



Breeding

Breeding occurs from July to February with the peak season in August and September. The female makes the nest on her own consisting of a rough basket of sticks in a tree. They often line it with softer material where she lays 3 to 5 eggs which take around 20 days to hatch.

Females incubate and rear their young unaided to the fledgling stage. During this time the nest is defended by the male who is sometimes assisted by the female to chase off "threats" to the young and its territory. Once the young have left the nest all members of the group help in educating, protecting, and caring for them.

Contacts for advice and information

Parkes Shire Council
PO Box 377
PARKES NSW 2870

Ranger Services - **02 6861 2375**
council@parkes.nsw.gov.au

WIRES Parkes **02 6862 4471**

National Parks & Wildlife Service

Information Service **02 9585 6333**

There is also a considerable amount of information about this wonderful Australian icon to be found on the Internet



“When I grow up I want to be a Fighter Pilot”

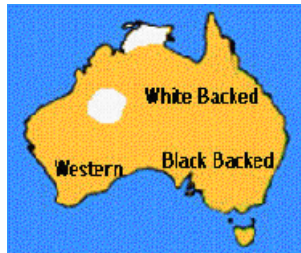


**Parkes Shire Council
Ranger Services**

Magpie Season



Habitat



The lyrically voiced magpie is the black and white minstrel of Australia. They have adapted successfully to urban and agricultural areas. Beautiful caroling, a relish for eating many harmful insect pests and the bird's bold nature have made the magpie popular with the suburban gardener and other bird lovers. Magpies are often found in relatively open areas, and sometimes become quite tame in suburban areas.

They require open areas to feed with some tall trees in which to shelter and nest. This describes a lot of Australia's rural and urban landscapes and Australian Magpies can be found in most of the parks and reserves here in Parkes.

Magpie Society

Magpies have a complex social structure. They form two main associations - tribes and flocks. Tribes consist of two to 10 birds of both sexes, which occupy a territory of up to 40 hectares. They feed mainly on small insects and other animals that live in or just under the ground, such as worms, beetles, ants, spiders, frogs, lizards and even carrion. Some of these food items are also pest species such as the scarab beetle and the Magpie helps in controlling their population.

They vigorously defend this breeding and feeding territory against perceived threats and other Magpies. Once the young reach about 2 years of age they are expelled from the territory by the adult birds.



These young birds and less successful mature birds will band together in large tribes of up to several hundred birds.

They occupy marginal habitats and are constantly moving to find food and water. Because they occupy marginal habitats they do not nest. They obtain nesting grounds by replacing birds who have died or become weak and unable to defend their territories.

Magpies and the Law

Magpies are native species to the Parkes area and are protected species throughout NSW. It is against the law to;








- Kill the birds
- Harm the birds, their eggs or their nests.
- To capture the birds
- To remove their eggs from the nest

Large fines and gaol terms apply to offenders who capture, damage or kill native fauna. Problems experienced with swooping magpies may be reported to WIRES or the National Parks and Wildlife Service. **It is unlikely that the offending bird will be removed or destroyed as another will simply take its place.**

Swooping Magpies

The swooping behaviour of Magpies during their breeding season can be a frightening experience that often causes a flood of complaints. Injuries from this swooping behaviour are rare as the goal of the bird is to chase off the threat whilst protecting itself from undue risk and injury.

Little can be done to prevent the behaviour. It is best simply to be aware and prepared. Here are some helpful tips.

-  Get to know where the birds are breeding in your area and try to avoid them.
-  Be aware that open areas with tall trees are likely sites to encounter the birds
-  Use an umbrella and wear a hat (good for UV protection too).
-  If the area is unavoidable, ensure you escort young children through any hot spots.
-  The birds are less likely to swoop while you are watching them (putting some big eyes on the back of your hat helps).
-  If you are riding a bike, get off and walk through hot spots.
-  If you are swooped by a Magpie, don't panic or run. If you don't have a hat or umbrella, simply place your hands over your head and keep walking.

All sites of swooping birds should also be reported to Ranger Services.

