

INDIAN MYNA ERADICATION PROGRAM

Fighting for the future of our beautiful and unique native birds and marsupials across NSW, Victoria and Queensland.

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THE SPRING CLEAN THAT KILLS

By Garry Cunich

“Spring has sprung
All the birds are on the wung
I wonder when the flowers will come.” Anon.

Spring is a wonderful time of year, a time of new life and new beginnings. Flowers and trees spring to life, young animals and birds are born and generally we all feel good.

Let's not forget spring cleaning.

Along the Eastern Seaboard and moving further inland all the time another sort of spring cleaning is happening.

As a result of this different spring cleaning thousands if not hundreds of thousands of our adult birds are flying quickly, not to take food to their young or get back to their nests and hollows to spring clean but fleeing for their very lives. Possums and other marsupials are also running away from home territory. Sadly for them they are running to certain death within two weeks. This is how long possums who loose their homes survive.

Why are they fleeing? Is there a bushfire, flood or cyclone coming?

None of the above.

The spring cleaners are Indian Myna Birds. They are staking out their breeding sites. They are searching for hollows, using the ones they want and filling the rest with rubbish.

If the hollows are occupied they use their numbers to drive away the current residents.

If the current tenants (parrots, lorikeets, possums, sugar gliders etc) put up a fight to retain tenancy they kill them. Flee or die is the choice.

Should there already be young in the nests or hollows they are killed or even worse get covered by the rubbish used by Indian Mynas and die a slow and agonizing death. Eggs of course are thrown to the ground and destroyed.

Once they settle in to their new nest the Indian Mynas take a look around the immediate area and locate any other birds nesting in nearby trees. Kookaburras, Magpies and Currawongs are amongst those they find. They attack them, once again calling for support from flock members to ensure the adult birds flee or die. Fledglings or eggs are then destroyed.

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The Indian Mynas now have a safe place to lay their eggs and raise their young. Depriving our native birds and marsupials of their nesting / living space means fewer competitors for available food and water resources. It also means that our native birds and marsupials are taken one step closer to extinction.

Some of our birds find other hollows outside the Indian Mynas territory or suitable nesting trees and set up house and lay new eggs. So there is hope.

Once the Indian Mynas have raised their first lot of brand new birds (in less than 30 days) they then want to have another lot. Not however in the first hollow. They have polluted this one so much that not only will they no longer use it but neither will our native birds or marsupials ever be able to use it. 100 -200 years in the making -30 days to destroy.

The Indian Mynas search for hollows in an extended territory and once again clear these hollows and trees by causing the adults to flee or die. Fledglings are again killed and eggs destroyed.

Extinction for our native birds comes yet another step closer.

Scientists predict that unless stopped Indian Mynas will occupy a solid band of territory stretching from the East to West Coast of Australia within twenty years.

Want to do something to help stop this deadly spring cleaning and save our native birds and marsupials? Contact Garry Cunich at the Indian Myna Eradication Program on (02) 4577 8335. Garry has been fighting for our native birds for five years and has developed some very effective traps for these pests. He is also organizing local groups in different areas to band together to fight these pests. He works with Councils as well as resident groups.

His greatest joy is when his trappers tell him that native birds have returned to areas where they have been missing for up to five years. His motto is "The person that says it can't be done is likely to be interrupted by someone else doing it"