

A successful control of the invasive Indian house crows (*Corvus splendens*) in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

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The Indian house crow (*Corvus splendens*) has successfully invaded many cities and areas along the sea coast of the Arabian Peninsula. Populations of the Indian house crow are well established in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and its numbers have increased rapidly since 1980. Its numbers have exceeded 70,000 birds in the late 1990s.

A control program was undertaken by the Municipality of Jeddah. Crow population dynamics, their ecology, dispersal, and behavior were considered for this study. Regular nesting and roosting surveys were conducted. Also information on mechanical and chemical control, and monitoring the crows' movement along the coast and inland were recorded during the period of October 2007 - October 2010.

A program is planned to cull up to 45% of crow populations during the first two years. The mechanical methods of management include: removing nests and collecting eggs and chicks from nesting sites during the breeding season. Cutting and clearing the outer side of trees is an effective method to prevent crows from building their nests. Also behavioral observations on feedings, roosting areas, breeding and movements of crows were conducted at different times of the day. Chemical control was limited to using baits containing DRC-1339 (3-chloro-p-toluidine hydrochloride).

This study has implications for the management of pest bird populations. An increase of the geographical range of crows to other areas may lead to an exacerbation of the problems caused by crows.