



Magpie



Magpies caught in a cage trap

## DESCRIPTION

Magpies are black and white birds, up to 36-45 centimetres tall, with a loud flute-like warble.

Magpies are fond of company, and prefer to live in family groups ranging from two to 24 birds. They are active during the day, feeding on a wide range of insects, spiders and worms. They are extremely territorial and their breeding season is generally between August and November, when they are at their most aggressive. Breeding magpies, on average, rear one chick.

## VALUES AT RISK

**Ecological values.** Magpies harass native birds, restrict their range and feed on native lizards and insects.

**Human health and safety.** Magpies harass people, particularly children.

## STRATEGY RULES

*There is no rule requiring you to control magpies. Any control is voluntary.*

## HOW TO CONTROL MAGPIES

**Shooting,** using .22 rifles or shotguns, particularly in association with the use of decoys or magpie distress call tapes that are used to attract the birds. However, do not shoot without intending to kill as this simply frightens the birds, making them more wary and more difficult to control. All safety precautions must be taken when using firearms.

**Trapping,** using magpie cage traps. There are a number of traps available and on request to the Regional Council a suitable trap can be loaned to you.

**Preventive techniques,** such as keeping out of the areas where magpies have been swooping during the breeding season. Protect yourself by wearing a hat or carrying an umbrella to discourage an attack.



For further advice or information about pest animal management contact:

**TARANAKI REGIONAL COUNCIL**

Pest Animal Management Section

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