

A Guide to using Pee Gee's Indian Myna and Common Starling Trap

Before you start trapping

- No bird is to be treated cruelly or subjected to harsh conditions: please observe the requirements of the NSW *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979*.
- Indian Mynas and Starlings are very intelligent and wary birds. For your trapping to be successful you will need to follow the process included below consistently and methodically. You will need **patience** and **persistence** for your trapping to be successful.
- Ensure that the birds you are aiming to trap are Indian Mynas or Starlings and not native Noisy Miners. Native Noisy Miners are often confused with feral Indian Mynas, however they are protected by law and it is illegal to trap them without a licence.
- This trap is intended to trap Indian Mynas and Starlings where they are known to come down onto the ground and feed on a regular basis (at least 3 times a week). If you have not yet had these birds feeding on the ground at your site, trapping with Pee Gees trap is unlikely to be successful.
- **Do not approach the trap during daylight hours.** Even if you can't see the Indian Mynas they can see you. If un-trapped Indian Mynas see you handling a trap, particularly once you have a trapped bird, they will avoid entering the trap.
- Only ever set up the trap when you are able to check it morning and evening. Ensure that the trap is stored away safely at night, and any other time that it is not in use, as this will prevent accidental trapping of non-target animals. This will also prevent vermin from eating your bait.
- Keep pets and children away from the trap as Indian Mynas and Starlings are extremely wary birds and are sensitive to disturbance. Pets may also eat the bait intended for the birds.
- If you trap any non-target species, you must release them through the door hatches.
- Don't be disappointed if you don't catch birds every day. Indian Mynas and Starlings are flighty birds that can be spasmodic in their movements, so keep at it. They may have moved to another food source in the area, but will return if you keep on baiting your trap.
- **Provide shade, food and fresh water in the larger chamber** (containment chamber) at all times for captured birds.
- If Ibis start to hang around the trap, put your trap away until they have been absent from the site for a couple of days. These birds can get a taste for the bait and stake out the trap even if they can't reach the bait and consequently ruin your trapping effort if not discouraged in the first instance.
- Traps are on loan and should not be modified or changed in any way.

Trapping Process

To maximise trapping results make sure that you have completed one step before moving to the next. Duration of trapping can vary widely from site to site, and can take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks.

Step 1 – Get your bait. You will need to use suitable bait. The bait that is most attractive seems to be 'Lucky Dog Minis – Minced Beef, Vegetable and Pasta Flavour'. **Do not use grain-based foods** (birdseed and bread etc) as this attracts non-target birds such as crested pigeons and parrots.

Step 2 – Choose a spot at which to undertake trapping. This should be a site that you have seen the Indian Mynas come down on to the ground. If possible, the site should be flat and open with short grass, however volunteers have had success trapping in various other settings including on

the roof of carports, or on verandahs. The trap will need to be clear from sources of disturbance such as walkways and children's playing areas. It will also need to be isolated from your pets, as they steal the bait and scare away the birds.

Step 3 – Restrict access to food sources as you need the birds to be hungry to lure them into a trap.

Make sure that any food the Mynas have been accessing at your place (scraps, pet food, chicken feed etc) is no longer available to them. If the birds are feeding at a neighbour's place, it may be worth approaching them and explaining what you are doing, and asking if they would mind restricting the availability of dog food etc. for the time in which you trapping.

Step 4 – 'Free-feed' the birds at the site you have chosen. This is done in order to teach the Indian Mynas that there is a safe and regular source of food at this site. To do this, place a **flat white plate or plastic container lid** at your site and keep this topped up with bait during the day. Avoid going near the plate when there are Mynas around. Other birds, such as magpies and Pee Wees, will most likely steal some of the bait, but do not chase them away as Indian Mynas learn by observation and will learn to eat from the plate by watching these less wary birds. Make sure you actually sight the Mynas eating the bait off the plate **before** moving to the next step.

Step 5 – Put the trap next to the plate. By placing the trap near the plate of food Mynas will perceive the trap as being a harmless object and associate the trap with a free feed.

Step 6 – Bait the trap and take away the 'free-feeding' plate. Place a small white plate inside the smaller (entrance) chamber of the trap. Put a big double handful of bait on the plate. Ensure the birds will be able to see the feed in the entrance chamber from the funnel, but will not be able to reach it until they have entered the trap.

Additionally, put a small amount of bait inside the funnel entrances of the small chamber of the trap and just outside the funnel entrances to attract the Mynas to the trap. Ensure that only a small amount of bait is used in this manner. If you provide too much bait outside the trap the birds will have no need to enter the trap.

Once you have trapped Indian Mynas or Starlings

- If Mynas are to be gassed, captured birds can be left in the holding chamber with the entrance chamber removed for ease of transport.
- A towel should be placed over the holding chamber to keep birds calm during transportation.
- If needed, the birds can also be transferred to a smaller bird cage by placing the holding chamber and cage alongside each other, with door openings aligned. Birds can then be coaxed from the chamber to the cage, without the need for direct handling of birds.
- Use gloves when handling live or dead birds as wild birds may carry disease. When removing the birds through the trap door, take care of the sharp edges. Mynas are easy birds to handle. If you pin the wings to their bodies and grasp firmly they will not peck or fight.
- Clean the trap. You may need to hose it down or, if badly fouled, use some vinegar and scrub it down. Indian Mynas will not enter a dirty or smelly trap. Relocate the trap if the area becomes soiled from captured birds. They like to be clean and will avoid being around their own excrement.

Euthanasia Procedures

The use of CO2 gas cylinders is the preferred method of euthanasing birds, but where appropriate they may be shot or the neck broken.

Contact the Indian Myna Project Officer to locate your nearest CO2 gassing point and for information on appropriate disposal of carcasses - 0438 218 261