

*Monitoring of myna birds roost at
Moamo*



27th June-01st July 2014

Terrestrial Section
Division of Environment and Conservation

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Introduction

Myna birds are categorized in the '*starling family*', they are native to Southern Asia especially India, has many species and lastly became an introduced invasive species to many countries of the Pacific including Samoa. Specifically, there are two species in the country today, jungle myna and the common myna bird, both have different characteristics but brings harm to the environment and people as whole.

In 1965, the jungle myna was introduced to the country followed by the common myna in 1988, under one aspect to control cattle ticks; however, it brought great impacts to Samoa's biodiversity.

Monitoring

The terrestrial team continued its monitoring and re-visited the roost site at Moamoa on Friday 27th June 2014 in the early mornings, several changes in the area was seen especially new homes were built as well as cultivation of lands. The monitoring team couldn't precede any further investigation that morning because we couldn't make our way to the usual roost areas because the land owners gate was locked; direct observation initialised that myna birds are still roosting at the site, where previous monitoring took place. Meanwhile, flock of myna birds flew out making loud noises until they were all out and the place was quiet, and few native birds flew by. Later on, the team were able to communicate with the owner of the land and the key was handed over for further monitoring.

On the other hand, native birds existed in the place too, such as, cardinal honey eater; white throated pigeon, Samoan broadbill, fruit dove, Samoan starling, Samoan fantail and many more.

The monitoring was conducted for the whole week, with two monitoring per day (morning and evening), where we observed its habit, reactions and the direction they took when neither took off nor disturbed.

Observation 1 (Morning)

Specifically, myna birds flew in and out, to and from communally; in the early hours of the morning, myna birds are dense and are scattered on Togo vao (shoe button ardisia), and meanwhile, they flew out and make a lot of noise. Every flock take different directions, others flew on coconut trees, African rubber tree, African tulip and shoe button ardisia, while others head off to their destination. At around 7am, myna birds are all out and they are seen on roads, near family homes and in public areas; approximately, 1000+ myna birds were seen and recorded by the team.

Native birds that have been recorded at the site include manualii, se'u, miki and others.

Observation 2 (Evening)

The evening observation happened, around 4:30pm myna birds already exists in the forest (site), they flew around on coconut trees, pawpaw trees, African rubber trees and African tulip.

Later on, myna birds scatter around the area making a lot of noise and by 6:25pm-6:35pm, myna bird's heads off to their resting area until morning, usually, myna birds flew on coconut trees, settles on togo vao then scatter in, the team tried their best to look out for any nests or observe their reaction in their nesting place, however, myna birds are very sensitive and flew off. This observation stabilises the fact that myna birds are very brave and is the main reason why it is very hard to catch them.

Furthermore, an unknown nest made from the flower of the pulu tree (African rubber tree) on the Togo vao (refer: figure 9 & 10), unluckily, no eggs were found to determine owner of the nest, however, due to our observation, flock of myna birds appears to be on Togo vao but the nest seems to be very shallow for a myna bird; thus, investigation will continue on it.

Recommendation

- Increase public and educational awareness
- Ongoing monitoring for located and possible roost areas. This will provide a more practical management method to kill myna's at the roost.
- Good plan and time management for monitoring, in spite of this, a possible method will be found, and then use to eradicate them.

Conclusion

To conclude, due to the inspection and monitoring carried out, it initialize that Moamoa is still the main roost for myna birds, approximately 1000+ myna birds were recorded as they flew out in the morning taking several directions, conversely, one possible roost site is the livestock field of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries at Vailima, however, no further investigations happened, other than direct observation and verbal communication with field officers. Moreover, myna birds tends to move around communally if disturbed, yet, exists in the area

Appendices



Figure 1: Myna bird feeds on the papaya tree



Figure 2: Myna Bird on the papaya tree



Figure 3: Myna birds on the African rubber tree



Figure 4: Myna birds flying in and out



Figure 5: Myna birds on coconut trees



Figure 6: Evening scene



Figure 7: Landing on coconut leaves



Figure 8: Myna birds on shoe button ardisia



Figure 9: A nest of an unknown bird on togo vao



Figure 10: A nest made from the flower of the Pulu Vao