

FACT SHEET: Swooping Birds

Native birds are a unique feature of Australia's wildlife. For most of the year, Australian Magpies are wonderful neighbours and their carolling song is enjoyed by many in urban areas.

Magpie and Masked Lapwing (Plover) pairs breed in spring (August-October) and their natural behaviour is to defend the territory around their nesting site. This may result in birds swooping either people and pets or other birds and animals they perceive as a threat to their nest. Only some birds see people as a threat - most will not swoop you.

Swooping usually occurs for six to eight weeks, commencing when the adult pair is nesting and concluding when the young leave the nest.

Getting help

A swooping bird is displaying a natural behaviour that is temporary and only occurs within the breeding season. Native birds have their place in the Australian ecosystem, and it is important that we learn to live with wildlife so we can co-exist without endangering conservation of our native wildlife.

If you feel a swooping bird has become a danger to people it should be reported to the landowner. If you feel that a bird is at risk of intentional harm (this includes the nest and eggs) contact National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) on 4580 2750 or contact Council on 4654 7777.

NPWS and Camden Council can install warning signs to alert members of public to swooping birds. Other actions will only be taken in extreme cases and are assessed on a case-by-case basis.

You can reduce your chances of being swooped! Pedestrians:

- Avoid the nest site and use an alternate route if possible;
- Do not deliberately provoke or harass the birds, as this may make them more aggressive;
- Walk calmly through the area - DON'T RUN;

- Protect your head with a large, wide brim hat or carry an open umbrella. You can place eyes on the back of hats and umbrellas to reduce the likelihood of the bird swooping;
- Wear glasses to protect your eyes;
- Keep an eye on the bird as they are less likely to swoop if you look at them; and
- Make a temporary sign to warn others.

Bike riders:

- If possible, take an alternate route;
- Dismount from your bike and walk through the bird's territory;
- Wear a helmet and sunglasses; and
- Fit a bike flag to your bike or try attaching cable ties or fake eyes to the back of your helmet.

Remember...

Stay calm. Accidents can occur when people, particularly children, panic. Swooping behaviour is temporary and will cease after breeding season. Magpies and Plovers are protected by the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* and harming these native birds and/or their nests is illegal.

Please remember that these species are only protecting their babies during nesting and are very important for the biodiversity of the local environment.



Australian Magpie
(*Cracticus tibicen*)



Masked Lapwing - Plover
(*Vanellus miles*)



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4654 7777



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