

## Participant Information Pack

### **Gympie Region Myna Bird Control Program**

Gympie Regional Council (GRC) have developed a program whereby local residents can receive assistance with information on control of the invasive Indian Myna Bird (IMB). Program provisions include the following:

- Education and direction for use of traps and treatment of caught/held IMB
- Loan of IMB Traps
- Supply of live IMB Caller Birds (Decoy Birds)
- Provisions for humane Euthanasia (Co2 Gas) of captured IMB by appointment

This document outlines your requirements while participating in the program and utilising its provisions. It is important that you have read and understood all aspects of this and sign Council's '*Welfare and Participation Agreement*' document each and every time you participate in the program.

### **Why control Indian Myna Birds**

Indian Myna Birds (IMB) are an introduced medium-sized bird species that have the potential to spread throughout much of Australia and are doing so at an alarming rate. They are a problem to both our natural environment, our economy, our social amenity and to human health for the following reasons:

- They have an aggressive nature that will outcompete native birds for food, water, nesting sites and territories;
- They are hollow nesters and will compete and often chase away any native hollow nesting species in the area, including larger parrots and mammals like glider possums;
- Can form large communal roosts, causing a nuisance due to noise and smell and a health risks due to spread of disease and mites;
- Often will nest in house rooves, causing a physical mess and fire risk, spreading disease and creating a nuisance;
- Spread disease (e.g.: avian malaria) and parasites like bird mites and lice and can adversely affect both domestic pets and humans with allergies (dermatitis/asthma);
- Cause damage to valuable crops and orchids as they are omnivores and will eat just about anything in an opportunistic fashion;
- Can spread weeds/berries through eating seeds and dispersing them broadly.

## How to best Control Indian Myna Birds

Like with many animal pests, IMB can be hard to control as they move over large distances and don't necessarily stay in the one location for control actions to take place. However, the more people who are undertaking control and prevention activities the better the results. Although we may not be able to eradicate IMB, ongoing management can reduce their devastating impacts at a local/regional scale, especially on our environmental values.

Steps you should take prior to considering trapping activities include:

1. DO NOT feed wild birds in your back yard as this creates reliance for native species and supports IMB.
2. DO NOT leave pet food outside during the day. IMB will find it and establish in the area.
3. REDUCE bird access to stock and poultry feed areas.
4. DO plant dense, thick native plants throughout your property. IMB prefer open grassed areas surrounded by large trees. A more natural variety in your garden will also support a more diverse native fauna.
5. DO scare IMB away from your back yard at every opportunity. It's important to not make them feel welcome or comfortable.
6. DO clear away any nesting material from gutters, roof eaves and tree hollows on a regular basis to discourage their nesting - be sure it's not a native bird nest first!
7. DO block access to known roosting or nesting sites within your home or building – small mesh or netting may need to be installed to ensure the birds cannot get to small spaces.

Please ensure you have read the attached **Indian Myna 'fact sheet'** produced by the *Department of Agriculture and Fisheries QLD* to arm yourself with additional options for control and prevention.

## Loaning of Indian Myna Bird Traps

Council have a set of IMB Traps available for loan to Gympie landholders for use within the Gympie region. These traps will typically be on loan for one month at a time and remain the property of Council. Participants are welcome to keep using traps beyond the one month, if they are actively utilising the equipment provided you have contacted Council to arrange this extension.

Data on the number of IMB captured is required to be returned to Council with the return of the equipment, or on a monthly basis, via the use of the record sheet provided in this pack.

Please contact *Lands Protection* team via Council call centre on 1300 307 800.

## Two-part Myna Cage Trap



### Trap Provisions:

- Primary/Feeding cage (with 2 internal tunnels)
- Secondary/Holding cage with:
  - 1 x perch
  - 2 x food/water dishes

If you need to bring trapped birds back to Euthanase you will also have:

- 1 x transfer/Euthanasia cage (or you can transfer bird/s in a pillowcase)

When using loaned traps, it is your responsibility to:

- Only use the traps as intended and instructed (for trapping of IMB);
- Look after, clean and maintain the traps to ensure you return them in the same state you received them;
- Don't place the trap in an area that is visible or accessible to passers-by, remember it is your responsibility and you must return the trap after use. If traps are stolen, you may be held responsible for a fee to cover the cost of the lost trap.
- Ensure that while the cage trap is in use you:
  - Always have plenty of fresh/clean food and water available for any bird that may get trapped;
  - Check the trap daily (see 'Trapping Help Sheet' within). One IMB can remain in the holding cage as a lure/decoy bird, other trapped IMB must be removed and humanely euthanased. Any native birds must be released unharmed.
- Ensure that NO native bird is kept in the cage longer than the period between your daily checks and that it is removed and NOT euthanased (it is illegal to kill any native birds);
- Ensure all trapping, holding, handling and Euthanasia of any trapped IMB is done humanely and in accordance with state legislation and guidelines (*Animal Care and Protection Act 2001; Animal Care and Protection Regulation 2012*);
- It is advised that when handling any birds, you wear gloves as they may carry parasites and/or diseases. Wash your hands thoroughly after handling.
- When traps/decoy birds are not in use (actively trapping for IMB) – Return to Council (via appointment) so others can continue with management actions.

## Indian Myna Trapping Help Sheet

This is intended as a guide to trapping Indian Myna Birds (IMB).

**Place** the trap in a relatively open area or where IMB are already feeding/active. Another good spot seems to be under power lines in an area where there is not people or animal traffic.

- Place/set-up your trap late in the afternoon or evening, when you know there are no IMB around, they learn quickly and will not go near something they have seen you at (especially if a you use a decoy bird and it happens to let off an alarm call while you are there).
- Pre-feed the selected site (if not using a decoy bird) for a number of days until you see that IMB are coming to the site. Then place the trap there as above and place feed only in the primary and secondary areas of the trap.

**Bait** the trap with food the IMB are accustomed to feeding on (area/site dependant). Suburban IMB are often used to pet food as many pet owners leave food out for their pets during the day.

- Using small dry dog/cat biscuits has been very successful as has moist pet food meat (not great in hot weather or near ants).
- If the IMB in your area are feeding on something specific (eg: fruits, vegetables, stock feed etc) then try this as your bait first. They are omnivores, so if one bait type is not working try something else. It may be a case of trial and error.
- Do not use cereal/grain-based foods (birdseed/bread etc) as this attracts non-target birds such as crested pigeons and parrots.

Put a little feed:

1. outside the primary cage funnel entrances to attract IMB to the cage - just a little (this is not so necessary when using a decoy IMB),
2. in the tunnel (just a little) and
3. inside the primary cage/feeding chamber (just a little) where the IMB can see the food directly in front of them when they are in the tunnel. Once in the primary cage, they should become a little disorientated and can't find their way back out, this is when they should find the funnel entrance to the secondary/hold cage and here they will be caught.

**Food & Water** must be placed and maintained in the dishes supplied in the secondary/holding cage for any captured/decoy birds. If the weather is hot, ensure that extra water dishes are included or water is replenished regularly. It is important not to 'service' (check or place feed/water) the cage during daylight hours – this will alert wild IMB to you and caution them on going near or into the trap.

**Monitor the trap** daily to ensure clean bait/food and water are available while trapping and to determine the success of trapping. Best time to monitor is late in the afternoon or evening. Replenish food/water at this point also, as they are most likely to come in looking for food in the early morning (you do not want to be servicing your traps when they are actively seeking food/water).

- **Keeping Decoy / Captured** bird in the holding cage to encourage wild IMB is a useful tool, however they must be cared for humanely and not allowed to get stressed. No more than 1 bird

should be kept to lure in other birds. Remove all except 1 IMB on a daily basis and euthanase humanely as per below.

- **Shade** – adequate shade must be provided for the trapping to be humane. Please ensure that the trap is placed in a shady area (but not under overhanging bushes, verandas etc) or install some additional shade via a towel etc to one or more sides of the holding cage area. If the weather becomes extremely hot, windy or stormy, you may have to remove the cage from use for this period.

**Handling** of IMB is relatively easy if you grasp their wings firmly in your hand from behind. They rarely peck and will be relatively calm if held this way. Their toes have large sharp talons which can try to clasp onto your fingers, so it is important to wear a pair of 'rigger' type gloves when needing to handle the birds. Handling should be kept to a minimum as this may cause unnecessary stress.

**Euthanasia** - IMB must be euthanased humanely and promptly, this is your responsibility and non-compliance with this is a serious offence under state legislation. If you do not feel comfortable undertaking the euthanasia of the IMB yourself, please discuss this with your Council representative. Depending on your location and efficiency of getting trapped IMB from you, Council may offer a Euthanasia service. If you are not eligible for a euthanasia service and you do not want to undertake this task, trapping IMB is not an option for you.

There is a number of methods that can be used, however the most recognised and accepted by RSPCA Australia are:

- **Cervical (neck) dislocation** – Dislocate the neck by taking the birds legs in the left hand (if right handed) and the head between the first two fingers of the right hand with the thumb under the beak. A sharp jerk with each hand, pulling the head backwards over the neck aims to herniate the brain stem and result in death. Violent muscular contractions may occur after cervical dislocation.
- **Inhalation CO<sup>2</sup>** - Carbon dioxide is suitable for adult birds, this can be administered by *Gympie Landcare* by appointment (please call to arrange a time during opening hours). You will need to return the bird/s in the small transfer cage.

**Disposal** - Dispose of any deceased IMB wrapped in newspaper in your wheelie bin or deep buried on site. Always handle birds with gloves as they can transfer diseases and parasites.

