



## Common (Indian) Myna (*Acridotheres tristis* or *Sturnus tristis*)

Common or Indian mynas are native to India and southern Asia. They are popular birds in their source countries as crop pest control agents and as symbols of undying love associated with their habit of pairing for life<sup>1</sup>.

**Distribution:** Mynas have spread worldwide over the last 200 years. In Australia, common mynas are often confused with the native noisy miner (*Manorina melanocephala*) and sometimes with yellow-throated miner (*Manorina flavigula*) (see photos) because of their similar size and appearance. The common myna has:

- a brown body
- a glossy black head, neck and upper breast
- distinctive white patches on their wings that are clearly visible in flight.

Common mynas are now widespread throughout eastern Australia from western Victoria in the south to Cairns in the north. They were first brought into Australia from Asia in 1862 to control caterpillars and other insects in market gardens around Melbourne<sup>2</sup>. In 1883, mynas were transported to Townsville and neighbouring sugarcane-growing areas in north Queensland to combat locusts and cane beetles<sup>2</sup>. Common mynas were also introduced in New South Wales, although the origin and reasons for the introduction are uncertain. Historical records indicate that the bird was once a protected species in NSW in the 19th century<sup>1</sup>.

Common mynas live in a range of climates and habitats and are extremely adaptable. They prefer warm to hot climates and are more abundant in tropical, subtropical and warm temperate areas. Open areas where there is little tree cover, such as suburban open parks and gardens, are their prime habitats. The common myna also inhabits cleared agricultural areas, especially open grasslands, cultivated paddocks, cane fields and plantations. In Cairns, there are up to 1000 common mynas per km<sup>2</sup>. They are capable of expanding their present range into other states, such as NT, SA, TAS and WA<sup>1</sup>.

**Impacts:** Mynas were listed among 100 of the world's worst invasive species by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) in 2000. In Australia, common mynas are



Common myna (above, image: Peter West), Noisy miner (below left, image: Lip Kee Yap) and Yellow-throated miner (below right, image: Michael Barritt & Karen May)



considered to threaten native biodiversity due to their territorial behaviours and nest cavity competition. They are lifelong monogamous and sedentary<sup>3</sup> – breeding pairs use the same territory each year and maintain and defend their territory aggressively during the breeding season (August to March)<sup>4</sup>. This behaviour is thought to evict native bird species from nesting boxes or tree hollows and even kill eggs and chicks<sup>3</sup>. The common myna is also known to carry diseases such as avian malaria (*Plasmodium* and *Haemoproteus* spp.), which can drive some native birds into extinction<sup>3</sup>.

Common mynas can cause serious damage to ripening fruit, such as grapes and blueberries<sup>4</sup>. Roosting and nesting near residential areas often results in noise complaints and health and safety concerns<sup>3</sup>. Common mynas are known to carry diseases, such as avian influenza and salmonellosis<sup>3</sup>, and parasites such as mites, which can cause dermatitis in humans<sup>3</sup>. In a nation-wide survey in 2005, the Australian public rated the common myna as the most significant pest, beating contenders such as the cane toad, European rabbit and feral cat<sup>5</sup>.

The perceived impacts of the common myna are often based on unreliable information, and there is a lack of scientific research that quantifies or confirms the bird's actual impacts<sup>5</sup>. The common myna is not listed as a 'key threatening process' under the Commonwealth's [Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation \(EPBC\) Act 1999](#). No particular legislative responsibility for myna control/management exists in states where mynas are already established, such as QLD, NSW and VIC (see Table). Conversely, import and keeping of common mynas is prohibited and they are 'declared' in states/territories where common mynas have not established yet, such as NT, SA, TAS and WA.

### More information:

1. Tidemann C (2005). *Indian Mynas – Can the problems be controlled?* In: M Hayward (Ed), *Proc. of the 15th National Urban Animal Management Conference*, Australian Veterinary Association, Canberra Pp 55-57.
2. Gregory-Smith R (1985). Introduction and spread of the Common Myna in Canberra. *Canberra Bird Notes* 10(3): 97-103.
3. Markula A, Hannan-Jones M and Csurhes S (2009). [Pest animal risk assessment: Indian myna \(\*Acridotheres tristis\*\)](#). Biosecurity Queensland, Brisbane.

4. Tracey J and Saunders G (2003). [Bird damage to the wine grape industry](#) – report to the Bureau of Rural Sciences, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.
5. Lowe KA, Taylor CE and Major RE (2011). Do Common Mynas significantly compete with native birds in urban

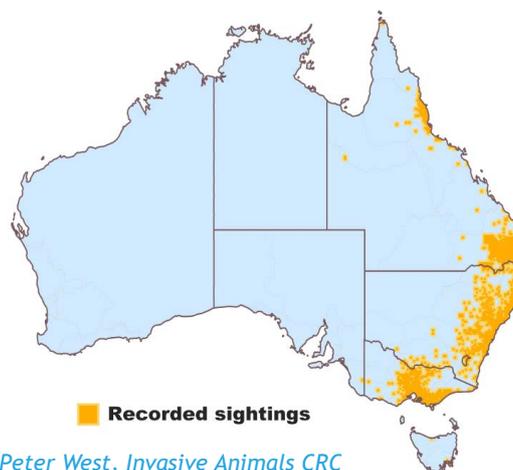


Table: Legislative status of the Indian myna in Australian states and territories.

State	Declared?	Legislation	Note	Prohibited?	Legislation
ACT	✓ invasive species	Pest Animal Management Strategy 2012-2022	Canberra Indian Myna Action Group (CIMAG) assists with trapping of myna in backyards.	✗ Not listed as already well established	Pest Plants and Animals Act 2005
NSW	✗	Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 Rural Lands Protection Act 1998		✗ Unprotected	National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974
NT	✗ Never sighted	Territory Parks & Wildlife Conservation Act 2002		✗ Restricted	Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 2007
QLD	✗	Land Protection (Pest & Stock Route Management) Act 2002	Can be declared under local government law.	✗	Nature Conservation Act 1992 Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation 2005
SA	✓	Natural Resources Management Act 2004	Alert pest animal: focus on prevention and early intervention	✓	Natural Resources Management Act 2004
TAS	✓ Feral Priority 1 species	Vermin Control Act 2000	Highest priority: Unwanted in the wild and need to be eradicated. Importation without a permit is illegal.	✓	Nature Conservation Act 2002
VIC	✗	Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988	Not listed as a threatening process due to a lack of sufficient current scientific evidence.	✗ Unprotected	Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994
WA	✓	Agriculture and Related Resources Protection Act 1976		✓	Agriculture and Related Resources Protection Act 1976

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