Importance of 'pre-adaptation', consumer opportunism and limited interference competition in facilitating urban living by exotic Common Mynas

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Introduced Common Mynas *Sturnus tristis*, are abundant in many eastern Australian cities, towns and adjacent rural (exurban) areas. They are widely considered to be pests, because they nest in house roofs, form noisy roosting aggregations, may spread human pathogens and allegedly negatively impact upon native birds through competition for food and nest sites. To test the latter allegation adequately, we need further investigation of the species' ecology, particularly in cities. To that end, this study documents aspects of Common Mynas' ecology in Melbourne, Australia and its exurban hinterland in the non-breeding season. Common Mynas' diet and foraging ecology were similar in Melbourne and the adjacent exurban environment. Collectively, in both environments, one or more other bird(s) foraged less than, or within, five metres of a focal foraging myna more than 90 percent of the time, but in the entire study only five aggressive encounters involving foraging Common Mynas occurred during direct observation (0.74 encounters/observation hr). All these encounters occurred in the city, but only two of them were with heterospecifics. The abundance of Common Mynas appeared to be similar in urban and exurban environments in the subset of habitats surveyed. Myna abundance was negatively correlated with the presence of native Noisy Miners *Manorina melanocephala* and *Eucalyptus* and *Corymbia* trees, but positively associated with the presence of exotic trees. We propose that the Common Myna's successful exploitation of urban food resources in Australia stems from a combination of 'pre-adaptation', some opportunistic consumer innovation with respect to human food waste and a low level of interspecific interference competition for food. Planting more native trees in the urban environment might ultimately make Australian cities less hospitable for Common Mynas, but also probably more hospitable for Noisy Miners.

Diet of the Satin Bowerbird *Ptilonorhynchus violaceus* in the Illawarra Region, New South Wales, Australia

Matthew Mo and David R. Waterhouse

Phenological patterns in fruiting are an important facet of avian frugivore ecology. The annual diet of the Satin Bowerbird *Ptilonorhynchus violaceus* has been documented mainly in the northern parts of its distribution. Less diverse assemblages of fruiting plants are expected in the more temperate regions. This paper reports on a five-year dietary study in the Illawarra rainforests, south of Sydney. Ground surveys recorded monthly phenologies for 83 species of fleshy fruit-producing plants and 78 observations of Satin Bowerbirds feeding. Twenty-six species of trees and climbers were identified in the diet. Moreton Bay Fig *Ficus macrophylla*, Jackwood *Cryptocarya glaucescens* and Crabapple *Schizomeria ovata* were the most significant feed species, followed by Wild Quince *Alectryon subcinereus*, White Quandong *Elaeocarpus kirtonii*, Sandpaper Fig *Ficus coronata* and Brown Beech *Pennantia cunninghamii*. Species that fruited sporadically comprised approximately one-third of the fruit component of the diet. The number of species fruiting reliably was lower during the breeding season, from September to December, than other months of the year. During this period, there appears to be accentuated reliance on invertebrate prey and herbs. Satin

Bowerbirds formed foraging associations with seven other birds, sharing more than half of the fruit species in its diet. This study contributes ecological information necessary for restoring natural corridors in the fragmented Illawarra rainforests to facilitate fauna movement and seed dispersion.

SEABIRD ISLANDS No. 267
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