

Breeding of the Common Myna, *Acridotheres tristis* Linnaeus, 1766 (Aves Sturnidae), in Libya: evidence of nesting and range expansion

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ABSTRACT

The Common Myna, *Acridotheres tristis* (Linnaeus, 1766) (Aves Sturnidae), one of the world's most invasive avian species, was first recorded in Libya in June 2024. Since then, field observations have confirmed not only its establishment but also active breeding across multiple Libyan regions. We report the first documented nesting of Common Myna in Libya, with confirmed breeding sites in the eastern (Amsaid, Tobruk, Benghazi) and western (Tripoli) regions. These findings demonstrate successful colonization and raise urgent concerns regarding the species' ecological impact on native birds and biodiversity in North Africa. Immediate monitoring and management strategies are recommended to prevent further spread.

KEY WORDS

Acridotheres tristis; invasive species; nesting; Libya and biodiversity threat.

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INTRODUCTION

Invasive alien species are a major driver of biodiversity loss globally (Dyer et al., 2017). Among avian invaders, the Common Myna, *Acridotheres tristis* (Linnaeus, 1766) (Aves Sturnidae), is listed among the world's 100 worst invasive species (Lowe et al., 2000). Native to South Asia, the species has successfully colonized parts of the Middle East, Africa, and Australia due to its adaptability to human-modified habitats (Pell & Tidemann, 1997).

The first record of the Common Myna in Libya

was recently published, documenting its presence in Tripoli in June 2024 (Etayeb & Elkrew, 2025). Considering the impact of this species on natural environments in other regions such as competition with native cavity-nesting birds, crop depredation, and urban proliferation (Orabi et al., 2024; Rabia et al., 2015), its establishment in Libya raises ecological and management concerns. Here, we provide the first scientific account of Common Myna breeding in Libya, confirming successful nesting and suggesting immediate monitoring and management strategies are recommended to prevent further spread.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Study area

Field surveys were conducted between June and August 2025 in both eastern and western Libya. Locations included:

Amsaid city. Amsaid is located about three kilometers from the Libyan-Egyptian borders. It is a transit area with a sizable population, most of whom are from Tobruk. It has all the government facilities, including an office for the Libyan Postal Company. In the office courtyard there is a tall communications tower ($31^{\circ}36'24.1''$ N $25^{\circ}02'55.7''$ E), which is the nesting site for the mynah bird in the area (Fig. 1).

Tobruk. Tobruk is one of the largest cities in Libya and is also located in the far east, about 500 km from Benghazi (Fig. 1). During the last decade, the city has witnessed a great urban bloom, which has increased the area's area to compete with the major cities in Libya. It is still characterized by agricultural and pastoral characteristics ($32^{\circ}05'06.8''$ N $23^{\circ}57'00.5''$ E).

Hai Al-Salam in Benghazi. Al-Salam district is considered one of the suburbs of Benghazi, the second largest city and the second capital of Libya (Fig. 1). It is a densely populated area ($32^{\circ}04'28.0''$ N $20^{\circ}05'55.4''$ E).

Al-Sarraj village in Tripoli. Al-Sarraj is a suburb of the Libyan capital, Tripoli. About three decades ago, it was an agricultural area dominated by forests. Due to population expansion, it has become

a residential area. However, there are still some green areas in the area, especially those lands far from the capital (to the south).

Data Collection

Observations were made using binoculars (10×42) and DSLR cameras. Nests were identified by repeated adult entry/exit behavior, presence of nest material, and juvenile vocalizations. GPS coordinates and habitat details were recorded at each site. Informal interviews with local residents provided supplemental information on sightings and bird behavior.

RESULTS

On 26 April 2025, a pair of Common Mynas was observed nesting in Amsaid city on a communications tower. Adults were seen carrying food, confirming breeding activity. In Tobruk on 2nd May 2025, in a farm surrounded by *Eucalyptus* trees, multiple pairs were observed near irrigation canals and Tamarisk trees, with at least one confirmed nest on an electricity pole in the farm (Fig. 2). The third observation was in Hai Al-Salam, Benghazi (17 May 2025), where a breeding pair was documented nesting in a hole in residential building (Fig. 3); juveniles were heard calling and later observed fledging. In 22 July, in Al-Sarraj, a suburban area in Tripoli ($32^{\circ}48'02.6''$ N $13^{\circ}05'25.8''$ E), a pair of Common Myna nested in roof cavity of residential house. Juvenile was observed with adults, confirming successful reproduction (Fig. 4).

However, the distance between eastern (Amsaid, Tobruk and Benghazi) and western (Tripoli) nesting sites indicates the species is not localized but has established in multiple Libyan regions.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study provides the first evidence of Common Myna breeding in Libya, confirming successful establishment. The species' adaptability to both urban and agricultural habitats is similar to that of the observations made in Egypt (Rabia et al., 2015; Orabi et al., 2024) and Algeria (Nedjah et al., 2023). Its presence in geographically distant sites



Figure 1. Nesting areas of Common Myna in Libya.



Figure 2. Nesting Common Myna perching on an electricity pole in Tobruk.

Figure 3. Common Myna nesting in a hole in residential building, Hai Al-Salam.

Figure 4. Juvenile with parents of Common Myna in a residential building, Al-Sarraj village.

suggests either multiple introductions (likely through pet trade) or rapid dispersal.

The ecological risks are considerable: competition with native cavity-nesting species (e.g., hoopoes and sparrows), potential predation on eggs and chicks, and agricultural damage. The Libyan records, following establishment in neighboring Egypt, underscore the species' westward spread across North Africa.

In Libya, the Common Myna is actively breeding with populations in both eastern and western regions. Early management interventions, including public awareness, monitoring, and control programs, are urgently required to limit its spread and mitigate ecological impacts.

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