

Swooping Magpies

Between July and November, magpies defend their young from threats.

Some magpies see us as threats—and they swoop. If you know what to do when a magpie swoops, you can stay safe and let these birds raise their young.



Safety tips

Mark July on your calendar

As a reminder that magpies will soon be breeding and that you must watch out for them.

Get to know where magpies breed in your area

Go to www.environment.des.qld.gov.au and print out a warning sign to let others know of the swooper.

Watch out for 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 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, the Department of Environment and Science or a licensed bird relocater in the Yellow Pages.

Avoid the zone

Magpies breed in spring. Avoid an area of 150 metres around a nest. If you must go near the nest of a swooper:

- Wear a hat and sunglasses or hold 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.

Further information

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