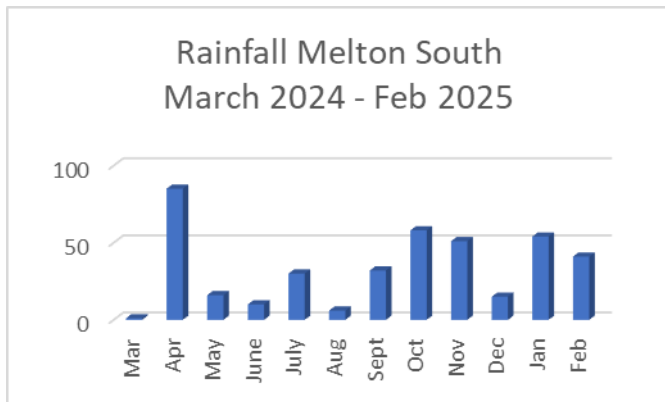




MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

March 2025

RAINFALL



FEBRUARY

Rainfall continued to be both low & sporadic:

June	10mm	23 days no rain
July	30mm	23 days no rain
August	6mm	28 days no rain
September	32mm	24 days no rain
October	58mm	27 days no rain
November	51mm	23 days no rain
December	15mm	22 days no rain
January	54mm	13 days no rain
February	41mm	23 days no rain

A stormy start to the month. A massive thunderstorm accompanied by 18mm rain. Re-igniting the bushfires in the west & starting more in the Otways. Even a local fire at Bullengarook! 23 days without rain in February!

FEBRUARY ACTIVITIES

Weeding in Pinkerton Forest

On Thursday 6th February Irene & Daryl returned to weed Pinkerton Forest. After several months work we have finally removed the Galenia infestation west of the Graves carpark, in the northwest corner of the Forest!

Unfortunately a new weed has appeared in the new year, perhaps taking advantage of the removal of the Galenia that was choking the ground. Known in northern Victoria & the Riverina as Love Grass or Caterpillar Grass, (possibly local colloquial names) it is suspected that it may have arrived in a shipment of rice hulls from the Riverina, brought as mulch. The seeds are very sticky, sticking relentlessly to clothing, & probably animal fur. Hopefully the kangaroos will not spread it into the Forest.



There are two main infestations beside the fence separating the Forest from Pinkerton Lane. This is the first time we have noticed it here so it must have recently spread over the fence. For several years it has heavily infested Pinkerton Link but it now seems largely under control after several years of grass cutting.

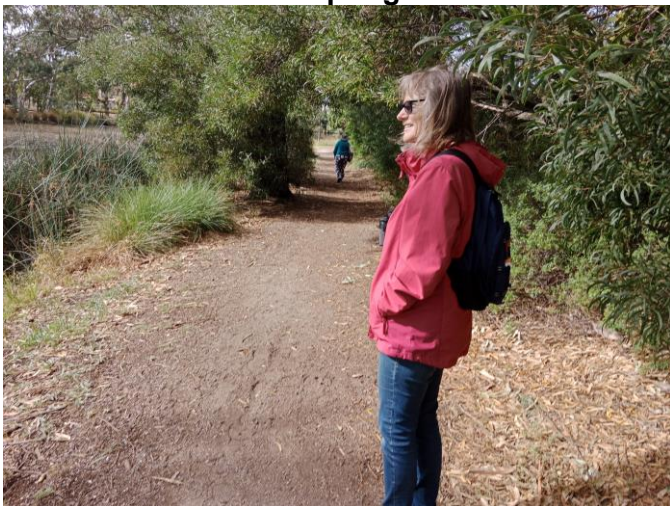
Irene slashed it all with a whipper-snipper to prevent further growth. We discussed raking up the cut grass, with the seeds, but decided this would not be practical.

But now that we know where it is, & when it will regrow in January 2026, we can be ready to hit it with an appropriate spray before it sets seed. We will need to discuss with Simon & Western Land Services what spray will be most effective. As it grows in mid-summer the broad bright green leaves will stand out quite distinctively from the surrounding brown grasses. Ex Shepparton orchardist, the late Alan Akers, advised that it had to be hit hard before March, otherwise forget it until next year!

We have a year to plan our next action tackling this new weed.



Bird Walk at Caroline Springs



On Saturday 15th February Pam, Sharon & Daryl met at Springlake Shopping Centre at Caroline Springs. Caroline Springs wetland has a rich variety of waterbirds. A birdlife oasis in the midst of the western suburbs. One of Melton's best waterbird sites. A paved footpath is on both sides of the waterway.

Bird numbers were very low, probably due to the cold weather condition, consisting of a series of

wild squalls with wind-driven rain. Many waterbirds were seen sheltering on the leeward side of the island. A complete contrast with the extreme heat waves of just three days before! Even the outdoor cafes were deserted. What the heck happened to summer!

23 bird species were seen, recorded on eBird: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S213362358>;

Black Duck	Wood Duck
Mallard hybrid	Black Swan
Eastern Swamphen	Dusky Moorhen
Coot	Masked Lapwing
Little Pied Cormorant	Silver Gull
Little Black Cormorant	White Ibis
Long-billed Corella	Rainbow Lorikeet
Domestic Pigeon	Crested Pigeon
Little Raven	Magpie
Red Wattlebird	Willy Wagtail
Sparrow	Magpie-lark
Starling	Mynah



As we walked, we were constantly approached by all three species of waterhens, as well as some Black Ducks; no doubt expecting to be fed. We were even followed by three juvenile Dusky Moorhens for about 100 metres! They approached to about 1.5 metres!! They are obviously well used to being fed. On previous visits we would often see an old lady, feeding the birds corn from a can. But she was nowhere to be seen, probably kept away by the wintry weather. There was even a fisherman trying his luck in the lake, despite the nasty weather.

No parrots were seen apart from a few Rainbow Lorikeets.

Pinkerton & Eynesbury bird survey

Unfortunately the quarterly bird survey scheduled for Sunday 23rd February was cancelled as it was a Total Fireban Day. The heat was not as fierce as it was the preceding Saturday but the declaration

of the Fireban took the decision out of our hands. Also, as Pinkerton & Eynesbury Forests are old growth woodlands safety protocols also preclude walks here if storms, high winds of thunderstorms are predicted, due to the danger of falling trees or branches.

Eynesbury Market



Lorraine & Lee at Eynesbury Market

On Sunday 23rd February Eynesbury Environment Group participated in Eynesbury Market. Crowds were down, possibly due to the Fireban Day & the predicted stormy weather. As it turned out the weather was not as stormy as predicted.

We were surprised to see some native ground covers persisting in the market area, managing to survive despite the trampling feet, vehicles & market stalls. This Bluebush (*Maireana* sp) was one of several beside the EEG marquee, no doubt enjoying the constant dripping water from the air conditioner next door.

Sowing Speargrass seed in Pinkerton Link



On Thursday Irene & Daryl returned to Pinkerton where we sowed Speargrass (*Austrostipa glabra*) seed in Pinkerton Link. These were given to us by the late Lyn Holdsworth. Those seeds that do not germinate should provide food for our resident Zebra Finches. Scattering the tangles seed was difficult so Irene suggested mixing the seed with mulch. This made scattering so much easier. Irene then watered the seed to settle it into the mulch, so it would not be blown away.

MARCH ACTIVITIES

Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group Working bees

PLEG working bees are held each Thursday. Meet at the Green Shed in Pinkerton Forest at 10:00.

Thursday 6 th March	Thursday 13 th March
Thursday 20 th March	Thursday 27 th March

Cleanup Australia Day

Cleanup Australia Day 2025

Sunday 2nd March

'Clean Up Australia inspires and mobilises communities to improve and conserve our environment, eliminate litter and end waste. More than 22 million Aussies have participated in Clean Up Australia activities and events over the past three decades.

Over that time Clean Up Australia has evolved to provide practical solutions to help all Australians live more sustainably every day of the year, and emerged as one of the country's most recognised, credible and trusted environmental charities.

Today our focus is as much on preventing rubbish entering our environment as it is removing what has already accumulated.

What was started over thirty years ago, by an "average Australian" who had a simple idea to make a difference in his own backyard has now become the nation's largest community-based environmental event.

Of course, Australia's environmental challenges can't be solved in just one day, so Clean Up Australia works with community, government and businesses to provide practical solutions to help us all live more sustainably every day of the year.'

<https://www.cleanup.org.au/about-us;>

Friends of Eynesbury

Friends of Eynesbury would like host a 'Clean Up Australia Day' Event to cover Greenhill Rd, St Arnaud's Rd down to the creek and recreation

area bordering on Cobram and Goulburn way In Eynesbury. Friends of Eynesbury is a community of locals who gather independently to pick up random rubbish on a regular basis.

27 Goulburn Way, Eynesbury 3338 BBQ area/Park Meeting Points:

Site 1- Goulburn Way BBQ area and playground..

Site 2 - Corner of Greenhill Rd/St Arnauds Road.

Site 3 - Discovery Centre Eynesbury/Eynesbury Road.

Site Supervisor: Samantha Marsh

<https://register.cleanup.org.au/fundraisers/samanthamarsh/friends-of-eynesbury----clean-up-australia-day----event>;

Melton Botanic Garden

Sunday 2nd March 10:00 – noon

Meet at FMBG Plant Nursery & Depot
21 Williams St.

MARCH ACTIVITIES

Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group

Meeting: Thursday 10th April 10:00

Meet at the Green Shed in Pinkerton Forest at 10:00. The meeting will be preceded by a working bee.

Eynesbury Market

Eynesbury Environment Group is a regular participant in Eynesbury Market as a stall holder
Dates TBA

OTHER LOCAL EVENTS

BIRDWATCHING IN MELTON

Birdwatching activities in Melton are now confined to two groups.

These include:

- Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group
- Eynesbury Environment Group

PLEG / Werribee Wagtails:

Bird surveys at Pinkerton & Eynesbury

Note: Pinkerton/Eynesbury quarterly bird surveys will now be conducted on the fourth Sunday of the month in 2025!

Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group (PLEG) & Werribee Wagtails once again invite the community to join them birding at Pinkerton Forest & Mulla Mulla Woodland (Bush's Paddock) in the morning & Eynesbury Forest in the afternoon. Toilets, café & bar at Eynesbury & composting toilet at Pinkerton. Eynesbury Forest, is one of Victoria's largest remaining stands of Grey Box),

We finish around 3 pm. Flat but uneven ground, with no paths in Pinkerton. Part of the Eynesbury walk is on a bush track.

Within the greater City of Melton, over 170 different bird species have been recorded. 134 bird species have been recorded at Pinkerton & 170 at Eynesbury to date. Wedge-tailed Eagles regularly nest in these woodlands. These quarterly surveys provide valuable scientific data as to both bird diversity & numbers in these woodlands. This data helps us make decisions & plan for the protection of our vulnerable birdlife. Citizen science in action! We may see some of the 60 or so kangaroos that live across all three of these adjoining sites as well as the several hundred kangaroos in Eynesbury. Birds of Pinkerton & Eynesbury Forests are recorded on eBird.

Pinkerton is private property located at [http://goo.gl/maps/drFnS.0-p';!./](http://goo.gl/maps/drFnS.0-p';!./;);

From Werribee, drive up Tarneit Road, turn left into Boundary Road, then turn right into Mt Cottrell Road. After about 3 Km, just after a rise, there is a group of houses on the left. The gravel track to Pinkerton (behind a locked gate) is just before the first house (1668 Mt Cottrell Road).

Mulla Mulla Grassland (formerly Bush's Paddock) is accessed by the same track. For more info: John McKenzie jackmack37@hotmail.com; or Daryl Akers jenniferkayakers@outlook.com; (0438 277 252). Meet at Mt Cottrell Road. Melway Map 221 Ref H8 Gates open 8.45 am, walk starts 9.00

Pinkerton & Eynesbury bird surveys are held quarterly in February, May, August & November

Sunday 25th May Sunday 24th August
Sunday 23rd November

Bird species are recorded on eBird

Pinkerton Forest 134 bird species:

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L2552509>;

Eynesbury Forest 181 bird species:

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L2552178>;

Eynesbury Environment Group: Nature Walks

The Eynesbury Environment Group's (EEG) nature walks are back for 2025. Join us for a guided walk through the Eynesbury Grey Box Forest and discover why it is one of the most important woodlands around Melbourne.

Meet outside of the Eynesbury General Store. Bring long pants, walking shoes, water, binoculars (available to borrow), camera. All walks are free! All ages, bird watching abilities and interest levels welcome. More walks and events are added throughout the year. For further details, updates or to join the Group contact us at: eynesbury.environment.group@gmail.com; or follow Eynesbury Environment Group on Facebook.

Eynesbury Nature Walks 2025 schedule

Join us for our bird walks to discover the interesting landscape and beautiful creatures that call Eynesbury and surrounding areas home. All walks are free! All ages, bird watching abilities and interest levels welcome.

Friday 30th May 2025 Eynesbury Bird Walk
9am – 11.30am

Sunday 27 July Eynesbury Bird Walk
Meet at Eynesbury Discovery Centre parking lot, 481 Eynesbury Road, Eynesbury.
9am – 11.30am.

Sunday 21st September: Spring Bioblitz Walk in Eynesbury Forest
9am – 11.30am.

4th October Woodland Night Walk
7pm – 9.30pm.

Eynesbury bird walk Sunday 27th July
Aussie bird count Sunday 19th October

Eynesbury Environment Group: Melton bird walk 2025 schedule

These walks are all on footpaths, some paved. No bushwalking required. Child & elderly friendly!

Saturday 15th March Eynesbury
Eynesbury is a 288-hectare Grey Box Woodland with over 170 bird species observed so far, as well as a small ornamental lake rich in wetland birdlife. A rare opportunity to see woodland bird species. A reminder of what the Melton region one looked like! Toilet facilities, general store, restaurant & bar! On Fire Ban Days, walk will be around the lake only.
Eynesbury Discovery Centre Melway 226 Ref H1

Saturday 19th April Little Blind Creek
Little Blind Creek flows through Melton, meeting Toolern Creek at Hannah Watts Park. It is home

for large numbers of birds. The many old hollow trees provide nest sites for many hollow-nesting birds & possums. Meet in Guide Hall carpark in Pinkerton St (off Yuille St opposite Melton Golf Course). Melway Map 337 Ref C8

Saturday 17th May Melton Botanic Garden

Melton Botanic Garden features plants that tolerate a dry climate and low water conditions. It is one of Melton's finest birding sites. Meet at the carpark in Lakewood Blvd, near the public toilets & BBQ shelters. Melways Map 337 Ref: C11

Saturday 21st June Hannah Watts Park

Hannah Watts Park is a popular park, beside Toolern Creek, in High St, just east of the shopping centre, opposite the golf course. Melway Page 337 Ref D9

Saturday 19th July Toolern Creek

Toolern Creek (Big Red) There is a footpath that runs along the creek. The creek forms a corridor for birds & other wildlife through Melton, from Toolern Vale in the north to the Toolern Regional Park in the south, thence to the Werribee River. Meet at Tamar Drive Melway Ref 337 C9

Saturday 16th August Strathtulloh

Strathtulloh Woodland is a remnant regenerating Grey Box Woodland overlooking Toolern Creek Meet in Strathtulloh Circuit Melway 343 Ref A12

-Drive south out of Melton along Exford Road, descending to the bottom of the road to the T intersection at Exford
-Turn left at the T intersection (*watching carefully for traffic!*)
-Head east along Greigs Road
-Turn left (north) into Redgum Drive (*opposite Butlers Rd*)
-Turn left at the T intersection into Strathhtulloh Cct
-Continue along Strathhtulloh Cct. (*Strathhtulloh Cct veers to the right*)
-Continue past Greens Road
-There is a footpath here on the left of the road (*just past Greens rd*) leading into Strathulloh Woodland

Saturday 20th September Melton Gilgai

Melton Gilgai Woodland (Harkness Road Woodland) is a remnant Grey Box/ Yellow Gum woodland. We hope to see a variety of woodland birds. Perhaps also some of the 100+ kangaroos

that live here. Meet in Harkness Road Melway map 330 Ref B11

-Drive through Melton along High Street, west along the old Western Highway toward Bacchus Marsh.

-Turn right (north) into Harkness Road, just before descending into the deep Anthonys Cutting.

-There is a woodland a few km down the road.

-Second woodland gate on the right

Saturday 18th October Aussie Bird Count Walk in Eynesbury Forest

Meet at Eynesbury Discovery Centre parking lot, 481 Eynesbury Road, Eynesbury. 9am – 11.30am.

Saturday 15th November Long Forest Mallee

Long Forest Mallee (LFM) is a unique Mallee remnant between Melton & Bacchus Marsh. Long Forest Road Melway 335 Ref E3

-Drive through Melton along High Street, west along the old Western Highway toward Bacchus Marsh.

-Turn right (*north*) into Long Forest Road, after descending into the deep Anthonys Cutting, then ascending once more to the top

-Long Forest Mallee is a few km down the road.

-Continue past Sundew Ave (*on right*)

-Slow down & turn left just after Sundew Ave into a reserve carpark (*hard to see*)

Bring long pants, walking shoes, water, binoculars (available to borrow), camera, hat and sunscreen. Follow us on Facebook or Instagram to see if there are any changes to planned walks. Contact us at eynesbury.environment.group@gmail.com;

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

January 2025 warmest on record globally

According to Copernicus Services,

'Copernicus: January 2025 was the warmest on record globally, despite an emerging La Niña.

**January 2025 was the warmest January globally, with an average ERA5 surface air temperature of 13.23°C, 0.79°C above the 1991-2020 average for January.*

**January 2025 was 1.75°C above the pre-industrial level and was the 18th month in the last nineteen months for which the global-average surface air temperature was more than 1.5°C above the pre-industrial level.*

**The last 12-months period (February 2024 – January 2025) was 0.73°C above the 1991-2020 average, and 1.61°C above the estimated 1850-*

1900 average used to define the pre-industrial level.'

<https://climate.copernicus.eu/copernicus-january-2025-was-warmest-record-globally-despite-emerging-la-nina>;

According to UN News:

'The world has just experienced the hottest January ever recorded, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said on Thursday, citing data crunched by UN partner the Copernicus Climate Service.'

'Last month was 1.75 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial level and 0.79°C above the 1991-2020 average, despite expectations that the La Nina weather phenomenon might bring cooler temperatures.'

In 2015, the international community agreed to try to limit average global temperature rise to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

The January data was "surprising" even to climate change experts at Copernicus, the European climate change service, which noted that it was the 18th month in the last 19 where the global-average surface air temperature was more than 1.5°C above the pre-industrial level.

January 2025 is another surprising month, continuing the record temperatures observed throughout the last two years, despite the development of La Niña conditions in the tropical Pacific and their temporary cooling effect on global temperatures," said Samantha Burgess, Copernicus Strategic Lead for Climate'

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/02/1159846#:~:t=ext=January%202025%20was%20the%20warmest,above%20the%20pre%20industrial%20level>;

The Climate Council's Heat Map of Australia : Melton 2050

'The Climate Council's Heat Map of Australia is an interactive tool that shows how cutting climate pollution will limit extreme heat in our neighbourhoods. It projects the average number of hot and very hot days, as well as very hot nights, for each suburb and electorate per year by 2050 and 2090, and across three scenarios: no action, continuing with existing action, and taking necessary action in line with Climate Council's recommendations'

Melton (Vic.)

In 2050 if we continue the existing action to tackle climate change, there will be:

14 days above 35°C. This is an increase of **4 days**.

3 days above 40°C. This is an increase of **2 days**.

0 nights above 25°C. This is an increase of **0 nights**. The increase in days is compared to the average over the period of 1986-2005.'

<https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/resources/heatmap/>;

Destruction of Melbourne grasslands



A media release by Victorian National Parks Association states:

"Outrageous destruction of precious Melbourne grassland after governments' collective protection failure"

An irreplaceable grassland in Melbourne's west has been bulldozed, with authorities across all levels of government failing to protect it despite being aware of the destruction.

The privately owned land at 248–316 Faulkners Road, Mount Cottrell on Melbourne's western edge was destined to become part of the long-promised 15,000 ha Western Grassland Reserve.

The Reserve is a desperate attempt to protect the last large remaining patches of Critically

Endangered grassland in Victoria. And it would be a place all Victorians can go to enjoy nature.

But despite local, state and federal authorities knowing the bulldozers were ripping through 40 hectares of the grassland throughout the holiday period and well into January, they all failed their obligations to protect it.

"Critically Endangered is the last step before extinction, and that grassland is irreplaceable," says Grassy Plains Network Facilitator Dr Adrian Marshall.

"Once stretching from Melbourne to South Australia, today only 1 per cent of our grasslands survive. These native flower meadows are now heading towards irreversible decline.

"This is an outrageous and deeply concerning situation. Developers are cynically undermining the rule of law for profit. They are robbing the future residents of Melbourne's outer west of public reserve land of great natural beauty and extraordinary conservation value.

"Who's in charge here? This native grassland was supposed to be protected under national and state laws. It has a Public Acquisition Overlay, an Environmental Significance Overlay, and is zoned Rural Conservation. Yet no one stopped it being cleared."

The Western Grassland Reserve is part of the Melbourne Strategic Assessment (MSA), a program put in place in 2010 to protect not just our last grasslands, but the endangered frogs, lizards, bandicoots, orchids and all the other threatened wildlife that call them home.

"The Melbourne Strategic Assessment needs to deliver what it promised, not just be a shortcut for windfall developer profit," says Dr Marshall.

"These developers need to be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. They won't stop until someone makes a very expensive example of them. The government is also going to have to find additional grassland to reserve in compensation for this loss. The annihilation of this irreplaceable grassland is devastating.

"We want an overhaul of how compliance with environmental laws is enforced too. The current system is broken. National and state

environmental laws need to be strengthened, and we need a nature cop with real legal teeth.”

This isn't the first time MSA grassland intended for environmental protection and public benefit has been destroyed. In 2022, Conservation Area 9, only 4km from the latest tragedy, was destroyed, smothered under asbestos-contaminated fill. That case is still before the courts, the grassland still in ruins.

Key findings

The privately owned land at 248–316 Faulkners Road, Mount Cottrell 3024 was almost entirely cleared of its native grassland over December 2024 and January 2025.

The land is subject to a Public Acquisition Overlay, has an Environmental Significance Overlay and is zoned Rural Conservation.

The land is intended to be purchased as part of the Western Grassland Reserve (WGR) under the Melbourne Strategic Assessment. Only 25% of the 15,000 hectares of the WGR has so far been purchased.

The Western Grassland Reserve is intended to become a public asset to protect Critically Endangered grassland and the threatened plants and animals, such as Growling Grass Frogs, Striped Legless Lizards and Spiny Rive-flower, that call it home.

In 2020, the Victorian Auditor General released a [scathing report](#) documenting the failures of the Melbourne Strategic Assessment. Victoria's [Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline](#), tabled in Parliament in 2021, recommended immediate purchase of the Western Grassland Reserve (Recommendation 18). The state government has yet to formally respond to those findings, let alone act on them.”

For more information:

Adrian Marshall, Facilitator, Grassy Plains Network, Victorian National Parks Association
0413 757 173 adrian@vnpa.org.au;

The environmental vandalism is described in an article in The Age newspaper
'From grasslands to 'moonscape': Dismay, anger over illegal clearing in Melbourne's west'
By [Adam Carey](#), February 24, 2025 — 7.30pm

<https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/from-grasslands-to-moonscape-dismay-anger-over-illegal-clearing-in-melbourne-s-west-20250222-p5le8u.html>;

MELTON WILDLIFE

Noisy Miners at Exford



Noisy Miner at Strathtulloh (by Norah Peters)

A pair of Noisy Miners was seen near the intersection of Eynesbury & Greigs Road, in the carpark outside the reservoir reserve. They were sometimes observed here back in the eighties, but they have not been seen here in the decades since. The nearest local population is in nearby Strathtulloh, where they have been present for several years. However, Chris of Eynesbury Environment Group has observed them in a 'small woodland on the western side of Greenhill.' There are also about seven Noisy Miners in Pinkerton Forest, three having arrived there about six years ago, after a storm. Their numbers have only increased to seven. They are common in Melton's Hannah Watts Park, Melton Botanic Garden & along Little Blind Creek. They have also made their way along High Street to Woodgrove via the roadside Sugar Gum trees.

They are often unpopular with many birdwatchers as their bullying behaviour is directed at smaller birds. However, this is caused by habitat destruction & imbalance, when understory has been removed- 'tidying the bush'! Where there is sufficient understory the small birds find protection here, from both Noisy Miners & predators such as cats & foxes. Prickly understory plants are especially good for protection. Despite the similarity in their name, they are completely unrelated to the exotic Indian Mynah. The Noisy Miner is a large honeyeater whereas the Indian Mynah is related to starlings.