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A Myna problem

Garry Cunich is waging war on the Indian Myna bird with his specially designed 'Mynamagic' trap

RESIDENTS of Shellharbour are joining the swelling ranks of communities around Australia calling for action to be taken to control the population explosion of the Indian Myna Bird, a feral species that is threatening native species such as Wagtails, Honey-eaters and Wrens.

Called 'flying rats' because of their rapid breeding and scavenging habits, Indian Mynas prey on native animals and birds during the breeding season as well as causing disturbances and health risks to the community from their noisy communal roosts and attendant large scale fouling.

Shellharbour City Councillor Geoff Rose says he has had numerous calls from irate residents asking what can be done to address this growing problem.

One such resident, living in Hawkes Place, Shellharbour complains that some 70 or 80 Myna birds roost in his palm tree every evening causing a great deal of noise and making a mess of his front garden.

"They make so much noise I can hardly hear the TV at normal volume levels," he said.

"There used to be lots of small birds around here, but since the Mynas moved in, they've all disappeared."

According to Wollongong City Council Environment Officers, there is no census information on Myna bird populations in the region, but based on anecdotal evidence, there have been rapid increases in their population over the last 10 years.

Shellharbour City Council Officers also confirm the growing problem of Myna bird population growth.

In last week's Council Meeting a resolution was passed to forward a motion to the Local Government Association Conference to "seek the assistance of the State Government to coordinate Local Government Authorities in a program of the control and reduction of the population of the Common Indian Myna (*Acridotheros tristis*), which represents a significant threat to populations of indigenous species of birds."

One man who has already taken positive action against the Indian Myna is Garry Cunich, who has developed, manufactured and tested a special trap.

Mr Cunich is driving a five-state eradication program against the India Myna and recently showcased his trap at the annual Tocal Field Days in the Hunter Valley.

Mr Cunich's traps are designed to capture only Indian Mynas and Starlings. Non-targeted birds can be released quickly and without harm, he says.

"The trapped Mynas are euthanised in a humane way using CO2 gas," said Mr Cunich.

Anyone interested in Mr Cunich's 'Mynamagic' trap can contact him on 9872 5822.



