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Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*

The Common Myna, also called Indian Myna and House Myna, is native to southeastern Asia, but has been introduced onto virtually every tropical or subtropical oceanic island always with disastrous results. They serve as reservoirs or sources of bird malaria, they can be serious pests of crops and orchards, they have been observed to feed on the eggs of seabirds in Hawaii, they are competitors of native species for food and nest sites, and they are a nuisance to humans because of their fondness for nesting around human habitations (Long 1981). Because of their history of establishment and its consequences, the importation of members of the genus *Acridotheres* is prohibited in the United States (Bates and Busenbark 1970).

The Common Myna was first reported in Florida in 1983, when Hal and Jean Quincy observed 6 birds on the Dade County Christmas Bird Count. Within a few years, it was common in several areas of Miami. In the 8 years since it was first observed its spread has been rapid. The population explosion, however, has not been so extensive as first predicted. The population remains small and widely scattered, but warrants continual monitoring. The center of the population remains in Dade County, where the species was confirmed breeding in 6 quadrangles. Breeding was also confirmed in western Broward County near Everglades City in Collier County, and near Jupiter in Palm Beach County. Breeding is suspected at Cocoa Beach in Brevard County and near Indiantown in Martin County. Birds are resident in Clewiston in Hendry County.

The Common Myna is an adaptable bird of open country and human environments. In Florida its preferred habitat seems to be shopping mall parking lots, where it will often beg for French fries and trash (B. Neville, pers. obs.). The birds are omnivorous and feed on a variety of fruits, seeds, and insects (Long 1981). In Florida, Common Mynas form flocks up to 20 birds, far fewer than the enormous aggregations reported in other areas (Long 1981).

The Common Myna is a cavity nester, and the nest consists of a collection of grasses, twigs, leaves, and trash (Schallenberger 1981). Nests have been found in tree cavities, buildings, and in the crowns of palms (Long 1981). In Florida large signs and broken lights are favored nest sites (B. Neville, pers. obs.), and Common Mynas have been observed attacking Purple Martins while at martin houses (D. Finch, pers. commun.) competing for nest sites. The breeding season varies with the location, but is usually in the spring and summer (Long 1981). The 2 to 6 eggs (Long 1981) are unmarked blue or blue-green. In Hawaii incubation lasts 13 days, the young remain in the nest for 29 to 35 days, and up to 3 broods may be produced.

Bruce Neville



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Common Myna

