

INTRODUCTION

The Common (Indian) Myna has been listed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (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 the species has spread to occupy most of the eastern seaboard of Australia, Pacific Islands and, most recently, South Australia. The bird is highly suited to the urban environment of Australia's east coast. Colonies quickly establish in urban areas, where food and shelter is plentiful. Common Mynas prefer to breed in sheltered areas in urban environments such as in roof cavities. They breed faster than native birds, and have been found to displace native wildlife such as sugar gliders when competing for nesting space. Breeding season is between September and March. During this period the birds are more aggressive and territorial as they defend breeding sites.

Bird mite infestation

Residents commonly experience the effect of bird mites entering the home from abandoned Common Myna nests in roofs. This occurs as Common Mynas create temporary nests in summer, often in residential roof cavities. When the young birds become fledglings, they leave the nest and bird mites migrate into the house. **Council does not provide a service to deal with this situation.** Please contact a professional pest controller for advice on treating bird mite infestation.

Things residents can do in their yard to help reduce Common Myna numbers

There are some things which residents can do to help reduce Common Myna numbers and encourage native birds to flourish. Common Mynas thrive in places with extensive mown grassy areas and non-native palm and other exotic plants. Council advises residents to use landscaping approaches that favour native birds, such as:

- Replacing exotic plants with native species to attract native birds and increase competition against Common Mynas.
- Reducing the amount of area dedicated to lawn, as this is where Common Mynas like to feed.
- Fixing holes in roofs and eaves, as these can be used by Common Mynas to nest and breed.
- Planting a diversity of native trees, shrubs and native grasses to attract native birds.
- Not feeding birds.
- Limiting access to pet food; not leaving food outside where birds can easily access it.

Council offers low cost native plants to local residents through Council's Greenplan Program –

Phone: (02) 4225 2636

Email: botanicgarden@wollongong.nsw.gov.au

Webpage: www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/services/sustainability/pages/greenplan.aspx

Council's approach to the Common Myna

Common Mynas are highly visible in the urban environment and are commonly seen to be aggressively defending nesting areas. Council regularly receives complaints from residents about the increasing numbers of Common Mynas and reductions in native birds in their backyards. Research indicates that native bird numbers can be increased by providing native habitat. Common Myna numbers may be reduced by reducing feeding and breeding opportunities as well as through humane trapping.

Code of ethics for euthanising trapped birds

Wollongong City Council would like to advise that any trapping of Common Mynas requires attention to the animal code of ethics. The code of ethics and further information on methods of euthanasia are available at <http://www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/SERVICES/SUSTAINABILITY/Pages/VertebratePestManagement.aspx>.

Residents interested in trapping Common Mynas are encouraged to participate in the Wollongong Indian Myna Action Program where the approved methods of euthanising birds will be explained and facilities provided for euthanising trapped birds.

The Wollongong Indian Myna Action Program 2011

The Wollongong Indian Myna Action Program has been developed to provide a response to the growing concerns regarding the abundance and distribution of the Common Myna within the region and their impact on human health, amenity and native wildlife. The three objectives of this program are to:

1. Reduce the breeding, feeding and roosting opportunities for the species.
2. Facilitate a humane trapping program that is acceptable to the community, animal welfare agencies and government.
3. Conduct a monitoring program with registered residents in the program to assist with future research of the species in our region.

How can I participate in the Wollongong Indian Myna Action Program?

You can register your interest in participating in the program by calling Council's Customer Service Team on (02) 4227 7111, where your name, address, telephone numbers (including mobile) and email address details will be recorded. You will then be contacted by Council staff regarding the program and compulsory workshops details.

Can I get the trap from the Council?

Council does not supply traps. Council provides a referral to the Corrimal Community Men's Shed where low-cost traps can be purchased following the completion of Council's educational workshop (approximately one hour in duration). If you want to purchase a trap you are required to firstly, register your interest (as above) in the program and secondly, attend a compulsory workshop as a pre-requisite. At the workshop, participants will be provided details on trap management, humane trapping and disposal of the birds, support, monitoring and correct identification of the species etc. At the completion of the workshop, participants will be provided with a signed referral to the Corrimal Community Men's Shed where a single trap can be purchased from the Men's Shed.

How much will the trap cost?

The traps will cost \$50 payable to the Corrimal Community Men's Shed.

Will Council help me euthanise trapped Common Myna birds?

Yes, Council will provide assistance to registered participants in the program by providing a time and location where carbon dioxide can be administered to the birds. All these details will be provided at the workshop.

Further information

www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/services/sustainability/Pages/VertebratePestManagement.aspx

www.indianmynaaction.org.au

<http://www.feralscan.org.au/default.aspx>

www.birdsinbackyards.net

Disclaimers

This Fact Sheet was believed to be correct at the date of its approval.

This Fact Sheet is for general information purposes only, and should not be solely relied upon.