

## INDIAN MYNAS IN EASTERN SOUTH ISLAND

On the morning of 17 January 1982, I saw an Indian Myna (*Acridotheres tristis*) above the Clifton Hill cliffs south of Shag Rock at Sumner (43°33'S, 172°44'E). The weather was fine and the observation distance was 5-15 m. The Myna was flying south, steadily gaining height with a laboured flight pattern. The distinctive mode of flight, body plumage and striking white wing flashes left no doubt about identification. The bird was seen from below, and the light enhanced the wing flashes in a way I have seen also on the wings of Cape Pigeons (*Daption capense*).

Indian Mynas have been reported only sporadically in the South Island. In 1956 two were seen near Nelson (Falla *et al.* 1979). Bull *et al.* (1978) recorded Mynas on the central east coast in only three of the 2016 national grid squares (10 000-yard squares) that make up the South Island survey region. There have, however, been several Myna sightings in Canterbury in 1981-1982. Since October 1981, J. Baggstrom, Ranger, Christchurch Botanic Gardens (pers. comm.), has received three unsubstantiated reports in summer of Mynas from New Brighton (c. 43°31'S, 172°44'E). In December 1981, S. Moore (pers. comm.) had a report from Ashley (c. 43°16'S, 172°36'E). On 29 January 1982, H. Niven (pers. comm.) saw a Myna at Bromley (c. 43°32'S, 172°42'E). On 3 February 1982, H. McAndrew (pers. comm.) saw two Mynas on the main road near Dunsandel (c. 43°40'S, 172°12'E). In Marlborough, R. Small (pers. comm.) saw four Mynas in May 1981 in Puriri Bay on the western shore of Arapawa Island (c. 41°11'S, 174°19'E) in Queen Charlotte Sound.

These several sightings in the last 12-18 months suggest that some Mynas may be breeding in some eastern districts of the South Island. However, the possibility that the birds were escaped captive birds cannot be dismissed. One Canterbury aviarist knows of a number of aviaries in which Mynas are held and cited one instance in Christchurch where the birds have been liberated with the intention of establishing a wild population. These birds have apparently survived during the summer but none has been seen in Christchurch in winter. Mynas are well established in the North Island north of 40°S (Kinsky *et al.* 1970). More southern latitudes may be too cold for them to become established.

I should like to thank Brent Cowie and Gordon Williams for helping me with this note.

## LITERATURE CITED

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