

Eradication plan for major myna problem

JOHN BLAIR

THE days of the myna scourge in the Garden Shire appear to be numbered with the local council ready to talk to pest nemesis Gary Cunich.

Myna traps, designed by Mr Cunich, are used by local government area across Sydney.

An apparent worsening of the problem in the Hills - with thousands of the birds descending each night on the Castle Towers shopping precinct - has prompted Baulkham Hills Shire Council, at the urging of Cr Ray Williams, to have a meeting to consider Mr Cunich's eradication plan.

A major deterrent to wholesale acceptance of the Cunich solution has been a fear trapped mynas and equally bothersome starlings will not meet a humane end.

Mr Cunich is about to launch his latest device, a "native bird rescue unit", which is a huge collection trap to be towed around the area picking up individual birds from smaller traps.

"They will then be trailered to an out-of-the-way place and gassed humanely," Mr Cunich said this week.

"This should remove the final

BULLY OF THE BIRD WORLD

Indian Myna

- Listed among the 100 most invading bird species in the world and classed as an extreme pest in Australia.
- Introduced to Australia in the 1880s to control locusts but became a pest themselves.
- Reduces biodiversity of an area by competing for nesting space, destroying other birds' chicks and eggs and competing for food.



barrier to getting our traps everywhere there is a problem - the Garden Shire included," he said.

Official action has been a long time coming in the Hills.

It is almost a year since Castle Hill State Liberal MP Michael Richardson raised the problem

in parliament, suggesting government participation in the Cunich solution.

Mr Cunich is currently negotiating with potential sponsors, among them major suppliers of industrial gases, to finance the new "rescue unit" through

paid-advertising on both trap trailer and towing vehicle.

"I prefer to call it a native bird rescue unit rather than a trap; by eradicating mynas, we will eliminate a serious threat to native species," he said.

If you want to know more, call Mr Cunich on 9872 5822.