

OUR ENVIRONMENT OUR HERITAGE

MYNA BIRDS ARE VERY SMART!



Photo taken by S.Siolo - 16 Sept 2008

Myna birds are a real problem and its population are increasing very fast especially in the lowland areas of Samoa. The damage they caused is also of highly concern as it creates most people to worry for the safety of their livelihoods. With less methods to control or captured them the Ministry is thus paving its way forward to find possible and effective methods to achieve the ridding off sooner of these invasive birds.

The Division of Environment and Conservation of the Ministry is implementing some of the control activities for the Myna Bird Control Project. Some of these activities include the Myna Bird Trapping, Bonus scheme, Voluntary Trapping system and Trapping Technique Competition. Household and field surveys were also conducted to collect baseline information on the myna diversity and distributions within the urban areas and the understandings of the people on the myna bird behavior and impacts.

What has been done?

Household and Field Surveys

Because there are so many myna birds around and no record available of its population, a field survey was done only within the urban areas (Saina to Vailele) tried to provide and estimate the existing population within the areas surveyed. Learning on the behaviour of the myna birds would grant the understandings on how these birds behave and thus help understand a possible way to capture and control them.

The red vented bulbul, an introduce bird has also been identified as an impact mostly on crops such as bananas and pawpaws. Its population is also increasing and sometimes seen flock with the Myna bird. The Ministry is also considering the capturing of this specie together with the mynas.

Myna Bird Trapping

Trapping mynas has been done in Australia using a humane trap designed by Chris Tidemann of the Australian National University. One trap was tested in 2004/2005 and has showed positive catch of myna birds.

Recently, (from 3rd 0 17th September 2008) another trial has been carried out for 12 traps. Difficulties was encountered during this trapping trial such as lots of disturbances of the traps from animals (dogs mainly) and people. However, some traps have made successful catch of mynas and red vented bulbuls. Suitable locations (no disturbances can cause) and the applying the right bait at the right part of the trap will enable mynas to attract to the trap. These birds are very smart and they can learn about the trap if a lot of disturbances happen especially from people approaching it and watching the trapping activity at a closer distance during daylight. Also it is most important that no other source of food for these birds is available nearby as mynas will then avoid visiting the food in the trap.

Adopting this trap method has been very selective considering the safety of non target species which can always retrieve from the trap when caught.

Bonus Scheme

Offering a .20sene reward to one dead myna system was opened to public early August 2008. This is one way that the Ministry have encouraged the public to support this program to reduce the population of myna birds. Anyone is welcome to bring in dead mynas for this reward at Ministry's compound at Sogi (*behind old Westec building*).

Voluntary System

A Volunteer system is also introduced to encourage those interested in the anti-mynas to take full responsibilities on operating the myna traps available from the Ministry. Up to date more than 30 volunteers are on the list eager to try the trap at their places. The trap is quite hard to most volunteers to operate as they find it hard to catch the mynas however, few of them have made it possible as they played around with the trap. These traps are the properties of the Ministry and anyone interested to support this system can visit the main office (*DEC, Level 5 DBS building*) to fill the trap volunteer form from the Terrestrial Conservation Section staff.

What's coming up?

Trapping Technique Competition

As the Ministry is searching for more effective ways to control/kill the myna birds a competition for all interested Samoans is soon to open for the skillful constructors and designers of traps that can attract and catch mynas. Traditional knowledge is highly considered in this aspect and trap techniques has to be environmentally friendly, easy to carry and effective for trapping myna birds. Registration form for this competition will make available from the DEC office when advertisement for trap is aired.

WHAT CAN WE ALL DO TO HELP?

The public is kindly advised to assist and support what the Ministry is working on trying to control these invasive birds by participating in the areas as stated above. Without this support the Myna Bird Control Project would be unsuccessful and if we can all work together in getting rid of the myna birds breeding and nesting in our homes (ceilings and plants nearby), preying on food crops and competing with the livestock, myna problem will be reduced.

Destruction of the myna nestlings also helps but identification of the right myna nest has to be considered correct.

We would be very happy to receive your feedback on this project and any ideas on catching mynas. Your contribution is very important and we must all work together to reduce the Myna Problem!



Photo taken by S.Siolo

For more information contact our - Environment & Conservation Division - DBS building - Level 5 - ph # 23800

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CHILDREN'S CORNER

Children aged 9-15 are invited to answer the following corner. The name of 3 students with top scores at the end of every month will be posted under the "Children's Corner" for special prizes. "2008 Young Environmentalist Star Awards" will be given to 10 students with top total scores at the end of the year.



QUIZ

Circle the right answer.....



1. How many myna bird species in Samoa?
a. 1
b. 2
c. 3
d. 4



2. Who provide funds for the Myna Bird Control Project?
a. Australia Government
b. New Zealand Government
c. Japan Government
d. Samoa Government



3. Why did the Ministry carried out the household and field survey?
a. To find out where the myna birds nest
b. To find out why myna birds are in Samoa?
c. To get information on the whereabouts of the myna birds
d. To provide an estimate of the population of myna birds in the urban areas.



4. Who designed the Myna bird humane trap?
a. Chris Tidemann
b. Mike Tyson
c. Samoa Government
d. Australian National University



5. How many traps trialed by the Ministry from 3rd - 17th September 2008?
a. 1
b. 10
c. 3
d. 12



6. Why was the humane trap adopted by the Ministry to control the myna birds?
a. Cheap
b. Available in Samoa
c. Safe for non target species
d. Easy to make



7. .20 sene bonus scheme is what?
a. Trapping competition
b. Voluntary system
c. Trapping
d. Is the system employed to offer a reward of .20sene for one dead myna.



8. What is the coming up activity for the Project?
a. Trapping,
b. Bonus scheme
c. Voluntary system
d. Trapping technique competition



9. How can the public support the project?
a. Bring in dead mynas for .20sene
b. Take a trap to operate at your place
c. Bring in feedback and ideas to catch myna birds
d. All of the above



10. Who to call on myna bird issues/concerns/information?
a. Ministry of Police
b. Ministry of Revenue
c. Division of Environment & Conservation, MNRE
d. Ministry of Education Sport a

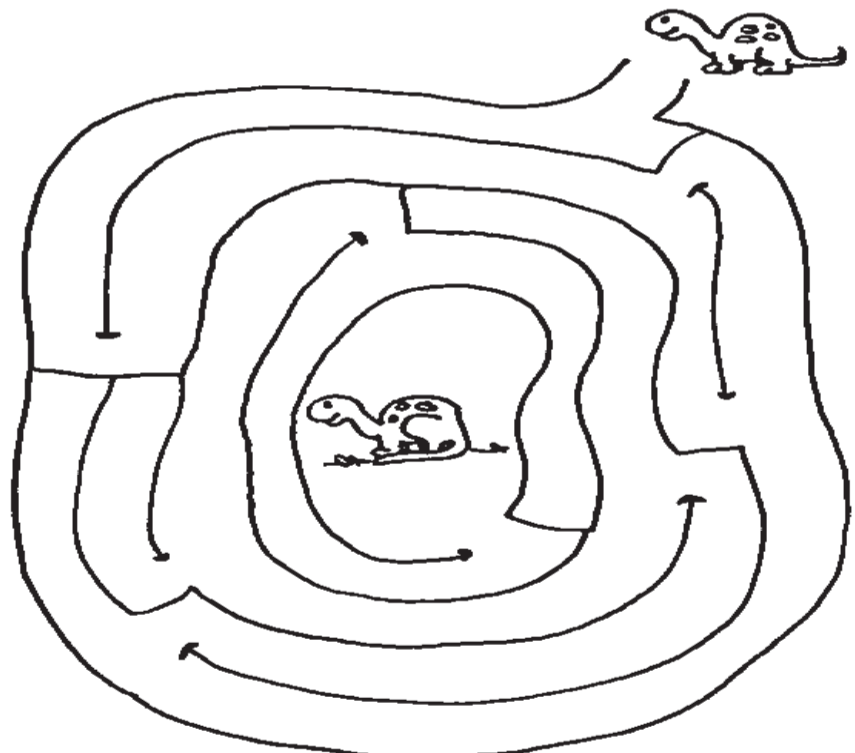


Fill in the gaps

Fill the blank spaces with the correct word.....

Myna birds are a real _____ and its population are increasing very _____ especially in the lowland _____ of Samoa. The damage they caused is also of highly _____ as it creates most people to worry for the _____ of their livelihoods. With less _____ to control or captured them the Ministry is thus paving its way forward to find _____ and effective methods to _____ the ridding off sooner of these _____ birds.

MAZE....



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to acknowledge the following companies for sponsoring our children's corner prizes.

➤ STRICKLAND BROS

➤ DIGICEL

Digicel
The Bigger, Better Network.

➤ McDONALD'S RESTAURANT

➤ BUSINESS SYSTEM

Produced by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment