Clarence Valley Conservation in Action
MYNA NEWSLETTER NO 11
DECEMBER 2013

WISHING YOU ALL A HAPPY CHRISTMAS & A GREAT NEW YEAR

Congratulations trappers last month we passed 5000 birds, well done all !!!

SUMMER TIME

At this time of the year there are many young and inexperienced myna fledglings about so we may need to increase our trapping efforts to make sure that we keep the overall numbers down.

During Spring lots of people reported that the Indian Mynas had visited briefly in pairs or small numbers for a couple of hours or days then disappeared, so total number of IMs caught have not been high but just one euthanased IM interrupts their breeding cycle.

We hope everyone has a happy and safe Christmas and New Year. Also, just a reminder that we are all giving each other a break and as we won't be following up any tallies until February 2014, please keep your tallies for December and January even if zero (0). If you still wish to phone or email them in each month, we're happy to receive them.
Happy trapping and thank you all for participating.

Story with a twist

A few strange critters seen and/or caught in traps this year have be a Phascagale (it goes into the trap, does its deed on the caller and then climbs back out again), a possum with young on her back and some water dragons (all of which were released with no harm). BUT THERE'S MORE: I set up "Hoppie" our caller bird in its cocky cage and our trap on one of our neighbours' property (about 1km away) and caught 2 mynas within a few hours. So…. you ask. The next evening when Kevin went over to euthanase, there were now 2 mynas and a MYNA EGG in the trap! Unbelievable but true.

Indian Myna egg

CANBERRA CONFERENCE (Part 2)

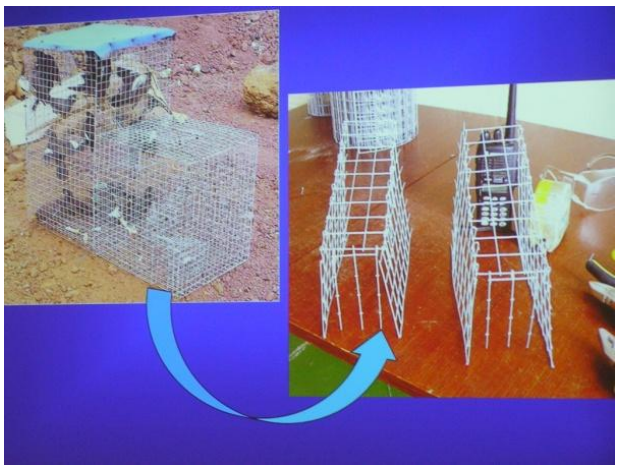
Following on from the last newsletter, below are brief summaries of other presentations at the very interesting Indian Myna Conference in June.

My view is that as the average life span of an IM is 4 years then the trapping program and restricting food sources will to help maintain the balance for our wildlife. If we continue to trap the young, juveniles and the "explorer" adults, then the more experienced "innovators" and trap-weary adults are only around for 4 years, so control should be possible. As mentioned in the previous newsletter, Canberra in 7 years reduced IMs from the 3rd most abundant bird to the 20th!

Euthanasing: Presenter Greg Flowers is currently a horticulturalist at the Australian National Botanic Gardens and has been trapping and removing mynas and starlings there. He showed his findings from the last 10 years on both carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide (CO_2) which are quick and humane euthanasia methods. With CO_2, being administered via a CO_2 bottle, there is shaking of the body toward the end as the brain registers that there is a lack of oxygen in the system (which can upset observers) but the bird is already unconscious and no pain is suffered. He also showed the results of carbon monoxide (CO) which is a colourless, odourless and tasteless gas but toxic to humans and animals. He showed a video of mynas and starlings being euthanased using CO and because the brain doesn't register the CO molecules replacing oxygen there is little to no body tremors. The birds were chatting and preening as the gas was released and within 6 to 30 seconds they had just dropped from the perches dead. He was creating his own carbon monoxide (CO) by running a cold motored 4 stroke engine for no more than 60 seconds, allowing the gas to run through a long hose (this enables the gas to be at air temperature) and as an added precaution to ensure the gas is at a comfortable temperature for the birds, he would have the middle of the hose submerged in water. Exhaust from anything other than a cold motor 4 stroke engine will not produce adequate CO and the other hot fumes will not be a quick and humane method to dispose of the pest birds. It must only be a cold 4 stroke engine.

[In NSW, carbon monoxide is not a preferred method of euthanasing as governed by the DPI. Also, it is of high risk to the user if not performed properly. I had a discussion with an expert on gasses, and he said that Helium (HE), also a colourless, odourless, tasteless, and importantly, non-toxic gas to humans is absorbed by the system in the same manner as carbon monoxide and results on the birds would be the same. Unfortunately DPI or RSPCA have not given helium a mention and we are not aware of any trials.]

Presenter Susana Saavedra Cruz – You may have heard her interviewed on ABC radio in June. Susana is a Spanish specialist in endangered species/invasive species management. She has been responsible for the eradication of mynas on a number of islands including 3 of the Canary Island and Mallorca. Susana has concentrated efforts of myna control in Portugal, as she fears that if not controlled or eradicated from there they will spread to Spain and then eventually to the rest of Europe. She also controls mynas and other exotic bird species on other iIslands, such as Ascension and St Helena Islands and Singapore. She is currently engaged to tackle the problem of mynas and bulbuls in Tahiti. As her work takes her to different countries she also has various methods of trapping/euthanasing at her disposal. For example shooting mynas with a pistol from an open car window whilst driving works in one of her locations but certainly would not be accepted here! She reinforces that mynas learn from each others' experiences. She says that people should avoid approaching traps during the day [unless of course if natives need to be released] so mynas do not associate people and traps, and thereby become trap shy. She also mentioned the importance of having a clean floor of the trap. [The trap only has to be moved enough to provide a clean bit of turf underneath the trap.] Susana also showed a simple attachment to the tunnels to make them an 'entry only' tunnel, so let us know if you think you have some extra tricky mynas who walk back out of the trap.



Presenter Daryl H King (CIMAG)

"Forage trapping" is initiated in response to an increase of myna numbers foraging in a local area and this trapping does significantly reduce these populations, but it may also mask the cause of the increase – a successful and secure nest ie refuge area. Juvenile groups are known to forage exclusively near successful nests, and their recurrence at the same locations year after year is a reliable indicator of the locations of refugial nests. Studies show that a foraging range is about 150-250m from a refugial nest site. Refugial nests are a permanent source for reinvasion of eradicated areas. The potential of trapping networks to recognise and provide data of refugial nests should further develop a fully effective trapping programme. Direct action that prevents experienced, wary mynas from continuing to use a nest cavity is the only certain way to prevent regular breeding success at refugial sites.

MILESTONE TRAPPERS

Moira from Coutts Crossing: the Myna Magnet has done it again. She's caught her 300th myna in July 2013 and currently has a total of 329 since starting in January 2012.

MYNAS TRAPPED

2011 = 1593 2012 = 2010

2013 = 1575

OUR TOP 10 TRAPPING AREAS (Jan to Nov 2013)

South Grafton	217
Coutts Crossing	172
Copmanhurst	143
Grafton	112
Glenreagh	105
Lawrence	103
Palmers Channel	79
Lilydale	66
Palmers Island	64
Eatonsville	56

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