BREMER CATCHMENT ASSOCIATION INC.

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around the bremer

Myna Birds

The common Indian myna bird is fast becoming Australia's number one feral enemy! In autumn, mynas start to aggregate in large flocks - providing the perfect opportunity to trial a new trap that could finally provide a way to remove these clever and aggressive pests.

The myna bird has been declared the second greatest threat to native birds after land clearing. It's currently spreading through eastern Australia, yet in some areas its arrival is so recent that unknowing residents welcome it into their backyards and encourage it to feed alongside native birds.

First introduced to Australia to control insect pests, the arrival of the Common Indian Myna (*Acridotheres tristis*) in a region signals a disastrous change to come in local bird populations. This extremely aggressive bird chases out native birds and small tree dwelling marsupials such as feather-tailed gliders.

And they are also making their way south - a pair that turned up in Tasmania just before Christmas were quickly dispatched, but others not doubt will follow them.

The Common Indian Myna or 'garbage bird' is becoming more and more prominent along Australia's eastern seaboard. (

For more information go to

www.lanecove.nsw.gov.au/

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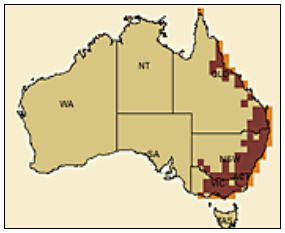
Fact File



When: Autumn - March, April, May

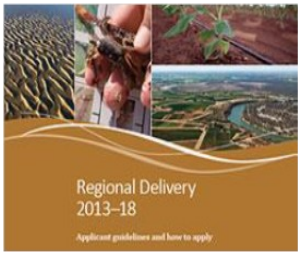
Where: East coast of Australia - Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra in particular have become favourite myna haunts and the myna has been pushing relentlessly north and westwards.

Other info: In Autumn mynas have finished breeding and have begun to aggregate into large flocks. This is the best time to catch birds in large numbers.

A Wild Dog

Example of a dog trap

Cost to Queensland's grazing industry was $67 million in 2008/09.



Caring for our Country program

Feral Animals - Wild Dogs

Phill Sutherland , Wild Dog Officer DAFF Beaudesert

Wild dogs have a significant impact on livestock and wildlife. In Australia, feral animals typically have few natural predators or fatal diseases and high reproductive rates. As a result, they have a high survival rate and can form large populations, often to the detriment of native species.
Wild dogs impact on a range of livestock, mainly through predation and transmission of disease.

AgForce leads the way on empowering Queensland producers to manage wild dogs through trapping and baiting to reduce the economic impacts to their enterprises.

Over the past few years AgForce has played a major role in reinvigorating the issue of wild dogs at a State Government level.

After sustained lobbying by AgForce to the Queensland Government in 2008 to make wild dogs a priority issue, former Premier Anna Bligh announced the formation of the Queensland Dog Offensive Group (QDOG). AgForce has two representatives that sit on QDOG, Peter Lucas (sheep) and Ian Harsant, *(*cattle), as well as President Brent Finlay as chair. Peter Lucas also represents AgForce on the national wild dog management advisory group.

AgForce has a wild dog committee which includes landholders from both inside and outside the wild dog barrier fence and peri urban representatives. This committee feeds information to the Queensland Dog Offensive Group (QDOG) representatives and discusses resolutions .

Counting the Cost

Consultants were employed to conduct focus groups around the state to record the social barriers that inhibited people from participating in wild dog control.

In September 2009, the analysis into Economic Costs of Wild Dogs was completed, which identified a cost to Queensland's grazing industry of $67 million in 2008/09.

P.S. Ian Harsant is also a BCA member.

Phill was a guest speaker at a recent meeting.

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More Caring for our Country Components Announced

Last week additional funding components of the next 5 year phase of the Caring for our Country program were announced by the Federal Government.
Regional Delivery Funding - $669 million has been allocated to the 54 Regional NRM Groups and Catchment Management Authorities (CMA's) to enhance and maintain Australia's biodiversity and environment over the next five years.
The second phase of Caring for our Country will be focused under complementary Sustainable Agriculture and Sustainable Environment streams.
Regional delivery will be administered by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities on behalf of both portfolios.

To find out more visit :**www.nrm.gov.au.**

As part of the Federal funding arrangements it is understood that the regional NRM groups/ CMA's will be required to place a greater emphasis on working with Landcare, farming systems and community groups and be responsive to community priorities such as pests and weeds.

Whole Farm Planning

Farmers are by necessity involved in planning. This planning may be merely on an informal basis, but it usually includes activities such as the scheduling of operations, stock and crop management programs, breeding strategies and the purchase of new equipment.

But works aimed at providing shelter or combating soil erosion, salinity and other degradation problems must also be included in a really successful operation. The development of a whole farm plan that looks at the characteristics and needs of the total property is an excellent way to maximize the effectiveness of such works. The process of developing such a plan enables problem areas to be identified and strategies to be developed that address these problems in the short and long term.

Land capability

The question of what land is *capable* of producing is closely linked to what is the most *suitable* land use for production

Landholders can use their property in many ways—cropping, grazing, horticulture—but there are physical limits to what can reasonably be expected to get from land without running it down. If land is pushed too hard or used for purposes for which it is not suitable, it will not be able to sustain production or resources. The land will become degraded and profit will shrink.

Drawing up a property plan will help you plan how best to use the recourses on your farm. Start be recording the physical characteristics: the slope , soil type, soil depth, watercourses, vegetation and others. An areal photograph from Google Earth will give you a good base for this.

Good Land use

Don't ignore the Landscape! Careful selection of Planting/Seeding Design will achieve a natural appearance.

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Roadvale Salinity Project

A salinity forum was held at Roadvale School on 4th May with 8 local Landholders in attendance along with the President and Vice-President of the Bremer Catchment Association (BCA). The Mayor and an officer from Scenic Rim Regional Council were also in attendance, as were technical specialists Dr Roger Shaw and Lauren Eyre from DNR&M, the Principal of the School and Jean Bray

Strong interest was shown by the landholders in a de-watering trial project. Other topics discussed were pasture management, the need to maintain good ground cover, revegetation options, the development of property management plans and the proposed funding application by the BCA to secure funds for on-ground projects in the area.

(This is part of the report submitted to BCA meeting by Jean Bray—SEQCatchments Ltd)

Salinity Problems

BREMER • CATCHMENT ASSOCIATION INC.

Working together

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Embankment Piping

Each year many dams fail by piping or tunneling resulting in loss of irrigated crop production or loss of stock water.

Most of these failures can be avoided if the causes are understood by landowners and earthmoving contractors, and if correct construction techniques are employed. "The combination of *dispersive soils* and inadequate *compaction* is the greatest contribution to farm dam failure", said Bill our BCA President.

What are Dispersive Soils? Dispersive soils are those in which the clay content has a high percentage of sodium. This clay fraction readily breaks down to form a suspension in water. *Country where dispersive material is prevalent is usually marked by deep erosion gullies which are larger than expected given their catchment area.*

What are the Problems? When excavated, dispersive soils form strong, tough, impermeable clods. Considerable compactive effort is needed to break down these clods and compact the material.

When water seeps in and leaches out the clay fraction, small pipes form which quickly develop into tunnels, resulting in a breached embankment. Pipes usually develop in a vary short time following filling of the dam and failure can occur in a matter of hours.

How to Test for Dispersion: Bill suggests a simple test can be used to determine whether or not a clay is dispersive. The procedure is as follows:

1. Place five *air-dried* soil crumbs, each about 5 mm diameter in a glass jar containing 100 milliliters of demineralised water. Add the soil to water, not the water to the soil. **2.** Allow to stand without shaking for at least 1 hour. **3.** Note the turbidity of the solution. If the solution is clear then little trouble from dispersion can be expected provided adequate compaction is done. 4. Examine the interface between the soil sample and the water.

If there is a cloud at this interface it is indicative of a dispersive soil. Soil samples tested should be representative of soils found at tall depths throughout the proposed excavation area. The degree of dispersion can vary at different depths and in different soil horizons. It is recommended that all tests be duplicated to ensure that results are consistent.

Can Dispersive Soils be used for Dam Construction? Many large on-farm storages for irrigation and stock water have been constructed with dispersive soils and are successful. This is because correct construction techniques have been used. The important factor is *compaction*. Adequate compaction can only be achieved with correct *compaction equipment* and working with material which is at the correct *moisture content*.