

AUSTRALIA'S BREEDING AND LIVING HOLLOW'S LOST FOREVER.

By Garry Cunich

We have all seen stories of human tenants that leave rented accommodation in a vile state rendering it uninhabitable.

Most people know that Indian Mynas (also known as the Common Myna) are taking tree hollows from our native birds and marsupials denying them somewhere to live and breed.

This is the last straw as the number of hollows are reducing all the time because of other factors such as land clearing, harvesting of old trees for firewood etc

What many don't realise is that once Indian Mynas have raised their young in a hollow it stays **abandoned forever** –once Indian Mynas have used it for one hatching not even they will go back to it.

When they want to have their second clutch of the season they go and find another hollow – if it is already inhabited by Australian native birds or marsupials they drive the parents away, killing them if they fight and then destroy their eggs or kill their young if they have already hatched . Once they get to their new home they then set about clearing the area of other birds. This includes Magpies, Currawongs, Kookaburras and any birds nesting in the branches of trees nearby. The story is the same, the adults flee or die, eggs are destroyed, and young are killed.

Possoms run because they cannot fight back. Most die within two weeks anyway because they cannot survive out of their territory.

Indian Mynas in hollows are not like squatters in houses. Once squatters leave a property you clean up and move back in. After Indian Mynas have been in a hollow it is vacant possession forever. The rubbish and filth left behind ensures this. It doesn't matter how large a hollow is the Indian Mynas completely fill it with rubbish and droppings. Our birds and marsupials **remain homeless** even after the Indian Mynas have moved on.

The Indian Mynas do nothing to create hollows -unlike our native birds and marsupials who work hard to enlarge them over long periods of time. Indian Mynas just use and abuse them.

The more the Indian Mynas spread their wings and invade fresh territory the fewer homes remain for our native birds and marsupials. The future existence of our unique birds and marsupials is threatened. No home or breeding places equals extinction.

What can be done? We need to remove the Indian Mynas and provide fresh nesting and living space for our birds and marsupials on our properties.

We do this by installing nesting boxes. If we don't have suitable trees for them that is not a problem as they can be erected on posts or attached to the walls of your house.

They will need to be monitored to ensure Indian Mynas don't take up residence. Some designs include a baffle which stops Indian Mynas getting in but allows native birds access.

If you have never been able to closely observe a possum family or native birds nesting you will be in for a treat as well as helping them to survive.

Having your own Indian Myna Trap and nesting boxes at your home will help to ensure our native birds survive this massive invasion by Indian Mynas.

Contact Garry Cunich from the Indian Myna Eradication Program (02) 4577 8335 or 0438198460 for information on traps and nesting boxes.

ARTICLE ENDS

References

From Wikipedia Encyclopedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tree_hollow

Australia

In [Australia](#), 304 vertebrate species are known to use tree hollows in Australia: 29 amphibians, 78 reptiles, 111 birds, 86 mammals.^[2] Approximately 100 of these are now [rare](#), [threatened](#) or [near-threatened](#) on Australian State or Commonwealth legislation, in part because of the removal of hollow-bearing trees^{[8][1]}.

Threats to hollows include: native forest [silviculture](#), [firewood](#) collection, rural [dieback](#) (such as from [inundation](#) and [salinity](#)), grazing by [cattle](#), and land clearing. Additionally, pest and introduced species such as the [Common Myna](#) and [Western honey bee](#) (*Apis mellifera*) compete with native species for hollows; domestic and feral [cats](#) and [black rats](#) prey on hollow-using animals and have been damaging especially to island populations; and some native hollow-using species have increased population densities or expanded their ranges since European settlement, such as the [Galah](#), [Common Brushtail Possum](#) and the [Little Corella](#) and compete with less common native species. (1)

Tree hollow

A **tree hollow** or **tree hole** is a semi-enclosed cavity which has naturally formed in the trunk or branch of a tree. These are predominantly found in old trees, whether living or not. Hollows form in many species of trees, and are a prominent feature of natural forests and woodlands, and act as a resource or habitat for a number of vertebrate and invertebrate animals.^[1]

Hollows may form as the result of physiological stress from natural forces causing the excavating and exposure of the [heartwood](#). Forces including wind, fire, heat, lightning, rain, attack from insects (such as termites or beetles), bacteria, or fungi. Also, trees may self-prune, dropping lower branches as they reach maturity, exposing the area where the branch was attached. Many animals further develop the hollows using instruments such as their beak, teeth or claws.^{[2][1]}

The size of hollows may depend on the age of the tree. For example, [eucalypts](#) develop hollows at all ages, but only from when the trees are 120 years old do they form hollows suitable for [vertebrates](#), and it may take 220 years for hollows suitable for larger species to form.^[1]

(1)[^] [a b c d e f g h](#) Gibbons, Phillip; David Lindenmayer (2002). *Tree Hollows and Wildlife Conservation in Australia*. CSIRO Publishing. [ISBN 0643067051](#).

(2) [^] [a b](#) "[Tree hollows and wildlife conservation in Australia](#)". *NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service*. Retrieved on [2007-06-19](#). Includes table of animal groups.