

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Myna Problem? It's a Major Problem!

Dr Ricky Spencer from the School of Natural Sciences has been investigating the distribution, abundance and habitat preferences of feral Indian Myna birds in urban areas. This research is funded by Blacktown City Council.

'The Myna bird has been declared the second greatest threat to native birds after land clearing', says Dr Spencer. 'It is an extremely aggressive introduced species that competes directly with native birds and even small tree-dwelling marsupials. The birds flourish wherever humans live, eating disposed food scraps, making considerable noise and nesting in the roofs of houses. They have the potential to spread disease with their mites and accumulated droppings and can also be carriers of avian influenza and other infections that can affect humans. Myna birds are intelligent and resourceful and have been resistant to effective trapping. This project will assess the dietary habits and living habitats of Indian Myna birds local to the Blacktown region and determine optimal trapping regimes for controlling this highly problematic feral bird.'

The distribution and abundance of Myna birds in the Blacktown area will be mapped using an online survey, sound recordings at roosting sites and the cooperation of the local community and bushcare groups. This information will then be analysed statistically to determine where the birds prefer to live in various urban habitats. In order to further optimise future control efforts, trap and bait preference trials will be done in participating community members' backyards. These backyard birds will be examined to determine dietary (and bait) preferences and their population health in urban areas, as well as clarifying what food competition there is between Mynas and the local native bird species.



Control of feral Indian Myna bird populations is very important for the protection of Australian native bird species and ecological balance, as well as the environmental health of human populations in urban areas of Australia.

Project Title: Assessing distribution, abundance and habitat preferences of feral Indian Mynas in an urban landscape.

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Contact Details: ricky.spencer@uws.edu.au
http://www.uws.edu.au/natural_sciences

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