

# Swooping Birds

Native birds are a unique feature of Australia's wildlife. For most of the year the Australian Magpies are wonderful neighbours. 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, 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 occurs for 6 to 8 weeks, commencing when the adult pair is nesting and concluding when the young leave the nest.

## Getting Help

Swooping birds are displaying natural behaviour that is temporary and only occurs within 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 land owner, nearest National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) office (4632 4500) or Camden Council (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.

## 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 which may 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.
- 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.
- 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 *National Parks & Wildlife Act 1974* and harming these native birds and/or their nests is illegal.



Australian Magpie  
(Cracticus tibicen)



Masked Lapwing or  
'Plover' (Vanellus miles)

