

HASTINGS - MACLEAY INDIAN MYNA CONTROL PROJECT

Community working together to help reduce the impacts of the Indian Myna



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INDIAN MYNA TRAPPING TIPS from successful trappers!

1 HOT TIP – It is important to the whole program that you don't let the Indian Myna birds see you attend to the trap! Especially when there are trapped Indian Mynas letting out their alarm call. Indian Mynas are extremely intelligent and are learning to avoid the traps. Don't let them associate danger with humans and our traps. Best attend at night or when you know an Indian Myna is not watching. Please do release native's birds ASAP regardless if Indian Mynas are about – their welfare is priority.

LURING / BAIT TIPS

1. Clean up any bird seed, pet food, chook food or scraps as best you can in the trapping area. Make them want the bait.
2. Use only small pieces of bait (size of a wheat grain). This will encourage the birds to peck along and into the trap. If larger pieces of bait are used they are more likely to pick up the bait and flying away with it.
3. Get the birds used to the trap and the luring baits. If possible use what they are already feeding on as bait such as dog food or food scraps (check if neighbours are feeding them). Set trap up on the grass in an open area (preferably where they are already landing to feed). Then place a good amount of bait around the trap – on a plastic lid/plate is good or just directly on the grass. Be patient and wait till the Indian Mynas are comfortably and confidently feeding near the trap. This may take weeks or days. Then when you think they are ready collect all bait from outside of the trap and only offer it to them inside the trap.
4. Vary Bait, and experiment. Indian Mynas are curious birds. Make sure its fresh and moist.
5. Do NOT USE BIRD SEED – attracts too many native species.
6. For baits try
 - dog/cat biscuits
 - strawberries and watermelon
 - chook pellets
 - left overs or cooked rice. It is proven that Indian Mynas are most attracted to bait that is red in colour. Try using food dye to colour your rice red.
 - a combination of mince meat and bread. Loosen and break up the mince and bread into very fine pieces. Combine the two and sprinkle outside of trap leading into the trap. This worked well at Long Flat, well over 200 have been trapped with this bait technique using the Pee Gee's trap design.
 - sultanas ~ this has proven successful at Laurieton. Potentially help minimise non target species such as the grain and meat eaters.
 - small pieces of bread dipped in a prepared gravox mix. The bread goes hard after a few days so it does need replacing regularly.

7. Place mirrors inside the trap lined up with the entrance points so the birds can see their reflection when they go to enter the trap. This works extremely well to entice them into the trap. This is excellent for those highly hesitant flocks.



LEFT: Indian Mynas trapped in a Pee Gee Trap in Port Macquarie.

GENERAL TIPS

1. If it does not already, it is important to add perches in both trap chambers. Sticks from the garden are perfect. Place them in a way which encourages the birds to move up and into the one-way valve mechanism.
2. If it does not already, provide suitable shelter for the trapped birds. An option is to secure a double length of shade cloth (or similar) to the roof and one side of the trap. But its important to not put the shelter directly ABOVE or ONTOP of the one way valve. Make sure the birds have a clear view of the sky when they move through the one way valve – as this is the trap mechanism, they think they are going to escape by going up into the one way valve.
3. You will mostly catch the birds early morning or late evening. Bait the trap at night (when they are not looking) so you have more chance of catching them first thing the following morning.
4. You may try to use a caller bird. These are previously trapped Indian Myna birds that can act as a lure to untrapped birds. It is vitally important that you take excellent care of your caller bird - look after him as you would a pet budgie. (I met a man who looked after his beloved caller bird for three years) A caller bird can be inside the trap or be in a separate cage right alongside the trap. They are most successful if the caller bird is from a different territory.
5. We are no longer informing trappers to 'open feed' prior to trapping. Set up the trap completely active and ready to go from the start. This will help reduce the number of non target species trapped.
6. Be prepared to release non target species. It is likely that you will trap non-target species such as bower birds or butcher birds. Differing your bait selection and trap design may help with this issue. This can be frustrating but its worth perusing for the Indian Mynas you do catch.
7. Please be patient. Don't move the trap around too much. It may take weeks to get the birds even used to the trap before you begin active baiting. If successful, most people generally trap 1 – 10 birds a month.
8. Make sure the trap is not interfered with by cats, dogs, rodents, kids, foxes or livestock. The less disturbance the more likely you are of trapping them, especially at dusk and dawn.
9. Check trap daily, and as often as you can – preferably from a safe distance from their view.
10. Traps are most effective on open mown grass – somewhere were the birds regularly land to feed.
11. Your trap may need to be stabilised with tent pegs or similar. The larger traps (Myna Magnet) have the potential to fall over during high winds. A sturdy trap will help with outside interference and be more successful.

12. Please read all the information provided to increase success rate, and to be aware that you are managing your trap in the most human way possible and in accordance with animal ethics. RSPCA is totally aware and in agreement with Hastings/Macleay Landcare's Indian Myna control program. Please contact the project officer for further enquiries.
13. Be mindful of neighbours and depending on your circumstance it is advised to notify them. This will increase awareness of the issue and Landcare's roll. Advising neighbours in close proximity to the trap location will also minimise the chance of well intended people releasing trapped Indian Mynas not realising they are a pest species. This has happened before in Lake Cathie.
14. Doors need to be fastened (e.g. with a peg) and make sure that trapped birds can not escape.
15. We welcome any maintenance that needs doing to the traps.
16. Playing an audio recording of Indian Myna calls may bring the birds closer. The Project officer can supply you with a recording.
17. Be aware of extreme temperatures or distressing situations for trapped birds. They should never be exposed to stressful temperatures or environments
18. If you do not wish to euthanise birds yourself, we can arrange someone to professionally do the job for you. Contact your local coordinator or Project officer. However please be willing to take care of the trapped birds for a few days until they can be attended or be willing to transport them a short distance. Remember to look after them as though they were a pet budgie.
19. It is best to handle the Myna birds at night time as they are more docile. Mynas are to be handled mindfully with care at all times. Cover them over if they need to be transported. Be aware that the birds usually have mites, handle accordingly.
20. September – February appears to be the time more likely to have a higher trapping success rate. The younger, not so educated Indian Mynas are the easiest to trap.
21. Please report to the office if you know where any Indian Mynas are roosting or nesting, or if you have any further control tips and comments to contribute. We need to work together to help control these birds.

22. **For further information please go to**

www.indianmynaproject.org



ABOVE: Indian Myna birds trapped in a Pee Gees Trap

Good luck and be mindful !