

Indian myna

Acridotheres tristis



Legal requirements

The Indian myna is not declared a prohibited or restricted invasive animal under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*, however everyone has a general biosecurity obligation (GBO) to take reasonable and practical steps to minimise the risks associated with invasive plants and animals under their control.

Local governments have a biosecurity plan that covers invasive plants and animals in their area and may require additional actions to be taken on certain species; some of these may be applied under local laws. Refer to your local government for more information.

Indian mynas are not protected under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*. Indian mynas and their eggs that are more than half incubated are defined as 'animals' under the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001*.

This legal status means that, although there is no obligation to control Indian mynas, they may be controlled if this is done in a way that causes the animal as little pain as is reasonable.

Local governments do not have an obligation to control Indian mynas, but may do so.



	Indian myna	Native noisy miner
Beak colour	Yellow	Yellow
Eye patch	Yellow	Yellow
Body colour	Brown	Grey
Leg colour	Yellow	Flesh coloured

Description

The Indian myna is a medium-sized bird native to the Middle East, India and Asia. Indian mynas are brown with a glossy black head, neck and upper breast; bright yellow bills, eye skin, legs and feet; and an upright posture. They are sometimes confused with native noisy miners (*Manorina melanocephala*); however, native noisy miners are grey rather than brown in colour and have flesh-coloured legs rather than the bright yellow legs of the Indian myna.

Indian mynas are an introduced species that have the potential to expand their range and become more abundant in a variety of open habitats, including parks, gardens, suburbs/towns, agricultural areas and some eucalypt woodlands.

Indian mynas prefer areas that have been heavily disturbed by human activities. Clearing trees for agriculture and urban development creates ideal habitat for Indian mynas.

Potential impacts

Where there is favourable habitat, Indian mynas:

- reduce the breeding success of some native parrot species—Indian mynas compete aggressively for nesting hollows and can evict native parrots from nest boxes or tree hollows and even kill eggs and chicks
- compete for tree hollows with other native wildlife (e.g. possums and gliders)—Indian mynas can kill small mammals and remove sugar gliders from tree hollows
- act as a potential reservoir for diseases that affect native birds (e.g. avian malaria)
- damage fruit, vegetable and cereal crops
- spread weeds such as lantana (*Lantana camara*) and fireweed (*Senecio madagascariensis*)
- form large communal roosts in suburban areas—this generates noise complaints
- cause dermatitis, allergies and asthma in people by nesting in the roofs of houses—Indian mynas carry mites and lice that can affect humans, and nests built in roofs are a possible fire risk.

Control

Maintain and restore native habitat

Indian mynas thrive in disturbed habitat. Retaining or restoring native habitat will provide an environment more suitable for native species. Planting local native trees and shrubs and reducing lawn areas will also make the environment less attractive to Indian mynas and encourage native species.



Native habitat restoration discourages Indian mynas

Don't provide food

Dog food, poultry feed, stockfeed, food scraps and seed put out for native birds can all provide food for mynas. Feed pets and livestock where mynas can't access the food and make sure mynas can't access food scraps.

Limit Indian myna nesting sites

Indian mynas will build nests in tree hollows, nest boxes, roofs, gutters, exotic trees and the dead fronds of palms.

In order to limit nesting sites:

- remove palms or remove all dead fronds promptly
- block holes in roofs and eaves (make sure no possums become trapped)—some commercial companies provide a service to remove Indian myna nests, bird-proof rooves and gutters, and treat for bird lice and mites.

Tree hollows are important for many native birds, bats and marsupials. Installing nest boxes can be an effective substitute for tree hollows, but Indian mynas can also use these. Consider the following:

- When buying new nest boxes, purchase boxes with holes small enough to keep mynas out (however, this will also limit access for some parrots).
- Rear-entry nest boxes are suitable for marsupials but not mynas
- If you see mynas using nest boxes, remove the eggs each time they are laid. Eventually this will discourage mynas from using the nest box.

Remove nests and eggs

Indian mynas lay two to five blue/turquoise eggs. They can breed twice a year and will build and defend several nests at a time (although only one will hold eggs). The egg colour is distinctive as no native 'hollow-nesting' birds lay blue/turquoise eggs.

Wear gloves and protective clothing and remove nests and eggs promptly (i.e. well before hatching). Seal eggs/nests in a plastic bag and place them in a wheelie bin.



Indian myna eggs

Community action groups

Several community action groups throughout Australia trap and euthanase Indian mynas. Although the effectiveness of these groups has not been fully evaluated, members believe that coordinated, persistent trapping reduces Indian myna impacts in the activity area.

Forming a community action group requires careful scoping, consultation, research and planning. Existing groups publish a lot of their information, but be aware that local area laws and conditions must be considered when adapting this information.

Members must be prepared to contribute significant time and resources to the enterprise and understand the following issues.

Animal welfare

Any control must be humane. Trapping must be done in such a way that:

- birds are only in the trap for a minimum amount of time native birds can be released unharmed.

Before any trapping takes place, arrangements must be in place for prompt and humane euthanasia of the birds.

Liaise with local government, local animal welfare groups and local veterinarians to produce a streamlined, humane, affordable and documented approach that can be distributed to members. All humane methods of euthanasia will have a cost.

Viability of control

A trapping program must recruit enough landholders to remove a significant number of Indian mynas and ensure the program has environmental gains.

Indian mynas can be trapped on private land, but not all landholders will have a suitable environment for trapping. For example, some pets will limit a landholder's ability to participate in a program. A predominance of some native birds will also make trapping impossible for some landholders.

Some interstate action groups have been operating for several years and can provide information on the number of volunteers necessary.

Effective trapping

Thorough research is essential for any trapping program. A poorly managed program will teach birds to avoid traps, making them immune to future trapping.

Several trap designs are available to purchase or build. Trapping usually involves a period of pre-feeding to get birds used to the trap.

Some areas may be unsuitable for trapping. Year-round, abundant food will limit the success of trapping.

More information about trapping is available from the following websites:

- Australian National University
<http://fennerschool.anu.edu.au>
- Indian Myna Action Group Inc.
www.indianmynaaction.org.au
- Indian Myna Bird Project
www.indianmyna.org

Further information

Further information is available from your local government office, or by contacting Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 or visit www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au.



Native noisy myna



Indian myna (photo courtesy of Richard Taylor
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/34094515@N00/4637885601>)

This fact sheet is developed with funding support from the Land Protection Fund.

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