POSITION STATEMENT
Invasive Species

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Biological invasions can displace indigenous species and cause irreparable damage to ecosystems; they represent one of greatest current threats to biodiversity. Invasive birds can adversely impact populations of indigenous birds, and invasive plants have caused extensive damage to important bird habitat.

BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA POSITION STATEMENT

BirdLife South Africa (BLSA) opposes the release of any plant or animal into an area outside of its native habitat. Although not all introduced species have adverse impacts, we advocate the precautionary principle due to the difficult nature of predicting consequences.

BLSA recognises that biological control agents can be beneficial for controlling invasive plants. Where sufficient research has been undertaken to determine possible threats posed to native animals and plants, we support the use of these as per legislative requirements.

BLSA supports the translocation or eradication of invasive birds before they become naturalised. Where lethal control is necessary, BLSA favours the most humane method possible.

Where non-native species exist, and do not pose a threat to indigenous species and/or habitat, BLSA supports sustainable population management measures, e.g. Common Peacock and Chukar Partridge on Robben Island.

BLSA supports the strategy to eradicate non-captive Mallards due to hybridisation threats posed to indigenous species.

BLSA is opposed to the release of domestic and/or pet birds into the wild, such as Red-necked Parakeets, African Grey Parrots, and Macaws.

BLSA recognises that Common Myna's represent one of the most widely known examples of an avian invasion in South Africa, and that there is widespread public concern about the matter. Therefore we wish to note the following:

- BLSA supports the legal eradication of Common Myna within our protected areas, e.g. the Kruger National Park.
- BLSA notes that large, communal Common Myna roosts that are situated in close proximity to humans can result in unwanted impacts (noise, odour, parasites). If it is considered that the only viable option for removing such populations is eradication, the provincial government authority must be consulted with in order to ensure legislative compliance, as regulations vary between provinces.
- Globally, there has been concern about the impacts of Mynas on native bird species due to competition for nesting sites. Interspecific aggression between Common Myna and indigenous species has also been noted in South Africa. Despite this, potential displacement of indigenous species is believed to be limited to the local scale in South Africa.
- Adverse impacts of Common Myna on biodiversity is not well documented in South Africa, and most descriptions are of an anecdotal nature.

BirdLife SOUTH AFRICA
Giving Conservation Wings