats of the sky”. They gather noisily in large numbers to roost (sleep), often in non-native trees and palms.



Australian native: Noisy Miner ✓

The **Noisy Miner** is a small gregarious honeyeater, most often seen feeding on native plants, eating insects and nectar from the flowers. It is aggressive enough to frighten away cats and other predators but timid enough to be frightened of humans. It is an Australian native and, as such, is protected. Unlike the introduced Indian Myna, the Noisy Miner does not kill other native birds or mammals.



What else can we do to help?

- ✓ Spread the word, tell your friends and neighbours about the impacts that Indian Myna's are inflicting on our native wildlife and the risk it poses to human health.
- ✓ Reassess your garden, do you need all that lawn? How about planting some local bird attracting plants that are low maintenance and easily accessible from the Wollongong Botanic Garden Nursery.
- ✓ Volunteer your time to undertake bird surveys around your neighbourhood. Bird surveys provide valuable data about Indian Myna bird populations as well as roost tree species and locations.
- ✓ Log on to www.birdsinbackyards.net and find out what you can do to help with the conservation of native birds in your backyard.
- ✓ Avoid feeding native birds as it will also attract Indian Myna birds to your yard.

What is the Wollongong Indian Myna Action Program?

The Wollongong Indian Myna Action Program is a Council sponsored community program that aims to provide a response to the growing community concern regarding the abundance and distribution of Indian Myna birds within the region and their impact on native wildlife, human health and amenity by:

- ✓ Raising public awareness that Indian Mynas are an urban pest, requiring community awareness and participation.
- ✓ Providing community information and resources on how to reduce their feeding, roosting and breeding opportunities.
- ✓ Implementing and providing training on a humane reduction program based on trapping that is acceptable to the community, Government and animal welfare authorities.
- ✓ Supporting ongoing research on issues related to local Indian Myna bird populations.
- ✓ Working cooperatively with other councils, agencies and organisations involved with Indian Myna bird research, education and control programs.

Trapping

If you are interested in conducting your own backyard trapping program under the Wollongong Indian Myna Action Program, you will need to attend a compulsory short workshop where trap management strategies, animal welfare protocols and euthanising options will be explained. Registration can be undertaken via Council by calling customer service on 4227 7111.

AN URBAN PEST THE INDIAN MYNA BIRD

A RISK TO OUR NATIVE BIRDLIFE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

WOLLONGONG INDIAN MYNA ACTION PROGRAM
LOCKED BAG 8821
WOLLONGONG DC NSW 2500
www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au

An initiative of Wollongong City Council

Why are they a problem?



An invasive introduced species

The Indian Myna has been listed by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) as among the world's 100 most invasive species and has been assigned an extreme threat category for Australia.

It is native to India and Southern China and was introduced into Australia in 1862 to help control insect pests in market gardens. In 1883 it was taken to North Queensland where it was thought it may control insects of sugar cane.



From these beginnings, helped by man, the species has spread to occupy most of the Eastern seaboard. Colonies quickly establish in urban areas, where food is plentiful and, from there, invade the surrounding countryside to the detriment of our native fauna. They breed faster than our native birds, at the same time displacing our native wildlife.

Displaces our native wildlife

Mynas reduce biodiversity by aggressively chasing out or killing weaker, more timid birds and other animals they see as potential competitors for food.

They breed mainly in tree hollows, palms and under roofs, competing with our native species for hollows, destroying their eggs and killing their chicks to commandeer nesting places.



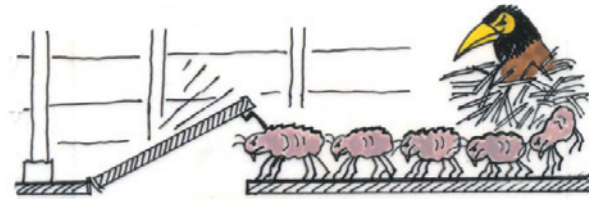
Unlike our native birds, Indian Mynas breed more than once a season. The large nests they build rot after they've vacated, making that tree hollow unusable again by our natives.

Mynas evict small mammals like Sugar Gliders from hollows. This usually means a death sentence for the Gliders because they have nowhere else to go.



Public health risk

Indian Mynas nest in roofs where they build untidy nests heavily infested with bird mites. The large amounts of nesting materials used by Mynas provide an ideal environment for mites to thrive. The expanding population of mites feed off the blood of the young birds but, in summer, when the birds leave the nest, the mites will often migrate to the interior of a house, looking for an alternative source of food. The mites enter the house through gaps in walls and ceilings and will often attack people in bed. A bird mite invasion lasts up to 3 weeks and can cause severe irritation, rashes and intense itching from the saliva they inject while biting.



Concentrated fouling occurs at Indian Myna roost and feeding sites like school grounds, shopping centres, fast food outlets and outdoor eating areas. This poses a risk to human health through avian borne diseases.

In terms of ability to carry diseases, the refuse eating habits of Indian Mynas put them in the same category as rats and cockroaches.

Noise from Indian Myna roosts, pre-dawn and at dusk, can result in considerable distress and sleep deprivation for people living close to a roost site.

Positive actions

To protect our native wildlife from Indian Myna competition, there are a few simple preventative measures we can all take to help:

- ✓ It is important to correctly identify the Indian Myna. It is sometimes mistaken for the Australian native Noisy Miner (see back of brochure).
- ✓ The more we limit the amount of easy food available for the Mynas, the more we limit their reproduction.
- ✓ And the more we make our environment a haven for our native birds, the more we increase competition for the Indian Myna.

Deny Mynas feeding opportunities

Ensure that food scraps and pet food are not accessible to mynas. Indian Mynas are opportunistic feeders. They eat almost anything but will always take the easy option. That's why they're most often seen where food scraps are plentiful or where people inadvertently feed them with one of their favourites, pet food. Mynas have been observed carrying pet food and scraps back to feed their young in nest sites they've acquired by killing our native birds.

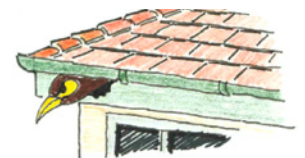


Try to avoid feeding native birds as Mynas will come looking for dropped pieces. Most experts agree that it is not good practice to feed native birds. Now there is an even more important reason to avoid this practice. Trying to feed the native birds only encourages and nurtures the Mynas, making them stronger, able to breed faster and kill more of our native birds.



Deny Mynas breeding opportunities

Block off holes in roofs and eaves to prevent Mynas nesting in your home. To an Indian Myna there is not much difference between a tree hollow and a hole in your eaves. If they do build a nest in your roof, not only is this helping increase their population but it puts your home at risk from a bird mite invasion. This can have serious health implications, particularly for families with young children.



Plant natives to prevent Mynas breeding and roosting in exotic trees and palms. Indian Mynas seem to prefer non-native palm trees and other exotics because they offer more closed-in protection from potential predators than the more open nature of Australian natives. Planting natives also encourages native birds and prevents Mynas from establishing dominance in an area.

