

SWOOPING MAGPIES



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If you know what to do when a magpie swoops, you can stay safe and let these birds raise their young.

Mark July on your calendar to show that magpies will soon be breeding and watch out for them.

Get to know where magpies breed in your area. If there is a swooping magpie, go to the Department of Environment and Science (DES) website www.environment.des.qld.gov.au and print out a warning sign to let others know.

Avoid the zone defended by the male magpie if you can (about 110 metres around the nest if you're on foot or 150 metres if you're on a bike).

If you have to go through the defence zone follow these safety tips:

SAFETY TIPS

- ✓ **Wear a hat and sunglasses** or just hold something like a school bag or umbrella over your head.
- ✓ Some magpies only swoop at cyclists. If you **get off your bike and walk**, the magpie should leave you alone.
- ✓ **'Spike up' your bike helmet** with a few cable ties to scare magpies away.
- ✓ Magpies are less likely to swoop if you **walk in a group**. Team up with others if you walk through a nesting area.
- ✓ **Watch magpies**. If they know they're being watched they are less likely to swoop.
- ✓ **Don't fight back**. Throwing sticks at a magpie will only make it more defensive next time.
- ✓ **Never approach a young magpie** that's out of the nest. The parents may think you're trying to harm it. Rescuing baby magpies is best left for wildlife rescue groups to carry out after dark.

Watch out for the baby magpies. When they leave the nest, the parents stop swooping. Magpies only swoop for around six to eight weeks: from when the eggs are laid until the young leave the nest. If there are large young in the nest, it should only be a few days before they leave and the swooping stops.

When a magpie becomes dangerous

If a magpie that is defending its nest becomes aggressive and a risk to human safety, the magpie may be removed.

Contact your local council, licensed bird relocater or the Department Environment and Science.

For further information

Visit www.environment.des.qld.gov.au or phone 13 QGOV (13 74 68)

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