

Feral animals in nest boxes

One of the biggest arguments against implementing a nest box program is the fact that feral animals may be encouraged to breed up in an area. With careful planning and regular monitoring this will not be a problem.

Feral European honey bees; this species is the biggest threat to hollow dependent fauna next to man. They can take over Tree Hollows and larger nest boxes, stinging to death whatever creatures are unlucky enough to get caught inside the box. They are however much more of a problem in tree hollows than they are in nest boxes. Once spotted infesting a nest box they can easily be poisoned and the box cleaned out and reused, if you use a non residue poison the honey and honey comb can be left for the possums and gliders to clean out. In tree Hollows on the other hand they will often fill all the cavities with honey comb and making the hollow branches heavy and often dangerous. Experienced aborists should be used to poison these hives.

Introduced Common Mynah: Again these are more of a problem in tree hollows than they are in nest boxes. they choose the highest hollows to nest and stuff the other hollows with rubbish to prevent other species using them, when planning a nest box program in an area with these birds it is best to target only those species that will use boxes unsuitable to mynahs, Mynah birds will not for instance, be able to fit through the entrance hole of a sugar glider box or a box suitable for scaly breasted lorikeets, Tree creeper and Micro bats also rear entry possum boxes can be used so that the birds do not know that there is a hollow available.

Starlings; again putting up boxes with entrance holes that are too small for the birds to fit into will solve this problem.

Ants: while not feral many people get disappointed when native ants take over their nest boxes, this is easily remedied with a ring of something greasy around the trunk of the tree such as Vaseline or marine grease.