

# BIO-HAZARD

## Indian Myna

The Indian Myna, *Acridotheres tristis*, is native to southern and south-eastern Asia and was introduced to South Africa in about 1900. A few individuals introduced into Natal multiplied into millions, and are now found over a large portion of South Africa. They are now considered as one of the world's 100 worst alien invasive species (Global Invasive Species Specialist Group) and do not warrant protection. Myna's compete aggressively with many indigenous species, and tend to replace them in areas where Myna populations are well established.

### Identification

The Myna is a medium-sized chocolate-brown bird, with a yellow beak, eye patch, feet and legs. The head and throat and tail are black, with the tail having white tips and white undertail feathers. The large white patches in the wings are noticeably visible when the bird is in flight.

Myna's are very noisy birds and are often found in pairs or small groups where they spend a lot of time on the ground feeding. They are omnivorous and feed mainly on fruits, nectar and insects. Myna's usually roost communally in trees, under bridges and under roof eaves.



Figure 2: Adult Indian Myna

### Damage

Indian Myna's greatly affect the biodiversity of an area, especially with regard to the birdlife. In Hawaii the Myna was introduced to control pest insects on sugarcane, but ending up being one of the main agents of the dispersal of the invasive plant, Lantana (*Lantana camara*). This is just one example of the effects that this bird can have on the biodiversity of indigenous fauna and flora.

### Contact address

Please report any sightings of these birds in the Lowveld to the KNP Alien Biota Section at:

Private Bag X402

Skukuza

1350

Tel: (013) 735 4114 Fax: (013) 735 4051

E-mail: [aliens@parks-sa.co.za](mailto:aliens@parks-sa.co.za)



Figure 1: Baby Indian Myna's

